Natives for the Kansas City Region

The following are 10 common species of plants, flowers and trees that grow well in the weather conditions of our region. The plants below are attractive and garden-worthy native plants that are recognized by Powell Gardens as Plants of Merit.

**Blue False Indigo**
* Baptisia australis

- Star-shaped, powdery-blue flowers that bloom in clusters in spring atop gracefully arching branches. Year-round ornamental features include spirea-like flowers with fringe-like, drooping, creamy white petals. Flower petals flutter gracefully in just a hint of breeze. It typically grows as a large shrub or small tree to 12–20 feet tall. Birds delight in the grape-like fruit which matures in late summer. It prefers a moist to wet soil and full sun to partial shade.

**Smooth Hydrangea**
* Hydrangea arborescens

- Clusters of pinkish to white flowers and trees that grow well in the shaded garden areas. Mass or group for best foliage display. Easily grown in borders, open woodland areas and native plant gardens.

**Spicebush**
* Lindera benzoin

- This native is noted for its intense red, yellow and orange-scarlet-purple fall color. Female trees produce dark-blue oval fruits that are quite attractive to birds and wildlife. Performs well in moist low spots.

**Cardinal Flower**
* Lobelia cardinalis

- The fronds are green at Christmas and each individual leaf emerges. Female plants produce bright red berries in autumn. Light green leaves turn yellow in autumn. Leaves are specly aromatic when crushed.

**Fringe Tree**
* Chionanthus virginicus

- Star-shaped, powdery-blue flowers bloom in clusters of pinkish to white flowers in spring, lobed dark green leaves in summer and inflating, orange-red fruits that mature red in autumn. The exfoliating reddish-brown bark, for which this plant is named, is best observed after leaf drop and throughout winter. Good for shrub borders, open woodland areas and naturalized areas.

**Amsonia tabernaemontana**
* Bluestar

- This tough, thicket-forming native deciduous shrub grows 6–12 feet tall with oval, serrate, dark green leaves are attractive throughout the growing season. Best forms in formal garden areas may be achieved by cutting back stems each year to 12 inches in late winter. If cut back, this shrub will grow to 3–5 feet tall in a single season. Perhaps best naturalized in native plant or woodland gardens.

**Ligustrum vulgare**
* Ninebark

- The leaves are spicily aromatic when crushed.

**Hydrangea arborescens**
* Smooth Hydrangea

- Easily grown in average, medium-wet, well-drained soil in full sun. Tolerant of wide range of soil conditions. If grown in part shade, plants tend to be taller and more open, produce fewer flowers and require support. Spreads over time by creeping rhizomes to form dense colonies. Divide every 3–4 years to control invasiveness and maintain vigor.

**Cardinal Flower**
* Lobelia cardinalis

- The unique foliage remains green throughout summer, but changes to gold in fall. Foliage clumps grow to 3 feet tall, with stems cascading as the season progresses. Mass or group for best foliage display. Easily grown in borders, open woodland areas and native plant gardens.

**Helianthus salicifolius**
* Willowleaf Sunflower

- Easily grown in average, medium-wet, soil in full sun. Has a clump-forming habit and is drought tolerant. Has a clump-forming habit and is drought tolerant.

**Penstemon**
* Blue False Indigo

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**Smooth Hydrangea**
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- Flattened clusters of dull white flowers appear in early summer on this native shrub. Prompt removal of spent flower heads may promote a late summer rebbloom. Oval, serrated, dark green leaves are attractive throughout the growing season. Best forms in formal garden areas may be achieved by cutting back stems each year to 12 inches in late winter. If cut back, this shrub will grow to 3–5 feet tall in a single season. Perhaps best naturalized in native plant or woodland gardens.

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