

Self-Seeding Perennials

Botanical Name	Common Name	Height	Comments, Hardiness Zone
<i>Aquilegia</i> spp.*	columbine	1-4'	Moist, well-drained soils; light shade; attracts hummingbirds; Zone 3-10.
<i>Acanthus mollis</i>	bear's-breech	2-4'	Well-drained soil; sun to light shade; Zone 4-10.
<i>Aconitum napellus</i>	monkshood	2-8'	Moist, light woodland; showy tall flower spikes; Zone 3-8.
<i>Allium schoenoprasum</i>	chives	12-24"	Sun, light shade; tolerates most soils; Zone 3-8.
<i>Allium tuberosum</i>	garlic chives	18-24"	Sun; well-drained soil; tough and easy to grow; Zone 4-8.
<i>Asclepias incarnata</i> *	swamp milkweed	3-4'	Wet and moist soil preferred; showy flowers; attractive seed pods; Zone 3-8.
<i>Asclepias tuberosa</i> *	butterfly weed	1-2"	Well-drained sandy soil; drought resistant; sun; common wildflower; Zone 4-10
<i>Baptisia australis</i> *	blue false indigo	3-5"	Most any soil; sun or light shade; long taproots; dislikes transplanting; Zone 3-10
<i>Brunnera macrophylla</i>	Siberian forget-me-not	12-24"	Sun or medium shade; dependable; Zone 3-8.
<i>Callirhoe involucrata</i>	purple poppy mallow	6-12"	Likes crevices, rocks, dry banks, well-drained soil; sun; Zone 4-10.
<i>Campanula</i> spp.	bellflower	2-4'	Sun or partial shade; some are invasive; Zone 4-10.
<i>Centaurea montana</i>	perennial bachelor's button	18-30"	Sun; good drainage; silver-grey foliage; large flowers; Zone 3-8.
<i>Chasmanthium latifolium</i> *	northern sea oats	2-5'	Sun or light shade; attractive flowers; Zone 4-9.
<i>Dianthus barbatus</i>	sweet William	6"-2'	Sun or light shade; biennial that re-seeds to be like a perennial; Zone 3-7.
<i>Echinacea purpurea</i> *	purple coneflower	2-4'	Sun or light shade; non-soggy soil; drought resistant; attracts birds, butterflies; Zone 3-10.
<i>Heliopsis helianthoides</i> *	oxeye	3-5'	Sun or light shade; all soils; easy and tough; attracts aphids; Zone 2-8.
<i>Liatriis</i> spp.*	gayfeather, blazing star	2-5'	Sun; good drainage; butterfly favorite; Zone 3-9.
<i>Scilla siberica</i>	Siberian squill	6"	Sun or light shade; blue carpet in spring; Zone 3-7.
<i>Silphium perfoliatum</i> *	cupplant	4-8'	Sun; tolerates most soils; Zone 2-7.
<i>Verbena bonariensis</i>	verbena	2-4'	Sun; well-drained soil; self-seeds to be like a perennial in MN; can be a nuisance; Zone 6-9.
<i>Viola</i> spp.*	violet	3-8"	Sun or light shade; easy; long flowering; Zone 3-8.

*Native to MN or U.S.

Self-seeding can be a desirable way to increase garden perennials, or it can be a nuisance and a means of spreading invasive plants. Many seedlings revert to less desirable forms. Pay attention to avoid exotic plants self-seeding into native areas.



Sweet William is a fragrant old-fashioned biennial that produces abundant seed, left undisturbed it can grow like a perennial.



Northern sea oats or river oats are native to moist shady sites in the U.S. and will usually self-sow.

Compiled by Norrie MacIlraith, Olmsted County Master Gardener. Norrie has been a Master Gardener for 23 years. Olmsted County Master Gardeners work on community projects including Community Ed, Olmsted County History Center, buckthorn removal, historic garden restoration, and school programs.