

Plant Selection



Selecting the right plants is crucial when designing a beautiful, lasting, and sustainable landscape. By opting for native or waterwise species, you ensure that your garden is both resilient and resource-efficient, reducing the need for additional watering and maintenance. Key considerations in plant selection include understanding the local climate, soil type, and sun exposure. Consider the plant's growth habit, mature size, and compatibility with other species in the landscape to ensure the best arrangement. By thoughtfully choosing plants that thrive in your specific environment, you create a landscape that is visually appealing and environmentally responsible.



When selecting plants for your space, it's best to plan ahead and choose based on the specific environment and desired aesthetic before heading to the store.

Establishing criteria such as plant size, maintenance level, and compatibility with existing style can help streamline your shopping process, allowing you to filter out unsuitable options efficiently. This preparation not only saves time and money but also enhances the likelihood of creating a harmonious and thriving plant collection tailored to your space.

Click the link for Resource Central's informative webinar on design and plant selection, where you'll discover creative landscaping ideas and a variety of plant options to enhance your garden. Please note that while the webinar offers a broad range of plant suggestions, not all of these plants may be suitable for the unique climate of Eagle County.



Plant Selection



Sections



Plant Types



Edible Plants



Considerations



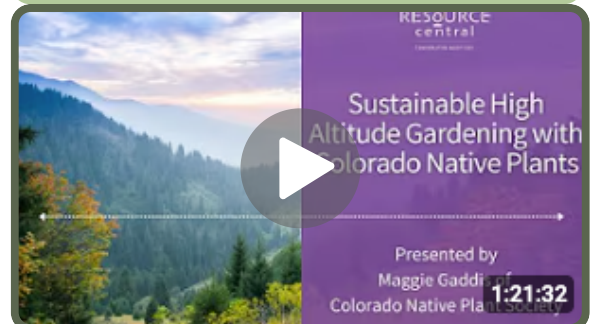
[Click Here for The Beyond Lawn Plant List](#)



Plant Selection Resources

- [Sourcing Plants](#)
- [Garden in a Box](#)
- [PlantSelect](#)
- [Wildflower & Grass Seeds](#)
- [Natives](#)
- [Trees](#)
- [Shrubs](#)
- [Perennials](#)
- [Ornamental Grasses](#)
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- [Edibles & Medicinals](#)
- [Using Annuals Wisely](#)
- [Buyer Beware](#)
- [Beyond Lawn Plant List](#)
- [Plant Selection Checklist](#)

Watch Resource Central's plant selection webinars to help guide your process ↓



Look for Beyond Lawn approved plants!

Local Plant Sourcing



In mountain regions, the limited availability of plants poses a unique challenge. Demand for native and waterwise plants is increasing, while supplies are very limited. While purchasing plants from outside local nurseries and retail centers can offer a wider selection, it is important to consider that many of these plants may not be adapted to our area.

Click the logo to be taken to the respective website.



Wiggle Worm Gardens is your local solution for edible, waterwise, native, pollinator, medicinal, and permaculture friendly plants. They are located behind the City Market in Eagle. Wiggle Worm also offers soil health, design, and other sustainable landscaping services.



Eagle Gardens is a perennial wholesaler, supplying the county's landscaping companies with perennial plant material.



The Garden Center of Gypsum is a locally-owned garden center in Gypsum. It has climate-adapted trees, shrubs, perennials, and edible plants, located near west end of the airport in Gypsum.



Stephens Nursery is a 3rd generation family owned and operated business founded by Annalies Stephens and son Bill Stephens Jr. The nursery is located in Dotsero, Colorado and successfully serves a 150 mile radius including the beautiful Vail Valley.



Eagle Crest Nursery is a locally owned full-service garden center in El Jebel, offering a vast selection of perennials, trees and shrubs, garden supplies, home and garden décor, and landscaping materials that are all well-adapted to our unique mountain climate.



