

## What to Plant

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I am often asked what should be planted to grow here in Wyoming. I have described in the past and will continue to highlight plants to consider or some that I would call fool proof. To help collaborate this effort there is an organization in Colorado called Plant Select which is a cooperative effort between the Denver Botanic Gardens, Colorado State University, the green industry and cooperative efforts with surrounding states such as Wyoming. 'The goal of Plant Select is to help gardeners and horticultural professionals transform the American landscape to a vibrancy inspired by the canyonlands, mountain peaks, and prairies of our western regional landscape'. Each year this group gets together and recommends plants that will prevail through tough times with many of them originating from native plants found throughout the west or from similar climates around the world. These plants have to be able to thrive, be resilient with our climate, be able to flourish in low water conditions display unique beauty and be non invasive\*. With that, I would like to introduce some of this year's recommendations.

The white sun daisy Avalanche has dazzling white flowers with coppery backing, which starts in April and goes through summer, showing off mats of lustrous succulent evergreen foliage. This daisy has great disease resistance and heavier summer blooms than other daisies. It grows 8 to 12 inches high and 10 to 15 inches wide in full sun or partial shade, preferring moderate to dry conditions and will grow in soil conditions varying from sand, clay to loam, and is USDA zone rated four.

The Colorado Desert Blue Star (*Amsonia jonesii*), is a widely adaptable western native which thrives in ordinary gardens or unwatered xeriscape areas. The sapphire blue stars which form from April until early summer is striking and the fall foliage is a beautiful clear yellow. It grows 10 to 14 inches high and 12 to 15 inches wide in full sun, preferring moderate to xeric conditions, and will grow in most soil conditions varying from sand, clay to loam, and is USDA zone rated four.

The Golden Storksbill (*Erodium chrysanthum*) has silvery mounds of evergreen, ferny foliage, which is very decorative and has fragrant, soft yellow, geranium like flowers from early spring until late summer. It grows 6 to 8 inches high and 10 to 25 inches wide in full sun or partial shade, preferring moderate to xeric conditions, and will grow in most soil conditions varying from sand to loam (good drainage), and is USDA zone rated four. This would be a very good ground cover for those hot dry sites.

The Baby Blue Rabbitbrush (*Chrysothamnus nauseosus*) is a dwarf form of rabbitbrush which is found all over the west. This compact dome shape strain was found along the front range of Colorado. The dense silvery-blue with bright golden flowers in late summer and fall is very attractive. This nearly indestructible native with multi-season interest is a must have in my xeric book. It grows 16 to 28 inches high and 20 to 30 inches wide in full sun or partial shade, preferring moderate to xeric

conditions, and will grow in most soil conditions varying from sand, clay to loam, and is USDA zone rated four.

Therefore, if you see a label on a plant that has the designation Plant Select you can be assured it will perform admirably based on the requirements of the plant. Most Plant Select plants actually do better if they are left alone especially with watering, after they are established and just enjoyed for their beauty.

\*"Plant Select is a Colorado Nonprofit Corporation" [www.plantselect.org](http://www.plantselect.org)

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