

FRIENDS OF THE CHICAGO RIVER

Plants of the Chicago River Watershed



Boxelder **R**
Acer negundo *50-70 feet tall*
 The boxelder tree is a fast-growing, short-lived tree. Its three leaflets resemble those of poison ivy, but it's a tree of the maple family with a woody trunk – not a vine.
 J.S. Peterson @ USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database



Giant Ragweed **R**
Ambrosia trifida
 This plant has large three-pointed leaves that resemble a bird foot. It is a weedy plant that can tolerate poorer soils. Hay fever is caused by Ragweed, not goldenrod.
 Dan Busemeyer, Illinois Natural History Survey



Eastern Cottonwood **R**
Populus deltoides *75-100 feet tall*
 Cottonwoods are the trees that release the white fuzzy seeds that float all over in the late spring to early summer. The leaves are heart-shaped with coarse rounded teeth.
 Dan Busemeyer, Illinois Natural History Survey



Black Willow **R**
Salix nigra *30-40 feet tall*
 Aspirin was developed from the bark of willows. This tree often grows multiple trunks. It requires consistently moist soil to reach maturity.
 Larry Allain @ USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database



American Elm **R**
Ulmus americana *80-120 feet tall*
 American elms were almost completely obliterated in the United States after the appearance of Dutch elm disease, a fungus that attacks this tree.
 J.S. Peterson @ USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database



American Basswood **R**
Tilia americana *60-80 feet tall*
 The basswood is a very soft wood as it is a fast-grower. The tree is valued for shade and for the flavorful honey that is produced when bees pollinate their flowers.
 Dan Busemeyer, Illinois Natural History Survey



Green Ash **R**
Fraxinus pennsylvanica *60-80 feet tall*
 This species is dioecious (male and female flower parts on different trees) and is very tolerant to siltation. This tree has been used to replace elms in urban forests.
 Dan Busemeyer, Illinois Natural History Survey



Common Ragweed **X-N**
Ambrosia artemisiifolia
 The pollen of this plant causes hay fever. It is typically categorized as a pioneer species and a plant that will quickly grow in disturbed areas with poor soils.
 Dan Busemeyer, Illinois Natural History Survey



Downey Hawthorne **R**
Crataegus mollis *20-40 feet tall*
 It is very difficult to categorize 100 or so species of hawthorne native to North America, with some of them even forming hybrids together.
 Dan Busemeyer, Illinois Natural History Survey



Oxeye Daisy **X-NN**
Heliopsis helianthoides *Yellow flowers*
 Oxeye daisy is the well-known yellow daisy. It is typically found on roadsides and old fields. It tolerates drought, but does better when water is available.
 Dan Busemeyer, Illinois Natural History Survey



Honeylocust **R**
Gleditsia tricanthos *75-80 feet tall*
 The large thorns of the honeylocust were once used as pins. This tree produces seed pods, 6 to 8 inches long, which are flattened, reddish-brown, and leathery.
 John M. Randall, The Nature Conservancy



Dandelion **X-NN**
Taraxacum officinale *Yellow flowers*
 Dandelions produce seeds with "fuzz" on them which kids love to scatter. It is typically found in lawns, roadsides and old fields, and is very difficult to get rid of.
 Dan Busemeyer, Illinois Natural History Survey



Silver Maple **R**
Acer saccharinum *60-80 feet tall*
 Silver maple twigs release an unpleasant odor when crushed. The trunk is usually short, with several subtrunks. Without competition, it can grow to be 100 feet tall.
 Dan Busemeyer, Illinois Natural History Survey



Japanese Barberry **I-NN**
Berberis thunbergii *Yellow flowers*
 This plant is widely used in landscaping because it retains red berries in the winter. It has escaped cultivation to become invasive in many different habitats.
 R.A. Howard @ USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database



Sugar Maple **R**
Acer saccharum *75-100 feet tall*
 The sap of sugar maple is where we get maple syrup once it is harvested and processed. It is a common shade tree in America and is the national tree of Canada.
 Dan Busemeyer, Illinois Natural History Survey



White Sweet Clover **I-NN**
Melilotus alba *White flowers*
 White sweet clover was used as fodder for livestock by early settlers. It has become a nasty invader in prairies, savannas, and woodlands across the state.
 Dan Busemeyer, Illinois Natural History Survey

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I-NN = Invasive Non-Native Species **I-N** = Invasive Native Species **X-NN** = Non-Native Weed **X-N** = Native Weed

