

Pipestone

National Monument
Minnesota

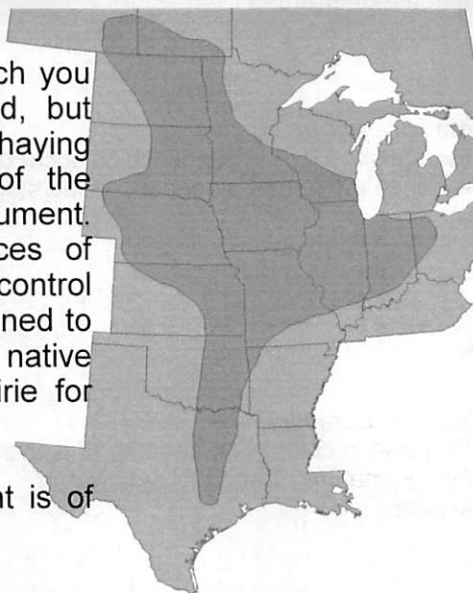
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



Tallgrass Prairie

Since the visits of artist George Catlin in 1836 and explorer Joseph Nicollet in 1838 the vivid yellows, purples, pinks, and blues have presented an ever changing color palette to visitors to the area. In addition, the grasses present a wave of motion as the breeze stirs them, giving the impression of a "sea of grass" as witnessed by pioneers of the past. Today, visitors to Pipestone National Monument can view a small section of this once vast treeless prairie.

The Prairie area through which you walk has never been plowed, but was subject to grazing and haying prior to the establishment of the area as a National Monument. Present management practices of prescribed burning and the control of non-native plants are designed to enhance the growth of the native plants and preserve the prairie for future generations.



cultural importance to American Indians mainly because of the presence of catlinite, but also because of its tallgrass prairie setting. For the early Indians living in this area, the prairie was an important source of food and medicines. The plants below represent a few of the more visible species at Pipestone National Monument today.

Pipestone National Monument is of

Pipestone National Monument contains a remnant of the tall grass prairie which once covered the entire Great Plains of the central United States. Over 300 native plant species have been identified within the Monument boundaries, making this a unique area.



Western Yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*)
A member of the aster family, this plant is found throughout the United States in all types of habitats. Flowers appear from June through November.

Blazing Star (*Liatris punctata*)
These bright purple stalks highlight the prairie from August through October.



Woolly Sage (*Artemisia frigida*)
Much taller and bushier than prairie sage, woolly sage has a 'ropelike' appearance. Flowers appear during August and September.

Prairie Sage (*Artemisia ludoviciana*)
Appears gray in color among the green of the other prairie plants. Flowers appear from August through October.



Chokecherry (*Prunus virginiana*)
These large shrubs flower during April and May with a short stalk of white flowers. Small reddish-black berries ripen from July through September.

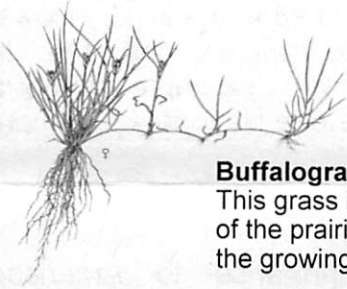
Leadplant (*Amorpha canescens*)
This small shrub with purple flower tips is common on the prairie. This plant blooms during July and August. It is often grazed by wildlife.



This brochure, along with plant signs located along the trail, will aid you in the identification of some of the more prominent prairie grasses found at Pipestone National Monument.

Big Bluestem (*Andropogon gerardii*)

The most common of the prairie grasses reaches a height of 4 to 6 feet. It is commonly called "Turkey foot" because the seed head branches into 3 parts resembling a turkey's foot. Seed stalks appear in July and August.

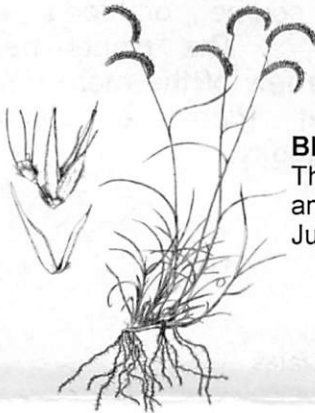
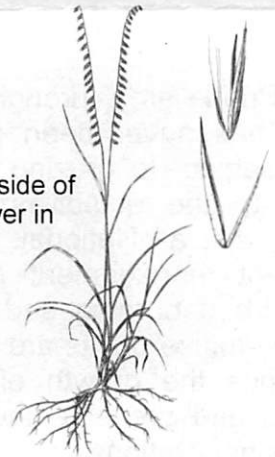


Buffalograss (*Buchloe dactyloides*)

This grass is usually found in the drier areas of the prairie. Seeds are produced throughout the growing season.

Sideoats Grama (*Bouteloua curtipendula*)

This grass is distinguished by the seeds which occur on one side of the seed stalk—hence the name "sideoats". Seed stalks flower in July and August.



Blue Grama (*Bouteloua gracilis*)

This grass is often bluish in color. The seed head is thick and often curved when mature. Seed stalks flower in June, July, and August.



Prairie Cordgrass (*Spartina pectinata*)

This is one of the tall grasses of the prairie. The seed heads resemble short strands of rope or twine. Usually found in marsh areas, the seed heads appear from July to October.



Little Bluestem (*Andropogon scoparius*)

This grass grows in dense clusters reaching 4 feet in height. Stems may be brown, tan, or wine-red in late summer and into fall.



Indiangrass (*Sorghastrum nutans*)

A warm-season perennial grass with stems reaching 6 feet. The flower head is branched, soft, and slightly fuzzy ranging in color from chestnut to grayish brown.



Switchgrass (*Panicum virgatum*)

Found in large clumps, typically 2 to 4 feet high, occasionally reaching heights of 6 feet. Flower heads may appear to be purple or auburn in summer, then turn to tan in the fall.