

# Selecting Drought Tolerant Plants For Your Landscape



(The bloom of the Kentucky Coffee Tree.)

## *Richmond* Tree Advisory Board

*"The creation of a thousand forests is in one acorn."*

Ralph Waldo Emerson

### Why drought resistant plants?

It is important to incorporate drought resistant plant species in your landscape. These plants will reduce water consumption and add some diversity to your design.

Typically, when we think of plants for dry sites, we think of cacti and succulents. These are not hardy here in Kentucky. There is a wide variety of plants that will do quite well in our Kentucky gardens.

When designing and planting your landscape it is always good to get sound, expert advice. Go to a reputable nursery to purchase your plants and get new ideas for combining plants.

### How to get your plants established:

Remember that no plant is drought tolerant until it is established in your landscape. Establishment take a few months or many years depending on the plant type. Large ball and burlap trees may take 1 year to establish for every inch of caliper (trunk diameter at 6" above root ball). For example, a 6" caliper tree will take about 3 years to establish in the site. An herbaceous perennial, however, may take only 6 months to a year.

During this establishment period, correct watering is crucial to a healthy plant and a thriving landscape. In most cases, water woody plants once per week during dry periods. Use methods that deliver water slowly and deeply which minimizes evaporation and runoff, for example a soaker hose. Use a rain barrel throughout the year to collect water for these dry periods.

Use mulches properly, a 2-3" saucer around trees and shrubs and 1-2" around perennials and annuals. This keeps soil moist and reduces weeds.

Finally, make sure that you group plants together based on their ultimate water requirements. Do not combine species such as juniper with azalea. Junipers prefer full sun and are drought tolerant while azaleas prefer moist, well-drained soil in lightly shaded areas.

Assess your landscape and learn the various microclimates, the climate in a small area. It may have unique qualities, such as low wind, full shade and moist soils. Choose plants that will thrive in each microclimate in your landscape.

### What plants are best for Richmond and Madison County?

The following is a list of some drought tolerant species that will do well in our Kentucky landscapes. This is not a complete list, but should get you started. As weather patterns change, selecting drought tolerant plants could mean the difference between well-stocked and barren landscapes.

## PERENNIALS:

*Achillea* spp., Yarrow  
*Aethionema* spp., Stonecress  
*Alcea rugosa*, Hollyhock  
*Alyssum montanum*, Alyssum  
*Amsonia jonesii*, Amsonia  
*Antennaria* spp., Pussytoes  
*Anthemis* spp., Camomile  
*Armeria* spp., Thrift  
*Artemisia* spp., Wormwood  
*Asclepias tuberosa*, Butterfly Milkweed  
*Aster divaricatus*, Aster  
*Baptisia australis*, False Indigo  
*Belamcanda chinensis*, Blackberry-lily  
*Campanula poscharskyana*, Serbian Bellflower  
*Centaurea* spp., Bachelor's Button  
*Cerastium tomentosum*, Snow-in-Summer  
*Comtonia peregrina*, Sweetfern  
*Coreopsis verticillata*, Tickseed  
*Dracocephalum* spp., Dragonhead  
*Echinacea purpurea*, Coneflower

## TREE SPECIES:

*Acer campestre*, Hedge Maple  
*A. ginnala*, Amur Maple  
*Betula populifolia*, Gray Birch  
*Carya glabra*, Pignut Hickory  
*Celtis occidentalis*, Hackberry  
*Crataegus phaenopyrum*, Washington Hawthorn  
*Gleditsia triacanthos* v. *inermis*, Thornless  
Honey Locust  
*Gymnocladus dioicus*, Kentucky Coffee Tree  
*Juniperus* spp., Juniper  
*Maclura pomifera*, Osage Orange  
*Pinus banksiana*, Jack Pine  
*Prunus besseyi*, Plum  
*Quercus macrocarpa*, Bur Oak  
*Q. prinus*, Chestnut Oak  
*Robinia pseudoacacia*, Locust

*Elymus glauca*, Blue Lyme Grass  
*Eriogonum umbellatum*, Sulfur Plant  
*Eryngium* spp., Sea-Holly  
*Eupatorium* spp., Joe-Pye-Weed  
*Euphorbia* spp., Spurge  
*Festuca* spp., Fescue  
*Gaillardia* spp., Blanket Flower  
*Guara lindheimeri*, Guara  
*Goniolimon tataricum*, Tatarian Statice  
*Helianthemum nummularium*, Common Sunrose  
  
*Helictotrichon sempervirens*, Blue Oat Grass  
*Hypericum cerastoides*, St.-John's-Wort  
*Hyssopus officinalis*, Hyssop  
*Knautia* spp., Pincushion Flower  
*Lavandula* spp., Lavender  
*Liatris* spp., Gay-Feather  
*Linaria* spp., Toadflax  
*Nepeta cataria*, Catnip

*Origanum* spp., Oregano  
*Penstemon caeapitosus*, Mat Penstemon  
*Ratibida columnifera*, Prairie Coneflower  
*Rudbeckia fulgida*, cultivars (i.e. Goldstrum)  
*Ruta graveolens*, Rue  
*Salvia* spp., Sage  
*Santolina* spp., Lavender-Cotton  
*Scutellaria* spp., Scullcap  
*Sedum* spp., Stonecrop  
*Sempervivum* spp., Hens-and-Chick  
*Silene frivaldskyana*, Campion  
*Solidago* spp., Goldenrod  
*Stachys* spp., Lamb's Ears  
*Symphytum* spp., Comfrey  
*Thymus* spp., Thyme  
*Verbascum thapsus*, Mullein  
*Verbena bipinnatifida*, Dakota Verbena  
*Waldsteinia ternata*, Barren-Strawberry  
*Yucca* spp., Adam's Needle

## ANNUALS:

*Cosmos bipinnatus*, Cosmos  
*Gaillardia pulchella*, Blanket Flower  
*Gazania rigens*, Treasure Flower  
*Gomphrena globosa*, Globe Amaranth  
*Helichrysum bracteatum*, Strawflower  
*Helipterum roseum*, Strawflower  
*Ipomoea* spp., Morning-Glory  
*Portulaca grandiflora*, Rock-Rose  
*Tagetes* spp. and vars., Marigold  
*Tropaeolum majus*, Nasturtium  
*Zinnia* spp. and vars., Zinnia

## SHRUB SPECIES:

*Acanthopanax sieboldiana*, Five-Leaved Aralia  
*Amorpha canescens*, Lead Plant  
*Arctostaphylos uva-ursi*, Bearberry  
*Berberis thunbergii*, Japanese Barberry  
*Buddleia alternifolia*, Butterfly Bush  
*Caragana arborescens*, Pea shrub  
*Caryopteris x clandonensis*, Hybrid Bluebeard  
*Chaenomeles* spp., Flowering Quince  
*Cotoneaster* spp., Cotoneaster  
*Genista* spp., Woadwaxen  
*Ligustrum* spp., Privet  
*Myrica pensylvanica*, Bayberry  
*Perovskia* spp., Russian Sage  
*Physocarpus opulifolius*, Nine-Bark  
*Potentilla* spp., Cinquefoil  
*Rhus* spp., Sumac  
*Rosa rugosa*, Hedge Rose  
*Tamarix* spp., Tamarix  
*Vaccinium pallidum*, Dry-Land Blueberry  
*Viburnum lentago*, Nannyberry

