Perennials for the Mountains
An abbreviated list by Karen Vail
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Achillea spp.
- Best in hot, dry areas, full sun
- Most will spread
- ‘Moonshine Yarrow’ is a clump former with silver leaves
- Foliage is aromatic

Achillea lanulosa. Native yarrow
- Use to cover areas where nothing else seems to grow.
- Foliage is aromatic

Anaphalis margaritaceae. Pearly everlasting
- Native
- Hot, dry, full sun, very high elevations
- Blooms can be cut when in bud and dried for long lasting bloom

Aquilegia caerulea. Colorado columbine
- Head in sun, feet in shade
- Native

Aquilegia chrysantha. Golden columbine
- Native
- Part shade to full sun
- Head in sun, feet in shade
- Very long blooming and pollinator magnet

Aquilegia x. Columbine hybrids
- Columbine are very promiscuous, so if you want to keep your native blue or golden columbine pure, grow them well away from these hybrids or the seedling will be mixed

Artemisia frigida Fringed sage, A. ludoviciana White sage
- Natives
- Both require dry, infertile soils or they get very leggy
- Highly aromatic
- A. ludoviciana covers a lot of area

Baptisia australis. False indigo
- Best in full sun and dry conditions
- Extensive taproot, so plant where you want it and do not disturb
- Excellent for soil enrichment
- Excellent pollinator plant
- Interesting seeds pods

Brunner macrophylla Bugloss
- Shade to part shade
- Can take some drought, but best in moister soils
- Early season flowers
- Huge variety of leaf color and veination

Campanula glomerata. Clustered bellflower
- Can be a bully in the garden, taking over all other plants
- Long bloom time

Campanula rotundifolia. Harebells
• Native
• Long bloom time
• Let go to seed to ensure season to season return
• Beautiful filler color

*Delphinium* spp. *Delphinium*
• Full sun to keep the stems stronger and produce better blooms
• Place near fence or house for support

*Dianthus* spp. *Dianthus*
• Full sun for best blooms
• Huge variety of colors and forms
• Some should be treated as biennials, short-lived perennials

*Dicentra spectabilis*  *Bleeding heart, D. formosa* Fern-leaf bleeding heart
• Shade lovers
• Do best with a little more moisture

*Eriogonum umbellatum*. Sulphur flower
• Native
• Hottest and driest, with full sun
• Excellent for slope stabilization
• Native bees love

*Gaillardia aristata* Native blanketflower, *Gaillardia* spp.
• Native is best for pollinators
• Can introduce native through seed
• Hybrids provide wide variety of color
• All take hottest, driest, full sun areas. Do not seem to like rich soil, rather gravel driveways

*Geranium viscosissimum*  *Sticky geranium, Geranium caespitosum* Rocky Mountain geranium
• Natives are very hardy, taking hot, dry conditions best.
• Excellent for native pollinators
• Long established plants, and long bloom times

*Geranium* spp.  *Hardy Geraniums*
• Can take a variety of conditions but seem to be less tolerant of harsh conditions than native.
• Full sun to partial shade
• Wide variety of colors, leaf shapes and forms
• Long bloom times

*Geum (Erythrocoma) triflorum*. Prairie smoke
• Native
• Can take some shade
• Will form nice patches over time
• Beautiful seedheads

*Heuchera* spp. Coral bells
• Huge variety of leaf colors, shapes and forms
• Hardiness varies
• Plants closer to native species seem to be harder
• Most need some shade, although those closer to native species can take more sun
• Red-flowered plants are excellent for pollinators

*Echinops ritro*. Globe thistle
• Thrives in rocky, nasty soils, do not plant in rich soils
• Taprooted, so place where you want it as it will not transplant well
**Erigeron speciosus. Showy daisy**
- Native
- Can take some shade
- Drought tolerant, will flop in wetter gardens
- Excellent pollinator plant
- Long blooming

**Iberis sempervirens. Candytuft**
- Early blooming
- Needs some moisture
- Reseeds readily

**Linum lewisii. Blue flax**
- Native
- Takes hottest, driest, loves gravel driveways
- Best introduced through seed, and let it seed year to year
- Beautiful long blooming filler

**Lychnis chalcedonia  Maltese cross**
- Best grown in full sun and drier soils to prevent flopping
- Attractive to butterflies

**Monarda fistulosa. Native bee balm**
- Native
- Pollinator heaven
- Highly scented foliage and flowers
- Best in drier soils, full sun to part shade

**Nepeta spp. Catmint**
- Tough, tough. Tough
- Full sun and drier soils will prevent flop
- Pollinators love this!
- Cut back after first bloom to 6” for second bloom cycle
- Aromatic foliage (that your cat might like!)
- Several forms and flower colors now available

**Oxytropis lambertii. Lambert’s locoweed**
- Native
- Found in shale and other nasty soils
- Can introduce through seed
- Excellent native pollinator

