

DISCOVER NEBRASKA'S

Roadside Flowers and Grasses



NEBRASKA

Good Life. Great Journey.

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Nebraska Roadside Plant Identification

Nebraska's roadside seed mixtures have changed through time. The plants that you see along the highway are there because their seeds:

- occur naturally in prairie soil,
- were included in a planted seed mixture, or
- were introduced by wind, water, or other external factors.

Photos are included here to help satisfy your curiosity and to identify several prominent species of flowers, legumes and grasses in your roadside view. Because of changing philosophies regarding roadside management, some of the species pictured here are no longer in Department of Transportation Regional Seed mixtures, especially the plants shown in the "non-native" section.



Goldenrod
State Flower



Little Bluestem
State Grass

NEBRASKA

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

www.transportation.nebraska.gov/docs/flowers

Roadside Vegetation in Nebraska

The roadside conditions in Nebraska, such as climate, soils, and topography, have unique features that differ from region to region across the state.

The plants you see along the roadside may occur naturally, have been intentionally seeded, or have been carried there by wind, wildlife, or a passing vehicle. The Nebraska Department of Transportation (NDOT) has developed a plan to promote the use of native plant species that are most likely to thrive in the different regions of the state. Native plants that occur in these regions within Nebraska are adapted for the specific growing conditions.

NDOT's roadside regional seeding mixtures include cool- and warm-season grasses, legumes, and

flowers. Species are selected as a roadside seed mixture according to the Nebraska region in which the NDOT project occurs.

Benefits from these regional seed mixtures include:

- Increased seed germination
- Increased durability and permanence of the plants that stabilize and beautify roadsides
- Active plant growth throughout the growing season
- Increased control of soil erosion
- Lower maintenance and mowing costs
- Increased Pollinator Habitat

Roadside seed mixtures are planted during highway construction projects. Mixtures that

are planted away from highway shoulders are comprised of approximately 10-20% native wildflower seed, by weight. Since the roadside may serve as pollinator habitat, NDOT has funded a research project with the University of Nebraska to investigate wildflower islands (areas of dense wildflower seeding) and their effect on pollinating species populations.

NDOT program documents have been revised to recommend mowing dates and frequencies that minimize interference with pollinator life cycles and foraging needs.

NDOT staff participate in efforts led by Nebraska pollinator interest groups to develop action plans and policies to support pollinator life cycles and develop habitat.

