

Wildflowers

at Homestead National Monument of America



Wildflower Coloring Book

The Homestead Act of 1862 had an immediate effect on America that is still felt today. Under this law, 270 million acres, or 10% of the country, were given away to individuals. This had an impact on American Indians, immigration, agriculture, and the land itself. Homestead National Monument of America commemorates these changes.

The park is located on the Daniel Freeman homestead, one of the first claims filed under the Act. When the National Park Service acquired the land in 1936 it was decided that the farmland could best be managed by restoring it back to its native vegetation, the tallgrass prairie. It is now recognized as the second oldest restored tallgrass prairie in the nation, and resembles what Daniel Freeman saw when he first arrived.

The prairie includes many wildflowers, which are important food and cover for wildlife. They are also enjoyed by people. The park follows the philosophy of U.S. Department of the Interior wildlife biologist Adolph Murie, who explained in 1940, "In restoring the prairie grasslands the ultimate aim is to approach as near the original as possible. How near the original we can come is not known. But it would seem desirable to make an effort early in the program to restore some of the more prominent spring, summer and fall flowers to show a part of Nature which no doubt gave some cheer to the first settlers." Homestead National Monument of America preserves the prairie for all to enjoy.

Coloring: _____
(your name here)

Lineart: *Shannon E. Meyer, SCA*

Butterfly Milkweed

Asclepias tuberosa



Flower Color: Orange

Bloom Date: Late Spring to Summer

Height: 3 ft

Comments: American Indians and settlers used the roots to treat chest colds.

Narrow-Leaved Purple Coneflower

Echinacea angustifolia



Flower Color: Pale Purple

Bloom Date: Late Spring to Midsummer

Height: Less than 3 ft

Comments: The coneflower was valued by both natives and settlers. They used the roots to treat snake bites and as a painkiller.

Gayfeather

Liatris pycnostachya



Flower Color: Purple

Bloom Date: Midsummer to Early Fall

Height: Up to 5 ft

Comments: Many native tribes made tea from the roots to treat bladder and digestive problems.

Ladies' Tresses

Spiranthes cernua



Flower Color: White

Bloom Date: Midsummer to Fall

Height: Less than 8 in

Comments: Ladies' Tresses is a variety of orchid.

Tall Thistle

Cirsium altissimum



Flower Color: Purple

Bloom Date: Midsummer to Early Fall

Height: 4 to 6 ft

Comments: The flowers attract butterflies, and the seeds are a food source for song-birds.

Prairie Wild Rose

Rosa arkansana



Flower Color: Pink or White

Bloom Date: Late Spring to Summer

Height: Less than 2 1/2 ft

Comments: Omahas and Chippewas used rose hips to treat eye inflammation. Cheyennes, Mesquakies, Blackfeet, and Anglo-Americans used various parts of the plant to treat digestive problems.

Sneezeweed

Helenium autumnale



Flower Color: Yellow

Bloom Date: Midsummer to Fall

Height: 1 to 5 ft

Comments: Inhaling the ground flower caused sneezing to clear nasal passages. Comanches soaked the plant in water and bathed in this to reduce fever.

Stiff Sunflower

Helianthus rigidus



Flower Color: Yellow

Bloom Date: Summer to Fall

Height: 1 to 16 ft

Comments: Sunflower seeds are enjoyed by both birds and people.

Further Reading

- Kindscher, Kelly. *Medicinal Wild Plants of the Prairie: an Ethnobotanical Guide*. Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1992.
- Ladd, Doug. *Tallgrass Prairie Wildflowers: A Field Guide*. Guilford, CT: Falcon Publishing, Inc., 1995.
- Smith, J. Robert, and Beatrice S. Smith. *The Prairie Garden: 70 Native Plants You Can Grow in Town or Country*. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1980.
- Stubbendieck, James, et al. *Weeds of Nebraska and the Great Plains, second ed.* Lincoln, NE: Nebraska Department of Agriculture, 1995.

 **Homestead** 
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