**Short, native, herbacious plants for a ground-cover layer and green mulch**

The species below may be suitable for planting as a ground-cover layer or green mulch below taller plants that rise above them as the growing season progresses. Most bloom in spring providing nectar and pollen for insects as well as beauty for humans. Those that flower in the summer and fall are perhaps best placed on the margins of taller plantings so that their flowers can be appreciated.

**Spring flowering**

* Low Sedges. Many species of *Carex* that do not require a wetland habitat deserve to be explored for their ground covering ability
* Creeping phlox, *Phlox subulata.* Evergreen, drought-tolerant
* Wild Ginger, *Asarum canadense.* Excellent groundcover especially in shade, spreads slowly from center
* Allegheny spurge, *Pachysandra procumbens.* Evergreen groundcover for shade
* Woodland phlox*, Phlox divaricata.* Long-flowering, useful where there is some shade
* Woodland creeping phlox, *Phlox stolonifera,* similar to the above, but with rounded leaves
* Dwarf Iris, *Iris cristata,* very pretty when blooming in spring, leaves may look ratty in summer
* Pasque flower, *Pulsatilla patens.* Spring flowering, drought-tolerant
* Spring-blooming anemone, *A. canadensis* and *A. quinquefolia*. Spreads by rhizomes
* Violets (if one doesn’t think of them as weeds)
* Golden ragwort, *Packera aurea.* Some shade, good leaf carpet after flowering, evergreen
* Lyre-leaf sage, *Salvia lyrata.* Most often purple leaves, flowers on stalks aren’t showy, self-seeds
* Purple phacelia, *Ph. bipinnatifida*. Bi-annual, strong self-seeder, evergreen rosettes, shade/sun
* Coral bells, *Heuchera*. Clumping; flower and seed stalks, if tall, are likely to flop and can be cut off; drought-tolerant, a huge variety of cultivated forms on the market
* Eared coreopsis, *C. auriculata.* Some moisture, golden long-lasting flowers in late spring
* Small’s beardtongue, *Penstemon smallii.* Clumping, pretty lavender and white flowers on weak stems
* Prairie smoke, *Geum triflorum.* Late spring flowering, drought-tolerant
* Blue-eyed grass, *Sisyrinchium campestre.* Grass-like leaves, but it is a forb
* Showy primrose, *Oenothera speciosa.* Large, very pretty pale pink flowers; spreads aggressively by thin brittle rhizomes
* Wild Geranium, *Geranium maculata.* Lavender-blue flowers on wandering stalks
* Bradbury’s monarda, *M. braduriana.* White flowering*,* shorter and earlier than other monardas
* Lanceleaf loosestrife, *Lysimachia lanceolata.* 1ft. tall, spreads by underground rhizomes

**Summer flowering**

* Missouri primrose, *Oenethera macrocarpa*. Large lemon yellow flowers on sprawling stems
* Midwestern primrose, *Oenethera pilosella.* Yellow flowers, mat-forming leaf rosettes
* Wild petunia, *Ruellia humilis.* Blue flowers closing in sunlight, drought tolerant, strong self-seeder
* Roundseeded St. John’s Wort, *Hypericum sphaerocarpum,* a low spreading semi shrub with yellow flowers, longish, dark green, glossy leaves, drought tolerant

(continued)

* Spotted St. John’s Wort, *Hypericum punctatum,* similar to above, but short, bluish, dull leaves
* Purple poppy mallow, *Callirhoe involucrate.* Wanders through a planting on long vining stems
* Dittany, *Cunila origanoides.* Rocky ground, clumping, small purplish flowers
* Violet bush clover, *Lespedeza violacea.* Small flowers on delicate looking but tough plant

**Fall flowering**

* Prairie dropseed grass, *Sporobolus heterolepis,* for borders in sunny locations
* White wood aster, *Aster (or Symphyotrichum) divaricata,* for shady locations, reasonably drought tolerant

**Non-native plants for ground covers:**

* All creeping thymes. They attract pollinators when in bloom
* Low-growing perennial *Geraniums*
* Plumbago, *Cerastostigma plumbaginoides.* Fall flowering, a very pretty blue, spreads by underground rhizomes, drought tolerant
* Epimedium makes a pretty drought tolerant ground cover in shade