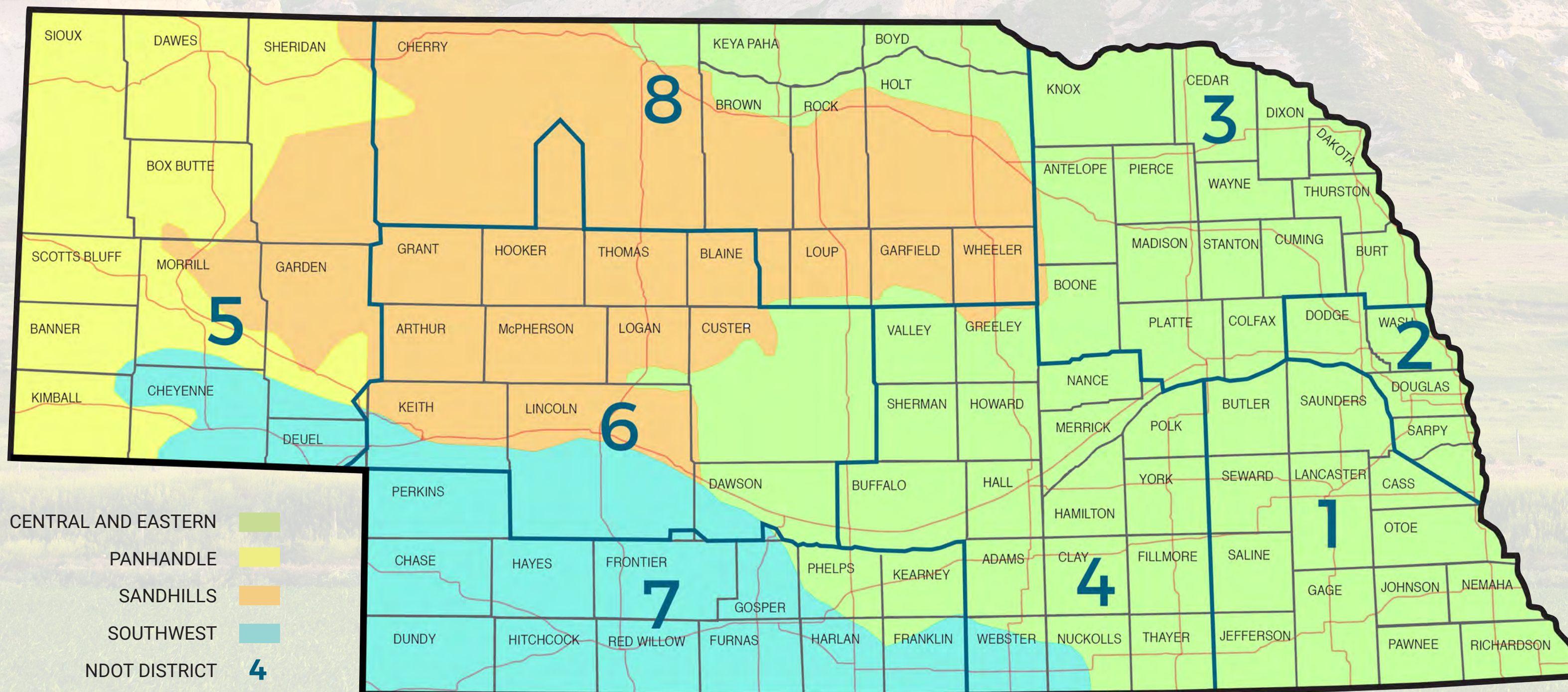


SCENIC BYWAY QR CODE



NDOT POLLINATOR QR CODE

Nebraska Department of Transportation Seeding Regions



Native Species Used Statewide

- Grasses**
- Big bluestem
 - Sideoats grama
 - Bouteloua gracilis
 - Buffalograss
 - Sand lovegrass
 - Canada wildrye
 - Western wheatgrass
 - Switchgrass
 - Little bluestem
 - Indiangrass
 - Andropogon gerardii*
 - Bouteloua curtipendula*
 - Blue grama*
 - Buchloe dactyloides*
 - Eragrostis trichodes*
 - Elymus canadensis*
 - Pascopyrum smithii*
 - Panicum virgatum*
 - Schizachyrium scoparium*
 - Sorghastrum nutans*

Flowers

- Plains coreopsis
- Purple coneflowers / black Samson
- Maximilian sunflower
- Blazing star
- Blue flax
- Shell-leaf penstemon
- Upright prairie coneflower
- Mexican red hat
- Black-eyed Susan

Legumes

- Leadplant
- Purple prairie clover

- Coreopsis tinctoria*
- Echinacea species*
- Helianthus maximiliani*
- Liatris species*
- Linum lewisii*
- Penstemon grandiflorus*
- Ratibida columnifera*
- Ratibida columnifera, red*
- Rudbeckia hirta*

- Amorpha canescens*
- Dalea purpurea*

Southwest Grasses

- Prairie sandreed
- Thickspike wheatgrass
- Calamovilfa longifolia*
- Elymus lanceolatus*

Flowers

- Common milkweed
- Butterfly milkweed
- Smooth blue aster
- Indian blanket
- Asclepias syriaca*
- Asclepias tuberosa*
- Aster laevis*
- Gaillardia pulchella*

Panhandle Grasses

- Thickspike wheatgrass
- Green needlegrass
- Prairie sandreed
- Sand dropseed
- Elymus lanceolatus*
- Nassella viridula*
- Calamovilfa longifolia*
- Sporobolus cryptandrus*

Flowers

- Common milkweed
- Butterfly milkweed
- Smooth blue aster
- Indian blanket
- Asclepias syriaca*
- Asclepias tuberosa*
- Aster laevis*
- Gaillardia pulchella*

Sandhills Grasses

- Green needlegrass
- Prairie cordgrass
- Nassella viridula*
- Spartina pectinata*

Flowers

- Stiff goldenrod
- Common milkweed
- Solidago rigida*
- Asclepias syriaci*

Legumes

- Roundhead lespedeza
- Lespedeza capitata*

Central and Eastern Grasses

- Prairie cordgrass
- Spartina pectinata*

Flowers

- Common milkweed
- Butterfly milkweed
- Smooth blue aster
- Illinois bundleflower
- Indian blanket
- Asclepias syriaca*
- Asclepias tuberosa*
- Aster laevis*
- Desmanthus illinoensis*
- Gaillardia pulchella*

FLOWERS



Black-eyed Susan



Blazing Star



Blue Flax



Compass Plant



Butterfly Milkweed



Common Milkweed



Common Evening Primrose



Goldenrod (State Flower)



