

# PLANTS WITH STYLE

KELLY D. NORRIS

## ENVIRONMENT

Gardening in harmony with the environment is the new vernacular. Recognizing that gardens aren't isolated from the world around them and leveraging that to your advantage is sure to result in a more satisfactory gardening experience. The best gardens are created when we embrace sense of place and celebrate ecology.

1. Indiangrass dominating a tallgrass prairie remnant near Bedford, IA.
2. *Sorghastrum nutans* (indiangrass)
3. *Andropogon gerardii* 'Dancing Wind (Dancing Wind big bluestem)
4. At dusk, *Sporobolus heterolepis* (prairie dropseed) looks its prime.
5. Lauridsen Savanna, Greater Des Moines Botanical Garden; Des Moines, IA
6. *Eragrostis trichodes* (sand lovegrass)
7. A vignette in Kelly's gravel garden at the farm; Bedford, IA
8. Meadow in Black Hills National Forest northwest of Hill City, SD
9. *Astragalus laxmannii* var. *robustior* (Laxmann's milkvetch)
10. Shortgrass meadow at 7,100 feet in the Black Hills, SD.
11. That wow moment in a meadow of tens of thousands of *Geum triflorum* (prairie smoke) in the Black Hills, SD.

## STRUCTURE

The modern garden deserves a durable skeleton: strong, living structure, walls and floors on which to hang and paint. Structural plants come to define spaces around them—the negative space—in ways beyond aesthetics. They have a way of uniting the landscape; they are leaders on a botanical scale.

1. *Acer palmatum* (Japanese maple) in Dan Heims' garden in Portland, OR.
2. *Nyssa sylvatica* 'Zydeco Twist' (twisted black gum)
3. *Nyssa sylvatica* 'David Odom' (Afterburner™ black gum)
4. Birch allée at Stan Hywet Hall, Akron, OH.
5. Bark swatch
6. *Acer griseum* (paperbark maple)
7. *Viburnum molle* (Kentucky viburnum) with sun kissed, exfoliating bark.

8. *Viburnum farreri* (Farrer's viburnum)
9. *Viburnum carlesii* 'JN Select' (Spiced Bouquet™ viburnum)
10. *Calycanthus* 'Hartlage Wine'
11. *Calycanthus* 'Venus'
12. *Diervilla* 'G2X88544' (Kodiak® Orange bush honeysuckle)
13. *Hypericum kalmianum* 'PIIHYP-I' (First Editions™ Cobalt-n-Gold hypericum)
14. *Clematis pitcheri* (bluebill) epitomizes noddy flowers.
15. *Clematis* 'Sophie' (Sophie viorna-hybrid clematis)
16. *Clematis virginiana* (devil's darning needles)
17. xMangave 'Pineapple Express'
18. xMangave 'Lavender Lady'
19. xMangave display at Greater Des Moines Botanical Garden, summer 2018
20. Garden path to the damp garden at Hatley Park, Victoria, B.C.
21. *Primula japonica* (Japanese primrose)

## EMBLEMS

Each season has its emblem plants, timepiece essentials that bring gardeners joy. Emblems are often familiar things and define our expectations for each passing season; without them, the garden might smear into a blur. Planting emblematic plants celebrates diversity in the season in which it shines.

1. Thousands of *Eranthis hyemalis* (winter aconite) at Fernwood, Nilles, MI.
2. *Trillium nivale* (snow trillium)
3. *Sanguinaria canadensis* 'Multiplex' (double bloodroot)
4. *Galanthus nivalis* 'Flore Pleno' (double snowdrop)
5. *Dirca palustris* (eastern leatherwood)
6. *Iris bucharica* (cornleaf iris)
7. *Iris spuria* ssp. *halophila* 'Prairie Lights'
8. *Gladiolus* 'Atom'
9. *Gomphrena* 'Fireworks' (Fireworks globe amaranth) and *Melinis nerviglumis* 'Savannah' (Savannah ruby grass)
10. *Gomphrena* 'Cosmic Flare' (Cosmic Flare globe amaranth)
11. *Salvia involucrata* (rosebud sage) and *Verbena bonariensis* 'Lollipop' (Lollipop purpletop)

12. *Salvia involucrata*, *Verbena bonariensis* ‘Lollipop’ and *S. elegans* ‘Golden Delicious’ (Golden Delicious pineapple sage)
13. *Solidago drummondii* (cliff goldenrod)
14. *Chrysanthemum* ‘Sheffield’s Pink’ with *Perovskia atriplicifolia* (Russian sage) and *Leonotis leonurus* (lion’s tail)
15. *Chrysanthemum* ‘Will’s Wonderful’
16. *Symphotrichum cordifolium* ‘Snowstorm’ (Snowstorm heartleaf aster)
17. *Symphotrichum* ‘Lalla’ (Lalla hybrid aster)
18. *Cotinus obovatus* (American smoketree)
19. *Rudbeckia subtomentosa* ‘Henry Eilers’ (Henry Eilers sweet coneflower) in winter.

## VIGNETTES

Finally, with ideas and stylistic training in hand, a gardener can begin to make signature vignettes or quintessential pairings that seem to crop up over and over to bring a sense of unity and harmony to the garden. In this chapter, four ideas for vignettes are brought together with a dramatic palette of plants.

1. A vignette in Kelly’s gravel garden with *Crambe maritima* (sea kale), *Eryngium* ‘Blaukappe’ (Blue Cap eryngo) and *Sporobolus heterolepis* (prairie dropseed).
2. One of the most fabulous vignettes on the planet (Northwest Garden Nursery in Eugene, OR.)
3. Evening light illuminates *Veronicastrum virginicum* ‘Fascination’ (Fascination Culver’s root) at Greater Des Moines Botanical Garden, Des Moines, IA.
4. *Salvia leucantha* ‘Cislano’ (Cislano Mexican bush sage) creating a timely contrast with *Clematis tangutica* ‘Helios’ (Helios old man’s beard)
5. A vignette full of visual suspense at Greater Des Moines Botanical Garden, Des Moines, IA.
6. Light shine moment at Terra Nova Nurseries’ display garden in Canby, OR.
7. *Monarda bradburiana* (eastern horsemint) in seed and in flower
8. *Monarda* ‘Mojo’ (Mojo hybrid bergamot)
9. Fine threads—*Artemisia ludoviciana* (Louisiana sage) and *Monarda fistulosa* (bee balm) mingling in an Iowa prairie.
10. *Aralia cordata* ‘Sun King’ (Sun King aralia)

11. *Symphytum* x *uplandicum* 'Axminster Gold' (Axminster Gold golden comfrey) in leaf and flower
12. *Dalea purpurea* (purple prairie clover) rocketing from the prairie weave.
13. *Sanguisorba tenuifolia* 'Purpurea' (Japanese burnet) bobbing in amid *Molinia*
14. *Yucca filamentosa* (hairy Adam's needle) and *Eragrostis spectabilis* (purple lovegrass) in striking combination; Greater Des Moines Botanical Garden.
15. *Eragrostis spectabilis* (purple lovegrass) in Kelly's front yard at Three Oaks; Des Moines, IA.
16. *Echinacea paradoxa* (yellow coneflower) flowers and seedlings
17. *Echinacea paradoxa* hybrid in Kelly's garden