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Joe Pye Weed **P/F**
Eupatorium purpureum *Pink flowers*
 The flower of Joe Pye weed has a very pleasant scent resembling vanilla that attracts many butterflies. They give way to seed heads which persist well into winter.
 Dan Busemeyer, Illinois Natural History Survey



American Hazel **S/F**
Corylus americana *15-25 feet tall*
 Hazel is a small shrub, usually found in clumps reaching 15 feet in height. The fruit, or hazelnut, is oval and enclosed in a leathery, leafy cluster called a husk.
 Dan Busemeyer, Illinois Natural History Survey



White Heath Aster **P/F**
Aster ericoides *White flowers*
 White heath aster is also known by such names as farewell-to-summer or goodbye-meadow, because it is a late bloomer, ushering in the fall season.
 Clarence A. Rechenstien @ USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database



Black Oak **S/F**
Quercus velutina *50-70 feet tall*
 Black oak trees can grow in very sandy soils. The inner bark, a deep yellow-orange color, and acorns of this tree both have a bitter taste not preferred by squirrels.
 Dan Busemeyer, Illinois Natural History Survey



Common Boneset **P/F**
Eupatorium perfoliatum *White flowers*
 A bitter, vile-tasting tea can be made from this plant, and was thought to be a cure for broken bones. It does lower fever, and was used to combat typhoid and yellow fever.
 Dan Busemeyer, Illinois Natural History Survey



Bur Oak **S/F**
Quercus macrocarpa *70-80 feet tall*
 Bur oaks have unusual acorns. They have a fuzzy top that looks like shredded wheat. The extremely thick corky bark of this tree allows it to survive prairie fires.
 J.S. Peterson @ USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database



Canada Goldenrod **P/F**
Solidago canadensis *Yellow flowers*
 Canada goldenrod is a very large showy perennial that is wrongly accused for causing hay fever. Prefers part shade to full sun and regular water.
 Dan Busemeyer, Illinois Natural History Survey



White Oak **S/F**
Quercus alba *80-100 feet tall*
 The Ohio and central Mississippi River valleys have optimum conditions for this tree. The white oak is the state tree of Illinois and has sweeter acorns than other oaks.
 J.S. Peterson @ USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database



Nodding Wild Onion **P/F**
Allium cernuum *White/Pale purple flowers*
 Chicago was reportedly named from this plant which has a mild onion fragrance. The blooming season is usually mid-summer. There is no floral scent.
 Thomas G. Barnes @ USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database



Flowering Spurge **S/F**
Euphorbia corollata *White flowers*
 This plant can tolerate dry or moist soil, sandy or loamy soil, and will grow in open sun or shade. Flowers are very small. In the sun, they cover the plant profusely.
 Dan Busemeyer, Illinois Natural History Survey



Prairie Wild Rose **P/F**
Rosa arkansana *Pink flowers*
 Prairie wild rose often appears herbaceous, but is actually a small shrub. Look for it in prairies, sandy tame pastures, roadsides, and at the edges of woods.
 Dan Busemeyer, Illinois Natural History Survey



Bottlebrush Grass **S/F**
Hystrix patula
 This woodland grass produces seedheads that resemble the brushes used to clean bottles. It grows in well-drained soils and is ideal for part-shade conditions under trees.
 Dan Busemeyer, Illinois Natural History Survey



Daisy Fleabane **P/F**
Erigeron strigosus *White flowers*
 Fleabane grows most anywhere and is found in many different habitats. It is popular with many flying insects and makes a decent garden flower.
 Dan Busemeyer, Illinois Natural History Survey



Foxtail Grass **I-NN**
Setaria glauca
 This grass is very common along roadsides and invades prairies, savannas and woodlands. It is a hearty grass and is very resistant to many herbicides.
 Dan Busemeyer, Illinois Natural History Survey



Stiff Goldenrod **P/F**
Solidago rigida *Yellow flowers*
 This plant is also known as rigid goldenrod or prairie goldenrod. Deep roots allow this plant to withstand overgrazing and also help it take hold in newly disturbed land.
 Dan Busemeyer, Illinois Natural History Survey



Orchardgrass **I-NN**
Dactylis glomerata
 Orchardgrass was planted as hay but has escaped throughout much of America. Its flower spike appears as a hand with the fingers together and the thumb sticking out.
 W.L. Wagner @ USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database

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