



# PLANT I.D. ACTIVITY



This activity is designed to entertain and educate kids (K-6th Grade) about important prairie and wildlife plants. The species listed in this activity are some of the more common prairie plants throughout the pheasant and quail range. You should be encouraged to add plants to this activity if there are additional plants you want to highlight in your local area. This activity is best conducted outside, but could be conducted indoors if weather does not allow outdoor activity.

To conduct this activity, you will need the following materials: answer sheet (included), plant I.D. key (included), individual species fact sheets (included), wood stakes, staples, surveyors tape, clip boards, pencils, and prizes.

Before the actual plant I.D. activity, you will want to set up the plant I.D. course by marking the actual plants you want to identify in the activity with surveyors tape. Next, you will want to place a stake next to the plant you have marked and then staple the individual species fact sheet to the stake. You will want to be sure and place a number in the location provided at the top of the individual species fact sheets that correspond with the answer sheet and the order in which you want your activity to occur.



Before you begin the actual activity, you should take the time to provide the group with some general information on the value of the plants you will trying to I.D. (i.e. their value to pollinating insects and food for pheasant and quail chicks). After you provide some general information on native prairie plants, you will want to divide the kids into small groups (3-4 kids per group) and give each group an answer sheet, plant I.D. key, clip board, and pencil. You can then send the groups out to try and identify the plants you have marked. You will want to plan for about 45 minutes to complete the plant I.D. activity. Feel free to turn this activity into a friendly competition and offer prizes for the groups who get the most correct answers (PF & QF offers many great prizes for you to purchase). Once the groups return, you can use the answer key to evaluate their success and award prizes.



# Plant ID



# Answer Sheet

1. \_\_\_\_\_

12. \_\_\_\_\_

23. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

13. \_\_\_\_\_

24. \_\_\_\_\_

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31. \_\_\_\_\_

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21. \_\_\_\_\_

32. \_\_\_\_\_

11. \_\_\_\_\_

22. \_\_\_\_\_

33. \_\_\_\_\_



# Plant ID KEY



**American Plum**

**Big Bluestem**

**Black-eyed Susan**

**Butterfly Milk Weed**

**Canada Goldenrod**

**Canada Wildrye**

**Compass Plant**

**Cup Plant**

**Foxglove Beardtongue**

**Grey-headed Coneflower**

**Illinois Bundleflower**

**Indiangrass**

**Indian Blanketflower**

**Little Bluestem**

**Leadplant**

**Lemon Mint**

**Maximilian Sunflower**

**Ohio Spiderwort**

**Pale Purple Coneflower**

**Purple Prairie Clover**

**Rattlesnake Master**

**Showy Partridgepea**

**Switchgrass**

**Tall Boneset**

**Upright Coneflower**

**Western Ironweed**

# Plant ID # \_\_\_\_\_



This showy plant is frequently grown from seed in home gardens. Its brilliant orange flowers attract butterflies, and its leaves are



eaten by butterfly larvae. The root of this plant was chewed by the Indians as a cure for pleurisy and other pulmonary ailments.

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## HINT



# Plant ID # \_\_\_\_\_



A native prairie perennial, this sunflower is a desirable range plant, eaten by many livestock. These plants often form large colonies. A heavy crop of seeds is produced, thus it is also a valuable plant for wildlife. It was named for



the naturalist Prince Maximilian of Wied-Neuwied, Germany, who led an expedition into the American West in the 1830s.

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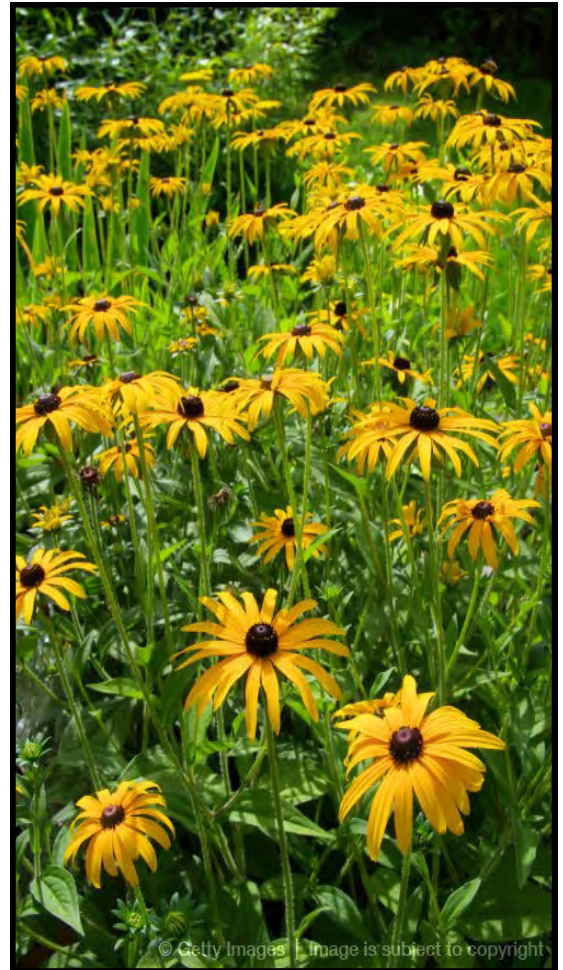
## HINT



