

Salt-Tolerant Natives









Why Care About Salt?

Sometimes in winter, it is hard to remember the plants that fill landscape spaces in the summer. But what is done in the winter can impact those summer blooms. First, growers should make sure to use the proper amount of deicer in the winter. Twelve ounces, or the amount held in a standard coffee mug, is enough to treat 10 sidewalk squares or a 20-foot driveway. After the ice melts, sweep up any excess and dispose of it. Otherwise, the salt ends up in rivers, streams, and soils. Excess salt in soils can lead to the burning up or death of plants, and it cannot be removed.

Planning Ahead
















Keep salt in mind when planting along driveways, sidewalks, and roadsides. Planting salt-tolerant species can help ensure landscaping thrives after harsh winters and repeated road salt applications. Planting native species will provide food and habitat for pollinators year-round.

Plant List Key

-  **Wet location:** Swampy or stays wet after rain for several days.
-  **Medium location:** Mesic soils or stay damp for a bit, then dry out.
-  **Dry location:** Sandy soil or stays dry most of the time.
-  **Full Sun**
-  **Partial Sun**
-  **Full Shade**

Plant Name	Height	Plant Needs
Scientific Name		

Shorter Plant Recommendations*

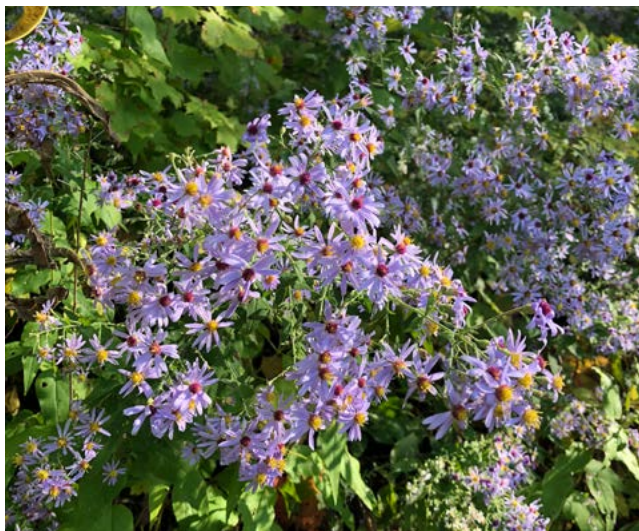
Black-eyed Susan <i>Rudbeckia hirta</i>	2'	
Blue Flag Iris <i>Iris versicolor</i>	2'	
Butterfly Weed <i>Asclepias tuberosa</i>	2'	
Cream Wild Indigo <i>Baptisia bracteata</i>	2'	
Eastern Prickly Pear <i>Opuntia humifusa</i>	6"	
Hoary Vervain <i>Verbena stricta</i>	2'	
Lanceleaf Coreopsis <i>Coreopsis lanceolata</i>	1-2'	
Nodding Wild Onion <i>Allium cernuum</i>	1-2'	
Partridge Pea <i>Chamaecrista fasciculata</i>	2'	
Penn Sedge <i>Carex pensylvanica</i>	8"	
Prairie Dropseed <i>Sporobolus heterolepis</i>	2'	
Purple Lovegrass <i>Eragrostis spectabilis</i>	2'	
Purple Prairie Clover <i>Dalea purpurea</i>	2'	
Sideoats Grama <i>Bouteloua curtipendula</i>	2'	
Wild Columbine <i>Aquilegia canadensis</i>	1-2'	

*Plants included in these lists have moderate to high tolerance to salt.

Mid-Size Native Plant Recommendations *

Dwarf Blue Indigo <i>Baptisia australis</i> var. <i>minor</i>	3'	
Foxglove Beardtongue <i>Penstemon digitalis</i>	4'	
Leadplant <i>Amorpha canescens</i>	3'	
Little Bluestem <i>Schizachyrium scoparium</i>	3'	
Rough Blazing Star <i>Liatris aspera</i>	3'	
Sky Blue Aster <i>Symphotrichum oolentangiense</i>	4'	
Stiff Goldenrod <i>Oligoneuron rigidum</i>	4'	
Swamp Milkweed <i>Asclepias incarnata</i>	4'	
Purple Coneflower <i>Echinacea purpurea</i>	4'	

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Native asters are often salt-tolerant, including both the smooth blue and sky-blue varieties. Photo by Jamie Viebach, Illinois Extension.

Tall Native Plant Recommendations*

Downy Serviceberry <i>Amelanchier arborea</i>	25'	
Elderberry <i>Sambucus canadensis</i>	10'	
False Indigo <i>Amorpha fruticosa</i>	12'	
Fragrant Sumac <i>Rhus aromatica</i>	6'	
Shadblow Serviceberry <i>Amelanchier canadensis</i>	20'	
Showy Goldenrod <i>Solidago speciosa</i>	5'	
Shrubby St. John's Wort <i>Hypericum prolificum</i>	5'	
Smooth Blue Aster <i>Symphotrichum laeve</i>	5'	
Yellow Coneflower <i>Ratibida pinnata</i>	5'	

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Sources

“The Gardener’s Guide to Prairie Plants,” by Neil Diboll and Hilary Cox, Prairie Moon Nursery

Viebach, J. (2025). *Easy-Care Native Plants*. University of Illinois Extension. go.illinois.edu/ECnativeplants

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For more info on native plants:

go.illinois.edu/NativePlantInfo