Golden Glow



Grayhead Coneflower



Hoary Vervain



Indian Blanket Flower



Maximilian Sunflower



Mexican Red Hat



New England Aster



Pale Purple Coneflower



Azure Blue Sage



Plains Coreopsis



Plains Sunflower



Prairie Wild Rose



Prickly Poppy



Rocky Mt. Bee Plant



Shell Leaf Penstemon



Showy Milkweed



Smartweed



Smooth Blue Aster



Snow on the Mountain



Spiderwort



St John's Wort



Upright Coneflower

NON-NATIVE



Bird's Foot Trefoil



Chicory



Crown Vetch



Dame's Rocket



Hairy Vetch



Intermediate Wheatgrass



Ox-eye Daisy

Nebraska Roadside Plant Identification

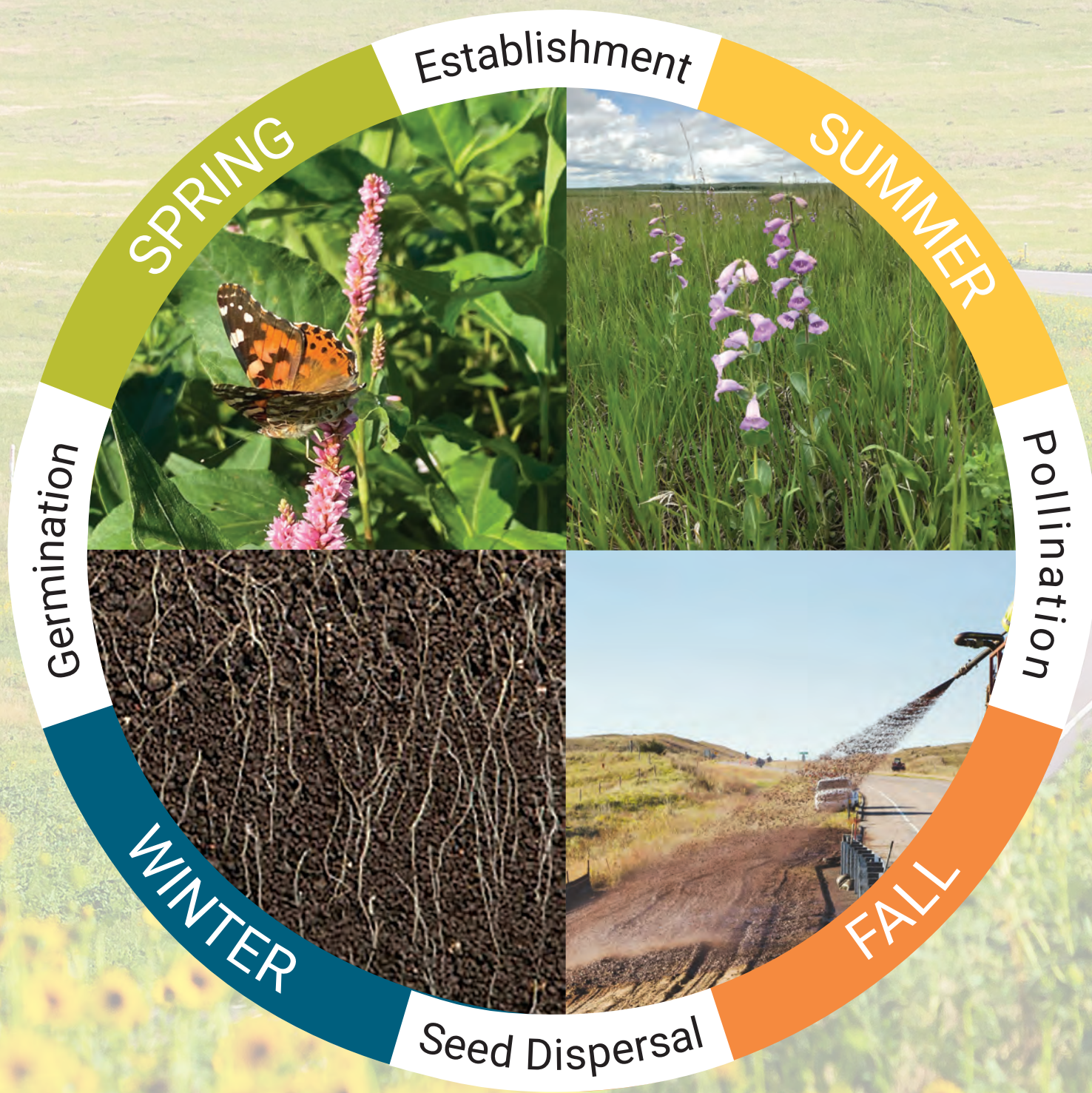
75%

of leading food crops
depend on pollinators

NDOT manages

10,000

miles of highways



NDOT maintains approximately

175,000 Acres

of Right of Way

NDOT seeds approximately

1,800 Acres

a year

GRASSES



Big Bluestem



Blue Grama



Buffalograss



Canada Wildrye



Green Needlegrass



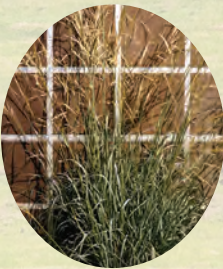
Indiangrass



Little Bluestem
(State Grass)



Prairie Junegrass



Prairie Sandreed



Sand Dropseed



Sideoats Grama



Slender Wheatgrass



Switchgrass



Thickspike
Wheatgrass



Virginia Wildrye



Western Wheatgrass

LEGUMES



Illinois Bundleflower



Leadplant



Partridge Pea



Purple Prairie Clover



Roundhead
Lespedeza



White Prairie Clover