# Plant ID # \_\_\_\_\_



This native prairie biennial forms a rosette of leaves the first year, followed by flowers the second year. It is covered with hairs that give it a slightly rough texture. This cheerful, widespread wildflower is considered an annual to a short-lived perennial across its range. Bright-yellow, 2-3 in. wide, daisy-like flowers with dark centers are its claim-to-fame.



## HINT



# Plant ID # \_\_\_\_\_



The hardened sap of this plant can be chewed like gum. This plant is a tall, coarse, sunflower-like perennial, growing 3-12 ft. high. Deeply cut, hairy leaves, up to 2 ft. in length, usually orient themselves north and south to avoid the heat of the noonday sun. Scattered along the top half of the stout, sticky stem are 2-5 in. wide, yellow, radiate flowers. The common name of this plant refers to the plants deeply incised leaves, which tend to be oriented in a north-south direction.



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## HINT



# Plant ID # \_\_\_\_\_



This native perennial plant is about 4-10' tall and remains unbranched, except for the panicle of flowering stems near the apex. The central stem is thick, hairless, and four-sided. The large opposite leaves are up to 8" long and 5" across, which join together around the central stem to form a cup that can hold water. Many species of birds will drink water from this plants leaves.



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## HINT





# Plant ID # \_\_\_\_\_

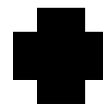


This plant can grow up to 3 feet tall, producing arching, grass-like leaves. Leaves contain a sticky, stretchy sap similar to a spider's web. The plant blooms in early spring, producing short-lived flowers that are typically blue or violet. Flowers have three petals, and open for a single day before fading. The plant is frequently found in the wild, growing in prairies, meadows, wood sides and roadsides. This plant has also been know to be called cow slobber due to its sap.



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## HINT



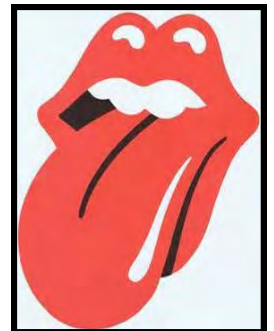
# Plant ID # \_\_\_\_\_



The foliage of this robust perennial can be semi-evergreen in the South. Its erect, 2-5 ft. stems are topped with stalked clusters of white, tubular, unevenly five-lobed flowers which rise in pairs from the upper leaf axils. This plant is frequented by hummingbirds and bumble bees for its pollen.



## HINT



# Plant ID # \_\_\_\_\_

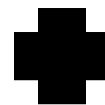


A slender, hairy-stemmed plant, each flower head has its own stalk. Before opening, the small disk flowers are ashy gray; they turn brown as the flowers open. The 5-10 yellow ray flowers droop downward, each about 2-inches long and less than 1/2-inch wide. This plant is a good food source for wildlife and forage for livestock.



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## HINT



# Plant ID # \_\_\_\_\_



This plant is a native, perennial forb that can grow up to 3 feet in height. Pale pink, drooping petal-like ray florets surround the domed, reddish-brown center of disk florets that are rough and prickly to the touch. You can usually find this plant blooming during the summer months. The Indians used this plants' tap root for many medicinal purposes.



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## HINT



Plant Key #9

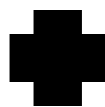
# Plant ID # \_\_\_\_\_



This native perennial plant can grow to 3' tall. The odd-pinnate compound leaves alternate as they ascend the stem. At the top of the plant is a dense cylindrical spike of flowers about 1-2" long and about half as much or less across. Each purple flower is about 1/3" across, with 5 small petals and 5 golden anthers that protrude outward. These flowers bloom together as a flowery wreath at the bottom of the spike, which gradually moves upward as the season progresses.



## HINT



# Plant ID # \_\_\_\_\_



This native perennial plant is 1-3' tall. With age, it becomes increasingly woody, assuming that growth and development are not disrupted by occasional fires or browsing from animals.



The young stems are light green and covered with white hairs. The compound leaves are whitish to greyish green, depending on the intensity of sunlight reaching the plant. Sometimes fine hairs cover the plant to the extent that it appears to be heavily dusted. This plant's flowers range in color from light to dark purple.