McCoy Tree Farm has proudly been family-owned and operated since 1999. Founded by Jean-Pascal Guilmineau, the farm began with a vision to provide premium Quaking Aspen and Colorado Spruce. Over the years, they have expanded to include a diverse selection of ornamental trees and shrubs suited to our mountain environment.

Front Range & Online



Click the logo to be taken to the respective website.



Pawnee Buttes Seed specializes in seed for pasture, reclamation, turf, and CRP. They have high-quality Colorado native wildflower and native grass seed great for meadowscapes and covering large areas.



Little Valley is a large wholesale nursery with a broader selection of trees, shrubs, and perennials than most, and they have a good selection of Colorado native plant material.

Chelsea Nursery

Chelsea Nursery is a small nursery located in Western Colorado, specializing in xeric plants and plants native to the Rocky Mountains.



Prairie Moon Nursery sells native seeds, seed mixes, and plants for restoration nationwide. While not based in Colorado, they are a good source for native plant material and specialize in prairie restoration mixes.



Bluebird Nursery, located in Nebraska, has a selection of Colorado native and waterwise plants and sells both retail and wholesale.



High Country Gardens is one of the largest online retailers of plants to the Rocky Mountain Region and is good for finding that elusive plant or two you've been looking to add to your collection.

Garden in a Box

The Garden In A Box program makes it easy to transform your yard into a beautiful, waterwise oasis, helping you to use less water on your landscaping year after year. Each spring and summer, they offer a selection of professionally designed, low-water garden kits tailor-made for Colorado yards. These do-it-yourself kits include quart-sized perennial plants, Plant by Number maps, seasonal maintenance suggestions, and watering schedule recommendations. Ditch thirsty turf grass and plant a new perspective with Garden In A Box!

EACH GARDEN KIT INCLUDES



STARTER PLANTS IN 4 INCH POTS

PRINTED PLANT & CARE GUIDE

TOTAL PLANT QUANTITY VARIES BY GARDEN SIZE



Not all Garden in a Box kits are suited for Eagle County!

- When selecting a kit, make sure it works at your elevation.

How it Works

The Garden In A Box program offers two times to purchase gardens during the gardening season:

- Pre-order in March for pickup and planting in May and June.
- Pre-order in June for pickup and planting in August and September.

1. [Join the Interest list](#) for all garden season news and updates.
2. Measure your space and determine the sun exposure.
3. [When available, pre-order your Garden In A Box online here.](#)
4. Remove lawn, if needed.
5. Pick up your Garden In A Box order.
6. Plant and mulch your new Garden In A Box.
7. After the first year, dial back the water and begin saving.



Plant Select® is the country's leading brand of plants designed to thrive in the high plains and intermountain regions. Plant Select is a nonprofit collaboration between Denver Botanic Gardens, Colorado State University, and professional horticulturists across the West.


Plant Testing and Selection Process

New plants come to the program from plant explorations, plant breeders, partners and passionate gardeners. Perennials, vines and grasses are tested for 3+ years at official trial sites and public gardens. Shrubs and trees are tested for 3-5+ years at sites across Colorado and the region.

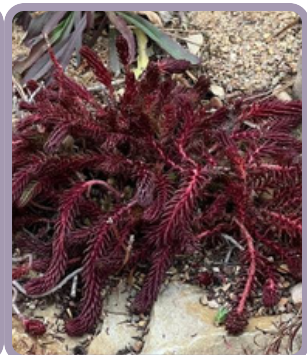
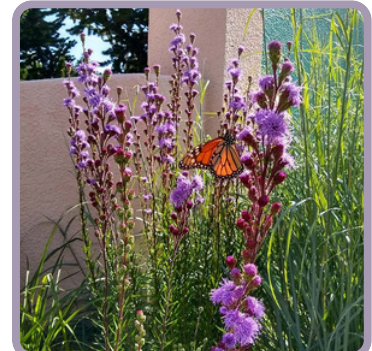
Plants for the program are considered for the following attributes:

- Flourish with less water
- Thrive in a broad range of conditions
- Tough and resilient in challenging climates
- Habitat-friendly
- Long-lasting beauty
- One of a kind/unusual
- Resist disease & insects
- Non-invasive

Not all Plant Select plants are suitable for Eagle County.