**Papaver nudicale. Icelandic poppy**
- Prefers a little moister soil
- Can take some shade
- Introduce through seeds or plants
- Considered a biennial or short-lived perennial, so let it seed

**Papaver orientale. Oriental poppy**
- Wide variety of colors and forms
- Best in full sun, drier areas for best bloom and less leginess

**Penstemon pinifolius. Pine leaf penstemon**
- Long bloom time
- Excellent pollinator plant, especially hummingbirds
- Grow dry for better blooms
• Can take some shade
• Reseeds readily
• Woody subshrub

*Penstemon barbatus.* Firecracker penstemon
• Native
• Grow in dry, well-draining soils
• Excellent pollinator plant, especially hummingbirds

*Penstemon virens.* Blue mist penstemon
• Native
• Needs well-drained soil and full sun
• Great for pollinators, especially hummingbirds

*Penstemon strictus.* Rocky Mountain penstemon
• Native
• Can take a little more moisture and shade than other penstemons
• Forms nice groupings
• Reseeds readily

*Pulsatilla patens,* and *Pulsatilla* spp. Pasque flowers
• Native, *P patens,* is super hardy
• Hot, dry areas
• Will come up right through the snow
• Other species and hybrids vary in color, hardiness, form

*Ratibidia columnifera.* Prairie coneflower
• Native
• Dry, full sun areas are best, although will take a little dry shade
• Can introduce through seed.
• Plant en-masse as plants are skinny
• Excellent pollinator plant
• Reseeds readily

*Rudbeckia hirta.* Black-eyed Susan
• Native
• Considered a biennial or short-lived perennial
• Reseeds readily
• Best in dry, full sun areas

*Salvia nemerosa.* Salvia
• Wide variety of colors and forms
• Prefers well-drained soils, but flowers best with some extra water
• Deadhead for prolonged bloom time
• Foliage is fragrant
• Excellent pollinator plants

*Thermopsis divaricarpa.* Golden banner
• Is a bully plant, so give this plenty of room
• Best in dry soil with full sun to slow down its growth
• Excellent for soil enrichment
• Excellent pollinator plant

**Bulbs**

Daffodils
• Most animals leave the bulbs alone, the tops might get eaten
Grape hyacinth
- Naturalizes easily
- Might get eaten

Winter aconite
- Blooms through the snow
- Naturalizes

Crocus
- Early blooming
- *Crocus tommasinianus* is the most deer resistant

Vines
Clematis
- Huge variety and hardiness
- Opt for native species if looking for better pollinator plants
- Head in sun, feet in shade

Dropmore Scarlet honeysuckle
- Woody and long-lived vine
- Hummingbirds love

Ground covers and rock garden plants
*Acantholimon* spp. Prickly dianthus
- Best in gravelly soil, full sun
- Reseeds readily

*Antennaria* spp. Pussytoes
- Best in full sun and dry soils
- Mat forming
- Great for walkways
- Reseeds readily

*Cerastium tomentosum*. Snow-in-summer
- Best in dry, poor soils and full sun
- Spreads by runners and seeds
- Shear off spent blooms to prevent reseeding

*Campanula* spp. Harebell
- A huge variety for rock garden and ground cover harebells, many more difficult to grow

*Gypsophila repens*. Baby’s breath
- Best in dry, full sun
- Fluffy filler plant in pink and white

*Lamium maculatum*. Deadnettle
- A bully plant for part to full shade
- Beautiful variety of leaves
- Prefers some moisture, could scorch when in drought conditions
- Shear back to prevent legginess

*Marrubium rotundifolium*. Horehound
- Best in full sun, dry, poor soils
- Excellent along the edges of pathways
- Shear off flowers for prettier silver foliage
- Shear flowers for prettier silver foliage

*Phlox* spp.
- Huge variety of colors, most are mat forming
- Native varieties can take poorer soils, heat and sun better
**Persicaria affinis. Himalayan Jewelweed**
- A bully plant for moist areas. Make sure you give it plenty of room!
- Covers thoroughly and inhibits weed growth

**Saponaria spp. Soapwort**
- A spring blooming (*S. ocymoides*) and fall blooming (*S. x lempergii* ‘Max Frei’) provide excellent color
- Max Frei is a hawk moth magnet
- Max Frei requires dry conditions, *S. ocymoides* enjoys dry but can take a richer soil
- Both need full sun

**Sedum spp. Stonecrop**
- Incredible diversity in form, color, blooms
- All tend to be drought tolerant
- Some can take a little shade

**Sempervivum spp. Hen and chicks**
- Amazing diversity in form, color
- Great stuffed along cracks of rock walls
- Best in full sun to keep color and form

**Thymus spp. Thyme**
- Most are used as drought tolerant ground covers/lawn substitutes
- Very fragrant foliage
- Some can tolerate a little shade
- Excellent pollinator plants

**Veronica spp.**
- A huge variety of ground cover and upright plants
- Many are drought tolerant. Some require more moisture
- Most need full sun for best flower production