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## HINT



# Plant ID # \_\_\_\_\_



This plant is a popular annual growing 1-2 ft. tall. The hairy stem is usually much-branched and becomes woody at the base late in the season. Branched stems, mostly leafy near the base, have showy



flower heads with rays red at base, tipped with yellow, each with 3 teeth at broad end. The well-known flower heads are 1-2 in. across with a red center and a yellow outer band. Occasionally the three-cleft rays are solid orange or yellow. The disk flowers in the center are brownish red.

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## HINT



# Plant ID # \_\_\_\_\_



Tall, leafy, finely hairy stem, the species has tiny yellow flower heads on arching branches in a long or flat-topped cluster at top. This handsome plant produces showy displays, usually late in the summer. This species is unfairly blamed for hay fever as it usually blooms the same time as ragweed.



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## HINT





# Plant ID # \_\_\_\_\_



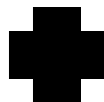
This plant has one to several erect stems that grow from the base to 1-3 ft. (sometimes up to 5 ft.) in height. The leaves are twice pinnately compound. Six to 15 pinnae each have 20-30 leaflets. Leaves fold in strong sunlight and when touched. Small, ball-shaped clusters of greenish flowers occur on axillary stalks.



An erect plant with ball-like clusters of small, whitish or greenish flowers on tall stalks rising in axils of compound leaves. Flat, leathery, twisted seedpods follow. The seeds of this plant are a favored food of quail.

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## HINT



# Plant ID # \_\_\_\_\_

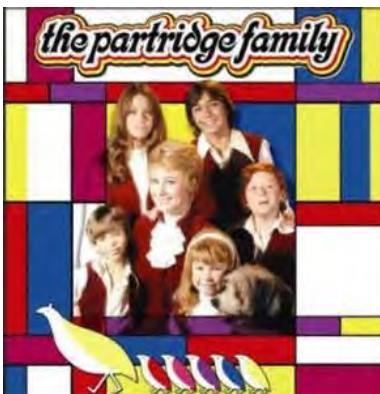


This plant is an early pioneer species on sandy disturbed sites, producing dense stands for a few years until later successional grasses and forbs establish. It can make a good cover crop in restorations, helping to hold the soil and crowd out weeds until deeper rooted perennials take over. Yellow flowers of this plant are 1 to 1½ inch across, with 5 rounded petals of unequal size, often a single lower one largest, the other 4 similar size with red blotches at base, opening somewhat haphazardly giving them an irregular appearance and shape.



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## HINT



# Plant ID # \_\_\_\_\_



This native perennial plant is 2-5' tall. The alternate leaves tend to occur near the base of the plant, although a few smaller leaves occur along the upper portion of the stem. These leaves are long and strap-like, rather stiff in



texture, and up to 2½' long and 2½" across. The entire plant is bluish or greyish green, and quite hairless. The top of the plant consists of several prickly balls of flowers that are individually about ½–1" across. These whitish green balls contain numerous small white flowers that are individually surrounded by prickly bracts.

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## HINT



# Plant ID # \_\_\_\_\_

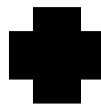


This plant's 3-5 ft. stems occur singly or in clumps, and are stout and hairy. Wide clusters of vibrant, red-violet flowers form at the ends of short branches near the top of the plant. Because the flowers are all of the disk variety, the 6 inch wide flower cluster has a fuzzy appearance. Long, lance-shaped leaves line the stems. This plant blooms late in the summer and blooms until frost.



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## HINT



# Plant ID # \_\_\_\_\_

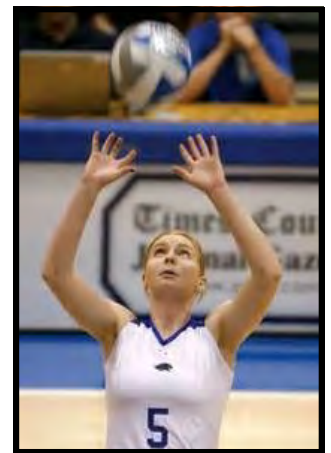


This native perennial plant is 3-4' tall and unbranched, except for the upper flowering stems. The stems are covered with white hairs. The opposite leaves are up to 5" long and 1" across, occasionally with small teeth along the margins. There are three conspicuous veins that run along the length of each leaf. This plants flowers are dull white and individually only 1/8" across. There is little or no floral scent. The blooming period occurs from late summer to early fall.



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## HINT



# Plant ID # \_\_\_\_\_



This plant is a native, warm-season perennial in the Sunflower family. Also called Mexican hat, it is a common weed and wildflower of roadsides, parks, vacated lands and managed pastures. This hairy-stemmed plant reproduces from seed or short underground stems. The stems grow from 12 to 40 inches tall and branch near the top. The leaves are strongly lobed into distinct segments that are long, narrow and pointed. The flowers are borne at the end of slender stems. Each has yellow to brownish petals and a dark brown center that can reach 1 inch long.