Always look up a plant before selecting it for your landscape. 

Many of the plants in the Plant Select program are native to the western United States, including Colorado, Utah, Idaho and Wyoming. Some are native to North America. And some are well-adapted plants that are native to parts of the world with similar climates and environments.



Wildflower & Grass Seeds

When selecting wildflower and grass seed mixes, it's important to be aware that many products marketed as "native" or "waterwise" may not actually deliver on those promises. In reality, some mixes can contain non-native species or invasive plants that may harm local ecosystems. These misleading labels can undermine efforts to support biodiversity and conserve water. Consequently, it is imperative to source seeds from reputable, weed-free suppliers who can guarantee the authenticity and ecological appropriateness of their products. By doing so, you ensure that your intentions to promote native flora and sustainable landscaping practices are genuinely fulfilled and contributing positively to your local environment.



Retailers often market seed mixes with terms such as "wildflower," "Colorado," "mountain," "high altitude," "dry," or "waterwise." More often than not, however, these mixes often contain annuals, introduced species, or plants that require a lot of water. **Eagle County Conservation District sells seed mixes specifically formulated for our area.** See additional resources for more trusted suppliers.

ECCD Backyard Pollinator Native Wildflower Seed Mix



- Rocky Mountain penstemon
- Black-eyed Susan
- Purple prairie clover
- Prairie coneflower
- Blanketflower
- Purple coneflower
- Mexican hat
- Firecracker penstemon
- Blue flax



ECCD Native & Waterwise Grass Seed Mixes

- [Low Grow Native](#)
- [Dry Native Mountain](#)
- [Shade Tolerant Lawn](#)
- [Full-Sun, Waterwise Lawn](#)
- [Reclamation Mix](#)



CO Native Flowers Spotlight



**Rocky Mountain
Penstemon**



Desert 4 O'Clock



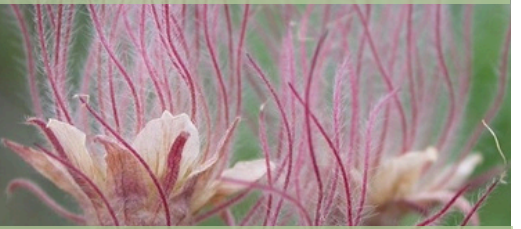
American Pasqueflower



Windflower



Sulfur Flower



Prairie Smoke



Blue Flax



**Upright Prairie
Coneflower**



Pearly Everlasting



Leadplant



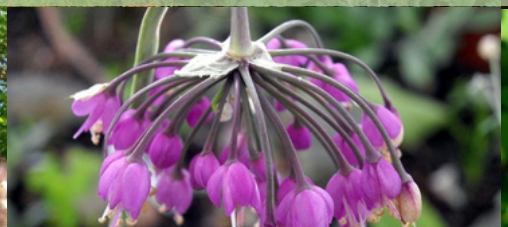
Winterfat



Harebells



Apache Plume



Nodding Onion



Grape Holly

Trees



Trees are foundational elements to a landscape that provide structure, habitat, and dimension.

For example, the **ponderosa pine** to the right is a large, waterwise evergreen tree that provides ample shade and native habitat.



← **Chokecherries** are native multi-stemmed shrubs to medium-sized trees that have wonderful white blossoms in spring and beautiful purple foliage in summer. They are fast-growing and provide lots of shade.

Bigtooth Maple are stunning large native specimen trees with fantastic fall foliage. Plant them for seasonal variation in the landscape and a tree you will admire year after year.



