

# Colorado Oasis

Designed by Cheval Oldaker of Ecoscape Environmental Design



Bask in the balance of the Colorado Oasis garden with a central sweep of grasses harmonized by warm-toned blooms on one side, and cool-toned blooms on the other. Much like the canyons along the Colorado Front Range - with a sunny side on the north, a shaded side on the south, and a meandering river running through the canyon center - this garden will draw you in to enjoy some respite from the summer's heat. Colorado Oasis covers 60 square feet and features 15 native, xeric perennial varieties!

- Adaptable sun exposure - full sun or part shade (minimum of 4 hrs of direct or indirect sun per day)
- Planting map covers 60 sq. ft.
- Blooms late spring to late summer
- Very low to low water needs
- Hardiness maximum of 7,000 ft.

## Individual Plant Information

### BLUE GRAMA GRASS - *Bouteloua gracilis*

QTY. 2



This Rocky Mountain native grass has eyelash-like spikelets that grow horizontally on its stems. Blue Grama stays colorful through the fall season.

- Mature height 1-2'  
Mature spread 1-2'
- Full sun
- Very low water needs
- Blooms summer to fall
- Attracts birds

**CARE:** This adaptable grass thrives in most soils except very heavy and very wet clay. Be sure to not let this grass sit in wet soils for long.

### BLUE NATIVE HAREBELL - *Campanula rotundifolia*

QTY. 1



Coming from the Latin word *campana* meaning "bell," this perennial features loose rosettes of foliage with blue, bell-shaped flowers on wiry stems.

- Mature height 6-18"  
Mature spread 12-18"
- Full sun to shade
- Low water needs
- Blooms spring to summer
- Attracts hummingbirds

**CARE:** This adaptable plant performs well on rocky mountain slopes, dry meadows and prairies, and open woods with moist soils.

### WHITE YARROW - *Achillea millefolium*

QTY. 1



A spreading clump of finely cut grayish-green, very fragrant foliage produces erect leafy stalks topped by tight clusters of flowers ranging in color from red to pink, apricot, yellow, cream and white.

- Mature height 1-2'  
Mature spread 2-3'
- Full sun
- Low water needs
- Blooms summer
- Attracts bees, birds, butterflies
- Resists deer, rabbits

**CARE:** Best in hot, dry, sunny locations, these flowers thrive on neglect and do not need pampering. Basal foliage will remain attractive throughout the winter.

FIRECRACKER PENSTEMON - *Penstemon eatonii*

QTY. 3



Clusters of tubular, fiery red flowers adorn the upright stalks of this Penstemon. Foliage is dark green with paddle shaped leaves. This evergreen variety is native to the western US.

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Mature height 18-24"  
Mature spread 12-18"



Full sun



Low water needs



Blooms early summer



Attracts hummingbirds



Resists deer, rabbits



**CARE:** Penstemon varieties prefer not to be overcrowded and prefer maximum heat and sun exposure. Avoid enriching the soil around these finicky plants - it will shorten their lifespan. Plant high so as to avoid burying the crown. Mulch with bark sparingly or use gravel or pine needles. Water sparingly once established.

PRAIRIE RED CONEFLOWER - *Ratibida columnifera pulcherrima*

QTY. 2



Its linear, bright green leaves create an airy clump with several slender stalks capped by brick red flowers with drooping rays surrounding a tall, brown center.

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Mature height 18-24"  
Mature spread 18-24"



Full sun



Very low water needs



Blooms early to late summer



Attracts birds, bees, butterflies



Resists deer



**CARE:** Prairie Coneflower is very drought tolerant and undiscerning about soil types. It thrives in full, hot sun.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN PENSTEMON - *Penstemon strictus*

QTY. 3



The brilliant, midnight blue flowers form on stout stalks arising from narrow, glossy green leaves. This semi-evergreen variety is native to the Rockies.

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Mature height 18-24"  
Mature spread 12-18"



Full sun to part shade



Low water needs



Blooms early to midsummer



Attracts native bees



**CARE:** Penstemon varieties prefer not to be overcrowded and prefer maximum heat and sun exposure. Avoid enriching the soil around these finicky plants - it will shorten their lifespan. This semi-evergreen can be slow to establish, so be sure to weed around it regularly to improve establishment.

SWITCHGRASS - *Panicum virgatum*

QTY. 1



Switchgrass forms dense, elegantly tall strands of green, changing to deep red throughout the summer and ending the season as a burgundy wine color in the fall.

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Mature height 3-5'  
Mature spread 18-24"



Full sun to part shade



Low water needs



Blooms late summer



Attracts butterflies, small birds



**CARE:** Extremely drought tolerant and grows well in any type of soil.

YELLOW COLUMBINE - *Aquilegia chrysantha*

QTY. 2



Its large long-spurred, but dainty, golden flowers dangle gracefully above attractive lobed blue-green leaflets.

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Mature height 2-3'  
Mature spread 18-24"



Full sun to part shade



Low water needs



Blooms late spring to early summer



Attracts bees, birds, butterflies



Resists deer, rabbits



**CARE:** Columbines are relatively short lived, so allow some of the plants to seed and self-sow.

# Plant Maintenance by Season

## MAINTENANCE TASKS

## PLANT

### SPRING (AFTER FIRST GROWING SEASON)

Cut back old growth or winter damage before new growth begins to show.

Blue Grama Grass, Common White Yarrow, Firecracker Penstemon, Prairie Red Coneflower, Rocky Mountain Penstemon, Switchgrass, Yellow Columbine

Divide mature plants, in early spring every three years, as needed.