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## HINT



# Plant ID # \_\_\_\_\_



This plant is known by a number of common names, and can grow to 1-2 feet tall. This plant is an aromatic winter annual with unusual, tuft-like, lavender to pink, whorled flower heads. Each whorl in the elongated spike is subtended by whitish or lavender, leaf-like bracts. Several stems grow from the base and are lined with pairs of lance-shaped leaves. This plant has a distinctive citrus or lemony scent when the leaves are rubbed or crushed. It is very easy to grow and often forms large colonies. Bees and butterflies are attracted to this plant.



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## HINT



# Plant ID # \_\_\_\_\_

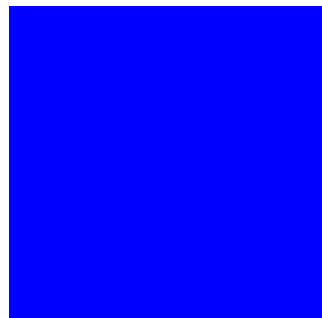


This species is a warm season, perennial bunchgrass with blue-green stems 4-8 ft. tall. The seed head is usually branched into three parts and resembles a turkey's foot. Fall color is maroonish-tan. This species is the star component of the Big Four native grass species that characterize the tallgrass prairies of central North America. Cattle love it so much that some ranchers refer to it as ice cream for cows.



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## HINT





# Plant ID # \_\_\_\_\_



This species of grass is a tall, bunching sod-former, 3-8 ft. in height, with broad blue-green blades and a large, plume-like, soft, golden-brown seed head. This showy perennial's fall color is deep orange to purple. This is a beautiful grass with a somewhat metallic golden sheen to its flowering parts. It is an important associate in the tallgrass prairies and is relished by livestock and makes good roost cover for upland birds.



**HINT**



# Plant ID # \_\_\_\_\_



This species is a native warm season perennial grass that is often grown as a forage crop, natural wildlife habitat, or, increasingly, as a bioenergy crop. This species can grow to more



than 10 ft. tall and well-managed stands may last for decades. Once this species is established, its bunch-type growth habit makes it very competitive with weeds. However, it is not considered to be invasive. This species makes good roost cover for pheasants and quail.



## HINT



# Plant ID # \_\_\_\_\_

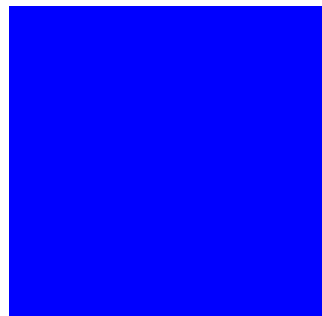


This species is a perennial bunchgrass and is prominent in the tall grass prairie region. This species grows to a typical height of 3 feet. Although it has a blue tint in the spring, in fall, its predominant color is more red, which color it may retain throughout winter into spring. This species is one of the most common grasses throughout the Midwest, and it is a very valuable wildlife plant.



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## HINT



# Plant ID # \_\_\_\_\_



The erect or arching stems of this cool-season, short-lived perennial grow 2-4 ft. tall. Terminal, spike-shaped seed heads of oat-like seeds with long, bristly awns, cause the stems to bend and droop. This plant establishes easily, providing quick initial cover. It is a versatile, cool-season plant, requiring little to no maintenance. It provides great nesting cover for pheasants and quail.



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## HINT



# Plant ID # \_\_\_\_\_



This species is a thicket-forming shrub or small tree with short trunk, many spreading branches, broad crown, showy large white flowers. Its fragrant, white flowers occur on the plant before the leaves in spring. The fruit that follows ripens to a shiny, bright red in late summer. The short, crooked trunk – with scaly, black bark – supports a graceful, open crown. Fall foliage ranges from electric red to pale yellow. This plants fruit are eaten fresh and used in jellies and preserves, and are also consumed by many kinds of birds.



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## HINT





# Plant ID



# Answer Key

1. Butterfly Milk Weed
2. Maximilian Sunflower
3. Black-eyed Susan
4. Compass Plant
5. Cup Plant
6. Ohio Spiderwort
7. Foxglove Beardtongue
8. Grey-headed Coneflower
9. Pale Purple Coneflower
10. Purple Prairie Clover
11. Leadplant
12. Indian Blanketflower
13. Canada Goldenrod
14. Illinois Bundleflower
15. Showy Partridgepea
16. Rattlesnake Master
17. Western Ironweed
18. Tall Boneset
19. Upright Coneflower
20. Lemon Mint
21. Big Bluestem
22. Indiangrass
23. Switchgrass
24. Little Bluestem
25. Canada Wildrye
26. American Plum

Numbers on this sheet correspond with numbers on the bottom right corner of individual species sheets.