Wild columbine (Aquilegia canadensis)

Prairie sundrops (Oenothera pilosa)

Wild indigo (Baptisia spp.)

Anise hyssop (Agastache foeniculum)

Butterfly weed (Asclepias tuberosa)

Prairie blazing star (Liatris pycnostachya)

Purple coneflower (Echinacea purpurea)

Cardinal flower (Lobelia cardinalis)

Bonset (Eupatorium perfoliatum)

Downy sunflower (Helianthus mollis)
Aquilegia canadensis (Wild columbine)
Characteristics: only native species in Illinois; 1-3' tall; blooms late spring to early summer with red and yellow blossoms that have pronounced nectar spurs.
Garden conditions: prefers shade to partial shade; woodland species; loses appearance after flowering.
Pollinator Associations: Butterflies, moths, bumblebees and the ruby-throated hummingbird visit the flowers for nectar; bumblebees may also collect pollen for their larvae. Photo by John Hilty.

Oenothera pilosella (Prairie sundrops)
Characteristics: prairie flowers blooms in late spring and early summer; has large yellow petals with show floral parts on fuzzy stems.
Garden Conditions: full sun; moist conditions; likes organic rich soils; appearance diminishes after flowering and can have aggressive qualities.
Pollinator Associations: pollinated primarily by long-tongued bees (Little Carpenter bees and large Leaf-Cutting bees), butterflies, skippers and moths. Photo by John Hilty.

Baptisia spp. (Wild indigo)
Characteristics: around 20 native species: blooms from March to June; Produce flower spikes of blue and white; forms green pods that turn black and split open.
Garden Conditions: full sun; drought tolerant; long lived; Slow to establish and unable to compete against aggressive plants
Pollinator Associations: Blue wild indigo attracts queen bumblebees and white attracts worker bumblebees for nectar. Photo by Kelly Allsup.

Agastache foeniculum (Anise hyssop)
Characteristics: produces blue-violet spike flowers mid to late summer
Garden Conditions: full sun to partial Sun; long floral display; adaptable.
Pollinator Associations: flowers are cross-pollinated primarily by honeybees, bumblebees, digger bee, leaf-cutting bees, Halictid bees (sweat bees) and Hylaeus spp. (Masked bees). Other occasional floral visitors are Syrphid flies, bee flies, and various butterflies, skippers, and moths. Photo by Kelly Allsup.

Asclepias tuberosa (Butterfly weed)
Characteristics: blooms early to mid summer and again in late summer to early fall; large umbel shaped flowers with orange petals; turns to large green pods that darken as they mature; stems have milky sap
Garden Conditions: Full sun; drought tolerant; taproot makes it difficult to transplant; susceptible to frost heaving and slow to establish
Pollinator Associations: The flower nectar attracts honeybees, digger bees, leaf-cutting bees, Halictid bees (Green Metallic bees), Ammophila spp. (thread-waisted wasps) and other Sphecid wasps, and butterflies, including Fritillaries, Swallowtails and the Monarch and the ruby-throated hummingbird. Photo by Kelly Allsup.

Echinacea purpurea (Purple coneflower)
Characteristics: E. pallida (Pale coneflower) blooms earlier than purpurea. Purple coneflower blooms June to August; producing daisy-like flowers that range in color from purple and pinks, seed heads turn dark and remain on the plant and will attract birds
Garden Conditions: Full sun; drought tolerant; prefers well-drained soil, drought tolerant once established.

Liatris pycnostachya (Prairie blazingstar)
Characteristics: blooms mid to late summer; large erect pink to purple spikes; achenes that look like brown tufts disperse in the wind.
Garden Conditions: full sun; young plants do not tolerate drought.
Pollinator Associations: Halictine bees, bee flies, and day-flying moths. long-tongued bees such visitors as honeybees, bumblebees, Little carpenter bees, miner bees, and large leaf-cutting bees. Butterfly visitors include Monarchs, swallowtails, painted Ladies, Sulfurs and Whites. Photo by John Hilty.

Eupatorium perfoliatum (Bonset)
Characteristics: 2-4’ plant blooms late summer to early fall; large spreading flower head with clusters of white disk florets; flowers turn into achenes and dispersed by wind.
Garden Characteristics: Full sun to part sun; moist conditions; can withstand some flooding
Pollinator Associations: The nectar or pollen of the flowers attracts bees, flies, wasps, butterflies, and beetles. Photo by John Hilty.

Helianthus mollis (Downy sunflower)
Characteristics: 2-4’ tall; blooms in Late summer to early fall with Composite flower bright yellow on fuzzy gray foliage. Garden Conditions: full sun; dry conditions; forms dense colonies
Growing conditions: allelopathic so may not allow other plants to grow.
Pollinator Associations: Primarily bees visit the flowers for nectar or pollen, including bumblebees, Miner bees, large Leaf-Cutting bees, Cuckoo bees, Green Metallic bees, and other Halictid bees. Bee flies and butterflies. Photo by John Hilty.

Lobelia cardinalis (Cardinal flower)
Characteristics: grows 2-4’; blooms late summer to early fall with showy red spike like racemes that procures small seeds dispersed by wind.
Garden Conditions: light shade to full sun; moist conditions; difficult to transplant because of taproot and can be short-lived.
Pollinator Associations: The nectar of the flowers attracts the ruby throated Hummingbird and various Swallowtail butterflies. Sometimes the larger bumblebees will steal nectar through slits in the tubular corolla. Photo by Doug Tallamy.