← **Bristlecone Pine** are tough as nails and hardy at even the highest elevations. While slow growing, they have dense, almost sculptural foliage and are ideal for creating privacy screens.



Shrubs



Shrubs are an under-appreciated element of the home landscape, offering a variety of benefits.

They come in a wide variety of sizes, habits, and requirements, but the right shrub can add screening, color, or wildlife interest to your property.

Ural False Spirea comes in a handful of cultivars. It is shade tolerant, deer resistant, has unique ferny foliage and delicate white flowers.



Pawnee Buttes Sand Cherry is a hardy, drought resistant Colorado native with gorgeous spring flowers.



Redtwig Dogwood is a native wetland species that provides winter interest and forage for local wildlife.



Serviceberry → Are native to the Rocky Mountains. They bloom white in spring and produce delicious edible berries in fall.



Ninebark adds foliage ↑ interest to any landscape.

Rabbitbrush → Is an underrated native. It provides year-round interest and is a keystone plant species in our area.



Perennials



A perennial is a type of plant that lives for more than two years, as distinguished from annuals, which complete their life cycle in a single growing season, and biennials, which take two years. Perennials can bloom and produce seeds multiple times throughout their lifespan. These plants often have robust root systems and vegetative adaptations that allow them to survive through dormant periods, typically during winter, and regrow each spring. Perennials bring vibrancy, intrigue, and seasonal diversity to your garden. Whether adding color, texture, movement, or by attracting wildlife, perennials make sure your landscape is always changing and growing. With their ability to return year after year, they become the steadfast backbone of any garden design.



From delicate blooms that fill the air with their soothing fragrance to the bold, architectural presence of ornamental grasses swaying in the wind, perennials offer endless opportunities for creativity and expression. Their cyclical nature creates transformation throughout the seasons, as spring brings fresh growth, summer bursts with vibrant colors, and autumn reveals rich textures and hues. In winter, even their dormant forms add structure and interest.

Native Colorado perennials are often overlooked in favor of flashier non-natives. Yet, they are often as beautiful, they are uniquely suited to our local climate and soil. From the vibrant Rocky Mountain penstemon to the textured apache plume, these perennials thrive with little care. They enhance gardens while supporting local ecosystems and native wildlife. Embracing them can transform gardens into sustainable, low-maintenance landscapes that celebrate and contribute to the region's natural beauty and biodiversity.

Ornamental Grasses



Incorporating ornamental grasses into your landscape design can add texture, movement, and visual interest

throughout the year. These versatile plants are not only frequently low-maintenance and drought-resistant, but they also offer a variety of heights, colors, and forms that can complement any garden style, from modern and minimal to lush and informal.

Karl Foerster, known for its striking vertical growth and graceful feathery plumes, is a popular for its toughness in both home and commercial landscapes.



Blonde Ambition Blue

Grama is a striking native grass known for its vibrant chartreuse seed heads that gracefully sway in the breeze.



Blue Oat Grass is a medium sized ornamental grass known for its steel-blue, spiky foliage and graceful, arching form, making it a popular choice for adding texture and color to gardens and landscapes.

Idaho Fescue is a resilient, perennial bunchgrass native to the western United States, prized for its fine, bluish-green foliage and its ability to thrive in a variety of soil types.



Groundcovers



Groundcovers offer numerous benefits, including erosion control and weed suppression, as they create a mat that protects the soil. These generally low-maintenance plants add visual interest with their diverse textures and colors, enhancing the appeal of your outdoor space while providing a habitat for beneficial insects.



Creeping Jenny is a versatile plant with vibrant green foliage and yellow flowers, perfect for adding a splash of color to any garden.



Creeping Speedwell is a delightful traffic-tolerating ground cover that features tiny, elegant blue flowers.



Some groundcovers are traffic tolerant, like most thyme species and creeping speedwell. They make attractive living accents to areas like flagstone patios and walkways, where they can be planted in the cracks between pavers.