Common White Yarrow, Prairie Red Coneflower, Switchgrass

### SUMMER

Water sparingly once established.

Firecracker Penstemon

Deadhead spent flowers to encourage new blooms.

Blue Native Harebell, Common White Yarrow, Prairie Red Coneflower, Yellow Columbine

If foliage becomes ragged during summer heat, cut foliage back to three inches above ground and new leaves will grow in.

Blue Native Harebell, Yellow Columbine

### FALL

Leave last blooms to self-seed and/or feed the birds come winter.

Blue Grama Grass, Firecracker Penstemon, Prairie Red Coneflower, Rocky Mountain Penstemon, Switchgrass, Yellow Columbine

Deadhead spent flowers to prevent self-sowing and spreading if this is undesired. Otherwise, leave last blooms to feed birds come winter.

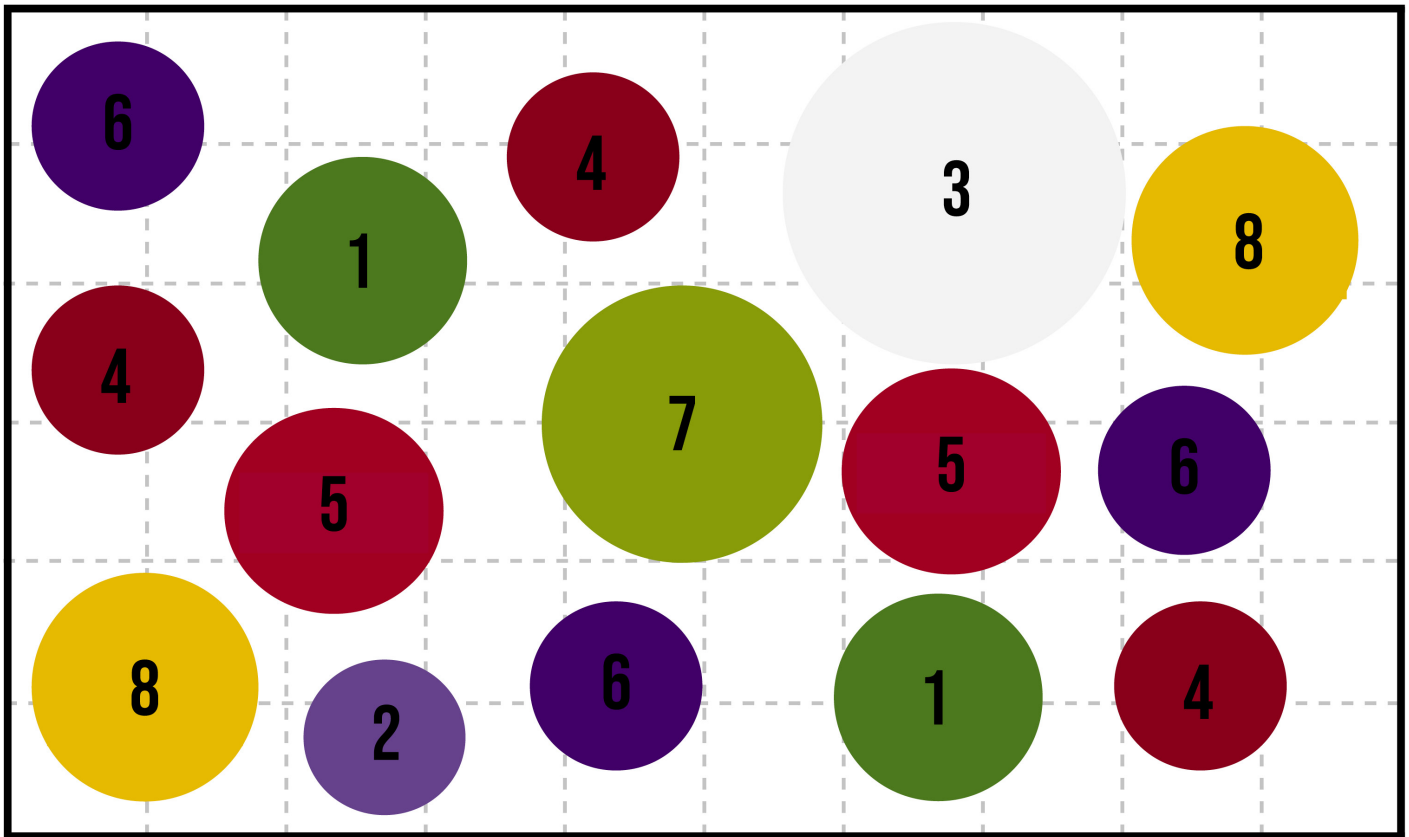
Common White Yarrow

### WINTER

Leave stems standing over the winter to protect the crown from winter moisture.

Yellow Columbine

# Plant-by-Number Design Suggestion



6'x10' rectangle  
SUGGESTED FRONT SIDE OF GARDEN

## Key

- |                                   |                                      |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Blue Grama Grass (Qty. 2)      | 5. Prairie Red Coneflower (Qty. 2)   |
| 2. Blue Native Harebell (Qty. 1)  | 6. Rocky Mountain Penstemon (Qty. 3) |
| 3. Common White Yarrow (Qty. 1)   | 7. Switchgrass (Qty. 1)              |
| 4. Firecracker Penstemon (Qty. 3) | 8. Yellow Columbine (Qty. 2)         |

1 box = 1 square foot

Map reflects bloom or showy foliage colors.