Periwinkle is a tough, evergreen ground cover great at covering shady, often neglected areas.

Favor natives where possible, but **always choose the right plant for the right place!**



Thyme comes in a number of species and is a fragrant, dense groundcover with pink flowers.



Creeping Phlox is an early spring bloomer. While slow-growing, its prolific blooms are an early pollinator favorite. Mix with dianthus for a showstopping combo.



Snow in Summer is an abuse-tolerant groundcover with subtle white flowers.



Partridge Feather wows with fernlike sage-colored foliage and a splash of bright yellow in early to mid summer.

Cold-Hardy Cacti



In the picturesque landscapes of Eagle County, cold-hardy cacti and succulents often go unnoticed, overshadowed by more traditional plant choices. These resilient plants offer a unique aesthetic and practicality that make them a valuable addition to waterwise landscapes.



Claret Cup Cactus

Adapted to endure the dry and harsh conditions of lower elevations and hotter exposures, they require minimal care once established. While they may need specific planting conditions to thrive, such as well-draining soil and careful positioning, their low-maintenance nature and longevity make them an excellent sustainable choice for environmentally-conscious gardeners.

Crevice gardens represent an innovative and sustainable landscaping option, particularly well-suited for the unique climate of Eagle County. These gardens emulate the natural rock formations found in mountainous regions, providing an ideal environment for alpine plants and cold-hardy cacti. The narrow spaces between rocks in crevice gardens create optimal drainage and mimic the conditions these plants thrive in, making them a sustainable choice that requires minimal water and maintenance.



Setting up crevice gardens requires significant labor, as it involves meticulously arranging rocks. Careful plant selection is a particular consideration for crevice gardens as well, so contracting a professional is recommended for all but the most experienced gardeners.



Take a trip to **Betty Ford Alpine Gardens** in Vail to explore a variety of water-wise garden designs and themes, including crevice gardens!



Edibles

Incorporating edible plants into the landscape combines beauty with practicality. By adding fruits, vegetables, and herbs in garden plots and planters or by working them into ornamental beds, you can enjoy fresh produce, reduce store reliance, and provide higher ecological value at home.

Annual & Biennial Edible Plants

Growing annual vegetables is a rewarding endeavor that brings fresh produce to your table while connecting you with nature. These plants, such as tomatoes, peppers, and lettuce, complete their life cycle in a single season, allowing you to enjoy a bountiful harvest within months of planting. To ensure successful growth, provide them with nutrient-rich soil, ample sunlight, and consistent watering, while also being mindful of their specific space and growth requirements.



Perennial Edible Plants

Perennial edible plants provide a continuous harvest of fresh produce year after year. Beyond their nutritional value to humans, these plants also serve as vital resources for wildlife, offering food and shelter to a diverse array of species. Flowering fruit trees, for instance, attract pollinators like bees and butterflies, while berry-bearing shrubs provide nourishment for birds and small mammals. By designing a garden that intertwines human benefit with wildlife habitat, homeowners can enjoy the dual satisfaction of cultivating their own food while contributing to the ecological health and biodiversity of their surroundings.

Medicinal Plants

Cultivating and using medicinal plants in the home landscape not only provides a sustainable source of natural remedies for common ailments but also enhances the garden's biodiversity and aesthetic appeal.



Permaculture



Permaculture is a holistic approach to designing agricultural systems that mimic natural ecosystems. In a home landscape, permaculture involves integrating elements such as edible gardens, layering of useful trees and shrubs, water and soil conservation techniques, and biodiversity pockets to create a balanced environment that supports both human needs and the ecosystem. By incorporating permaculture principles, homeowners can design gardens that require minimal inputs and maintenance while maximizing productivity. Techniques like companion planting, rainwater harvesting, and composting can be used to enhance soil health and biodiversity. This creates a resilient, fruitful landscape that provides food, habitat for wildlife, and a sustainable environment for all to enjoy.

Incorporating beautiful edible plants such as rhubarb and asparagus into the home landscape is a brilliant way to combine aesthetics with functionality.

These plants not only enhance the visual appeal of your garden but also provide fresh produce for your kitchen. Rhubarb, with its striking red stalks and large, lush green leaves, can serve as a vibrant ornamental feature. It thrives in well-drained soil and can be used to create stunning borders or focal points.

Asparagus, on the other hand, adds a touch of elegance with its feathery foliage, which turns into a soft, fern-like texture as it matures. Planting asparagus in a sunny spot ensures it thrives, and its perennial nature means it will return year after year, making it a sustainable choice for your garden.



Rhubarb

Raised Beds

Raised beds can solve many problems for mountain gardeners. From the offset, they can be created with rich, weed-free topsoil that bypasses many of the challenges of growing fruits and vegetables in our lean mountain soils. Most fruits and veggies need high organic matter content, fairly neutral pH, and good water retention for optimal growth.

Ideally, raised beds should be irrigated with drip irrigation, targeting water straight to the roots. Many plants suffer from issues like powdery mildew and rusts when watered from above. They also require good airflow around their base to prevent rots and other fungal growth.

Raised beds can help reduce pest and disease pressure by improving drainage, allowing better air circulation, creating barrier between the plants and soil-dwelling pests, and increasing some of the the physical obstacles to small rodents and other animals.

They also warm faster in the springtime because they are aboveground, helping to extend the season and help ramp up the microbiome activity early.

Straight rows may be the traditional planting pattern, but it's not best for beating the heat. Planting in groups or a hexagonal pattern provides better shade for leaves. More shade keeps the soil cooler and reduces evaporation.



The soil layer in a raised bed should be at least 12-18" deep. Do not use treated wood. Rot resistant woods like redwood and cedar work best.

Hugelkultur

Layer 5: Soil

Layer 4: Compost

Layer 3: Plant Waste

Layer 2: Wood

Layer 1: Cardboard



Hugelkultur is a German horticultural technique that involves creating raised garden beds by piling decaying wood and other organic materials, which enriches the soil and improves water retention over time. It is a permaculture practice that uses rotting wood at the base of a mound to provide nutrients, acting similarly to nurse logs in a forest.

Season Extension



Eagle County is known for its short growing season, typically lasting only about 90 to 120 days due to its high elevation and cooler climate. To maximize within this narrow window, gardeners can implement several season extension strategies:



Utilizing cold frames and hoop houses can provide protection from frost and create a microclimate that retains heat. These structures extend the growing season by weeks, allowing earlier planting in spring and later harvesting in fall. They are invaluable for maximizing Eagle County's short growing season.



Selecting cold-tolerant and short season varieties and starting seeds indoors before the last frost can also give plants a head start. Choosing varieties suited for cooler temperatures and starting seeds indoors can ensure a successful harvest despite climate constraints.



Using grow lights to start plants indoors can be an effective way to extend the growing season. Plant lights speed up initial growth and can potentially remove weeks from germination process. Some plants are better direct-sown into the ground, so be sure to do your research!



If buying your starts, selecting and using larger plant starts can also be a good way to extend the season. Larger starts, with their robust root systems, can establish more quickly, especially when purchased early and gradually acclimated.



Using dense surfaces to warm heat-loving plants is another way to accelerate growth and make the most of a short growing season. Crops like cucumbers, squash, tomatoes, and peppers need warmer soil temperatures to grow quickly. Dense surfaces radiate heat at night to buffer them against the cold.



Using row covers can shield plants from unexpected cold snaps and maintain a stable environment. Lightweight fabrics trap warmth, protecting seedlings from frost and wind. Row covers let in sunlight and rain while blocking cold, leading to more abundant harvests. They also reduce pest pressure by acting as a barrier against insects, offering dual benefits.

Using Annuals Wisely



Incorporating annuals into your landscape adds vibrant color and variety, but using them wisely is key to reducing their impact. Strategically placing annuals in focal areas, like entryways, viewing windows, and in window boxes draws attention without overwhelming the overall design. Planting annuals in containers offers flexibility and keeps them away from deer and other pests. **Keep annuals out of in-ground beds where possible.**

Thrillers, Fillers, & Spillers

Annual use should be saved for high-impact areas. To compose an aesthetic arrangement, think thriller, filler, spiller, and take advantage of perennials and houseplants where possible.

Spiller

Trailing plants that cascade over the edge. Notice how this container uses mostly foliage for color instead of just flowers. This is a low-maintenance, visually appealing approach to using annuals.



Thriller

The tall, eye-catching focal plant. In this case, the thriller is a perennial shrub that can be planted in a garden bed the at the end of the season.

Filler

Medium-height plants that fill space around the thriller. This container used common houseplants as well, allowing them to make use of favorable summer conditions to grow. A smart, wallet-friendly approach!



← **Windowboxes** give a pop of color on decks and high-use areas and attract pollinators. Annual containers should be on their own irrigation zones in order to conserve water.

Hanging baskets dry out → quickly if they are in coco coir or porous baskets. Use nonpermeable containers and containers with reservoirs to reduce watering frequency.



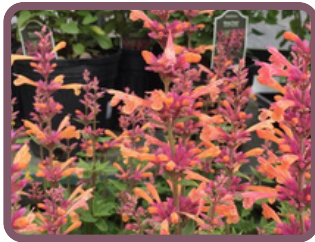
Buyer Beware



Many plants available in retail outlets are labeled as suitable for Eagle County's cold hardiness zone, but factors such as altitude, humidity, and specific microclimates can drastically affect their survivability. The high altitude and variable weather conditions often create a harsher environment than the general zone rating suggests, leading to low survival rates for these plants despite their theoretical hardiness.



Look for the buyer beware icon in the Beyond Lawn plant list for plants commonly sold in retail stores that have low survivability or success in Eagle County!



Certain **agastache** varieties can survive at lower elevations in Eagle County, but will struggle or fail to survive at higher elevations. Experimenting with small quantities can help identify the best-suited varieties for your garden's microclimates, ensuring a resilient and sustainable landscape.

Arborvitae, or thuja, are commonly used for hedges and as ornamental landscape plants in more humid North American climates. While there are a few varieties that claim to be hardy at altitude, many will not survive their first winter, and most will grow slowly or die off piecemeal for a few years thereafter. Upright juniper may be a better suited alternative, but be mindful of firewise considerations when using any juniper in the landscape.



Hydrangea are another fan-favorite landscape plant used frequently in more humid climates. While most hydrangea tags claim they are hardy to USDA Plant Hardiness Zone 3, they have an incredibly difficult time adapting to our altitude, lack of humidity, and intensity of sun. Good alternatives include snowball viburnum or snowmound spirea for clusters of large, showy flowers.

Boxwoods are popular for their ability to form formal shapes and dense, deer-resilient hedges used for privacy. While Eagle County is theoretically within their plant hardiness zone, they struggle in all but the most ideal locations and are not recommended for use in the landscape.



Plant Explorer







The Beyond Lawn plant list provides a one-stop solution to Eagle County plant selection based on a wide range of criteria. This thoughtfully curated list is organized into filterable categories, allowing homeowners to easily find plants that suit their specific needs.

[Click here to navigate to Beyond Lawn Plant Explorer](#)



Click on the plant card for more detailed information beyond the filterable categories shown in the top menu.

Area ▾ Exposure ▾ Foundational Environment ▾ Hydrozone ▾ Native or Introduced ▾ Beyond Lawn Grade ▾ Plant Type

 <p>Stonecrop</p> <p>Scientific Name Sedum spp.</p> <p>Foundational Environment Adaptable</p> <p>Exposure Full Sun</p> <p>Hydrozone Very Low</p> <p>Beyond Lawn Grade B</p>	 <p>Creeping Jenny</p> <p>Scientific Name Lysimachia nummularia</p> <p>Foundational Environment Montane Woodland</p> <p>Exposure Full Sun/ Part Sun</p> <p>Hydrozone Medium</p> <p>Beyond Lawn Grade C</p>	 <p>Helenium</p> <p>Scientific Name Helenium autumnale</p> <p>Foundational Environment Adaptable</p> <p>Exposure Full Sun/ Part Sun</p> <p>Hydrozone Medium</p> <p>Beyond Lawn Grade B</p>	 <p>Kinnikinnick</p> <p>Scientific Name Arctostaphylos uva-ursi</p> <p>Foundational Environment Adaptable</p> <p>Exposure Full Sun</p> <p>Hydrozone Low</p> <p>Beyond Lawn Grade A</p>
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Refer to the directions on the next page for how to use the Beyond Lawn Plant Explorer to find the right plant for the right place.

How to Use the Plant Explorer

1

Eagle County Area

- Vail
- Minturn
- Avon
- Edwards
- Eagle
- Gypsum

Ever wondered what **USDA hardiness zone you're in?** We took the guesswork out, so now you can just select your location for the plants that will work there.

If you want to double-check, click the plant's card—the USDA hardiness zones are still listed at the bottom.



2

Exposure

- Full Sun
- Full Sun/ Part Sun
- Part Sun
- Part Sun/ Shade
- Shade

Next, **select by your exposure.** A **full sun** plant needs 6+ hours of direct sunlight each day to grow properly and produce flowers, fruit, or foliage. A **part sun** plant needs approximately 4 to 6 hours of direct sunlight per day. A **full shade** plant is one that thrives in areas receiving <4 hours of direct sunlight per day.

3

Environment

- Semi-Desert Shrubland
- Adaptable
- Montane Woodland

What was there before the site was developed?

Your **foundational environment**, whether semi-desert shrubland or montane woodland, is representative of existing sun, soil, and precipitation. Adaptable plants can thrive on both.

4

Hydrozone

- Very Low
- Low
- Medium
- High

Hydrozoning is the practice of grouping plants of similar water need together in their own irrigation zones to prevent over or underwatering. **Turf, annuals, and vegetables have the the highest water need.**

5

Native Status

- Native
- Introduced

Native plants are adapted to Colorado's climate and have evolved alongside other native plants and animals. **Introduced plants** are not from Colorado and have been brought here from elsewhere.

6

Beyond Lawn Grade

- A+
- A
- B
- C
- D
- F

- A+ plants are the best of the best
- A plants are mostly native and waterwise, but include some nonnative waterwise and high-value plants
- B plants are lower water need or broadly applicable
- C plants are average or common introduced landscape plants, or higher water need natives.
- D plants are high water need introduced species
- F are problematic in our landscapes. Avoid these!

Plant Selection Checklist



Is the plant suited to your USDA hardiness zone?



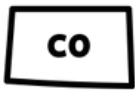
Is the plant suited to its intended hydrozone?



Is the plant an annual, biennial, or perennial?



Is the plant appropriate for the type of soil?



Is the plant native?



Is this plant susceptible to pests and disease?



Is the plant waterwise?



Is the plant a keystone species?



Is the plant the right size at maturity for the space?



Is the plant appropriate for its proximity to a structure?



Is the plant edible or have any other benefits?



Is the plant toxic or poisonous to kids or pets?



Is the plant particularly pollinator-friendly?



Is it appropriate for its foundational environment?



Does the plant have the right habit for the space?



Does the plant have seasonal or winter interest?



Are you selecting for a specific blooming period?



Are there survivability considerations?



Is the plant low, medium, or high maintenance?



Is there a varietal with better attributes?