

# AGRI-FACTS

Practical Information for Alberta's Agriculture Industry

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## Alberta Range Plants and Their Classification

Alberta rangelands consist of native and introduced plant species that exist in plant communities. These lands are made up of grasses, sedges, forbs, shrubs and even trees. Rangelands provide an important source of forages for domestic and native animals as well as protection to the soil and watersheds.

Specific to the plant species found in a particular area at any point in time, plant communities group various population sizes of plants occurring together on the landscape. These communities are managed in pastures, grazing reserves and ranches as range ecosystems, which are complex collections of living and non-living (biotic and abiotic) parts that interconnect with each other within the rangeland environment.

This complex network of individual biotic and abiotic entities works together cohesively as a single unit. This unit functions as a continuum of cause-and-effect relationships that is never ending as long as the ecosystem can support life in any form. If one part of this unit is affected, the whole network and every individual part within it is affected as well.

Rangeland environments and range ecosystems are inherently complex. However, they are largely based on individual plants that are important as forage for livestock and herbivorous wildlife. To maintain the site stability, stand longevity and structural integrity of their communities, range managers must know these plants and their various structural and habitual characteristics.

### Using this factsheet

In this factsheet, each range plant species is shown under two names: a common (English) name and a scientific (Latin or Greek) name. This presentation is so that the plants can be sorted into the various taxonomic genera, families and classes based on that species' unique

physical characteristic[s] and to help managers find more information on that particular plant. See the tables later in this factsheet.

Because a plant can have several different common names in different parts of the province or country, the scientific name helps pinpoint the identity of that plant more accurately, especially if it is discussed among range managers all over the globe.

Range plants can also be grouped based on various characteristics like plant type, lifespan, origin, response to grazing (or other disturbances like fire and drought) and forage value. In the “**Definitions**” section below, *Plant type* groups various species with similar physical characteristics to define them as grasses, grass-like plants, forbs, shrubs or trees.

Also in the section below, a plant's life span, noted as an annual, biennial or a perennial, determines the longevity of a plant. *Origin* refers to plants indigenous to North America or that have been introduced recently from other continents. Plants with varying *responses to grazing* are grouped as decreaseers, increaseers or invaderes.

*Range plants  
are important  
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wildlife*

Finally, *forage value*, grouped as good, fair, poor and/or poisonous, is determined by palatability (acceptance by grazing animals based on taste), nutritional value and abundance for grazing. Poisonous plants are deemed as such if they contain toxins harmful to grazing animals.

Range plants can also be classified according to what part of the growing season they tend to grow best in. Most of the plants listed in this publication show a “cool season” response where the major portion of their growth occurs during spring and early summer when temperatures range from 18°C to 24°C. Some plants, including blue grama (*Bouteloua gracilis*), little bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*) and red three-awn (*Aristida purpurea* var. *longiseta*), are classed as “warm season” plants because they grow slowly during the early part of the season, but grow best in late spring and summer when temperatures range from 32°C to 35°C.

## Definitions of plant characteristics

### *Plant type*

**Grasses** – herbaceous plants with narrow, long, parallel-veined leaves and hollow, jointed stems. Spikes of small seeds borne between two scales are found at the top portion of these stems.

**Grass-like plants** – look very similar to grasses but have solid stems (not hollow) that are often three-sided and not jointed. Leaves are no different from grasses. These are made up of sedges and rushes.

**Forbs** – herbaceous, broad-leaved plants with annual tops and leaves with net-like veins (range weeds and flowers).

**Shrubs** – woody, often deciduous perennials with stems that live over the winter and branch out from near the base or at ground level.

**Trees** – woody, single-stemmed perennial plants that reach a mature height of at least 3 metres.

### *Life span*

**Annual plants** – live only for one growing season. They do not come up a second year from roots or a crown but rather from seeds deposited by a parent plant.

**Biennial plants** – require two years to complete life cycle. Vegetative growth is focused during the first year, then in the second year, flowering, fruit production and death.

**Perennial plants** – live and reproduce year after year, producing leaves, stems and flowers for more than two years from the same root system.

### *Origin*

**Native plants** – those plants that are indigenous to North America.

**Introduced plants** – plants that have been brought in from outside North America in the last few centuries and are not usually present in the original plant community.

### *Response to grazing*

**Grazing response** - the reaction a species has to continuous defoliation, usually by grazing and hoof damage. Soil type, moisture levels and climate ultimately affect the response to defoliation for any one species. Where a species is a primary decreaser in one environmental condition, it may become an increaser in a different environmental situation. (Note that the response of plants to defoliation is not limited to grazing animals. The response is also related to the effects of fire, insect damage and drought.) Types of range plants responses are grouped as follows:

- **Decreasers** – plant species of an original or climax plant community that decrease in relative amount with continued disturbances, such as heavy grazing. These plants may be either highly palatable, being continually sought out by grazing animals and often the first ones to be defoliated throughout the growing season, or they may lack certain physical characteristics that would otherwise help them in their recovery.
- **Increasers** – plant species of an original plant community that will increase in relative amount for period of time under continued disturbances such as heavy grazing. Increasers will generally take over the community. Increaser plants are typically those adapted to heavy defoliation because they grow close to the ground and possess physiological attributes that allow them to recover quickly from grazing and hoof damage. They may also be less palatable and therefore less desirable to grazing animals. Such plants need to be monitored since they are a sign of heavy grazing (such as high intensity, high frequency grazing) and can increase in abundance beyond what is acceptable. Overuse, however, can cause even these plant types to decrease in the community.
- **Invaders** – commonly are weedy plants that have established themselves in a plant community because the more desirable species have died out from heavy grazing and trampling. A high proportion of invader species is generally a sign of excessive grazing pressure; however, some noxious range weeds such as leafy spurge (*Euphorbia esula*), spotted knapweed (*Centaurea maculosa*) and even aspen poplar (*Populus tremuloides*) are capable of invading healthy range ecosystems.

## Forage values

**Forage value** – is determined by palatability, nutritional quality and abundance (biomass in terms of lb/acre of plant material) for livestock. Nutritive value ultimately depends on the type of animal consuming that plant and its stage of growth (i.e., immature vegetative vs. mature dormant). Classification of range forage value is as follows:

- **Good** – plants are nutritious, highly palatable and tend to produce abundant forage in their original community.
- **Fair** – plants are very likely to produce adequate nutrients when consumed; however, they may not have substantial palatability or do not produce an abundance of forage in their original community.

- **Poor** – plants that lack adequate nutrients for the grazing animal. Also, most plants that contain anti-nutritional factors that cause reduced intake or possible illness are also classed as having “poor” forage value.
- **Poisonous** – plants classed as “poor” quality forage due to compounds or toxins that cause illness or death of grazing animals.

## Grasses

Common name	Scientific name	Life span	Origin	Grazing response	Forage value
Alkali cord grass	<i>Spartina gracilis</i>	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Poor
Alpine timothy	<i>Phleum alpinum</i>	Perennial	Native	Decreaser	Good
Awne d wheatgrass	<i>Agropyron trachycaulum var. unilaterale</i>	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Good
Bearded wheatgrass	<i>Elymus caninus</i>	Perennial	Introduced	Invader	Good
Bluebunch wheatgrass	<i>Agropyron spicatum</i>	Perennial	Native	Decreaser	Good
Blue grama	<i>Bouteloua gracilis</i>	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Good
California oat grass	<i>Danthonia californica</i>	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Good
Canada bluegrass	<i>Poa compressa</i>	Perennial	Introduced	Invader	Good
Canada wild rye	<i>Elymus canadensis</i>	Perennial	Native	Decreaser	Good
Canby bluegrass	<i>Poa canbyi</i>	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Good
Cheat grass/downy brome	<i>Bromus tectorum</i>	Annual	Introduced	Invader	Poor
Columbian needle grass	<i>Stipa columbiana</i>	Perennial	Native	Decreaser	Good
Common reed	<i>Phragmites australis</i>	Perennial	Native	Decreaser	Fair
Creeping red fescue	<i>Festuca rubra</i>	Perennial	Introduced	Invader	Good
Crested wheatgrass	<i>Agropyron pectiniforme</i>	Perennial	Introduced	Invader	Good
Early bluegrass	<i>Poa cusickii</i>	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Good
False melic	<i>Schizachne purpurascens</i>	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Poor
Foothills rough fescue	<i>Festuca campestris</i>	Perennial	Native	Decreaser	Good
Fowl bluegrass	<i>Poa palustris</i>	Perennial	Native	Decreaser	Good
Fowl manna grass	<i>Glyceria striata</i>	Perennial	Native	Decreaser	Good
Foxtail barley	<i>Hordeum jubatum</i>	Perennial	Native	Invader	Poor
Fringed brome	<i>Bromus ciliatus</i>	Perennial	Native	Decreaser	Good
Giant wild rye	<i>Elymus piperi</i>	Perennial	Native	Decreaser	Fair
Green needle grass	<i>Stipa viridula</i>	Perennial	Native	Decreaser	Good
Hairy wild rye	<i>Elymus innovatus</i>	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Good
Hooker’s oat grass	<i>Helictotrichon hookeri</i>	Perennial	Native	Decreaser	Fair
Idaho fescue	<i>Festuca idahoensis</i>	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Good
Indian rice grass	<i>Oryzopsis hymenoides</i>	Perennial	Native	Decreaser	Good
Intermediate oat grass	<i>Danthonia intermedia</i>	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Good
Intermediate wheatgrass	<i>Agropyron intermedium</i>	Perennial	Introduced	Invader	Good

## Grasses *(continued)*

Common name	Scientific name	Life span	Origin	Grazing response	Forage value
June grass	<i>Koeleria macrantha</i>	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Good
Kentucky bluegrass	<i>Poa pratensis</i>	Perennial	Introduced	Inv./Intro'd	Good
Little bluestem	<i>Schizachyrium scoparium</i>	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Poor
Bluejoint	<i>Calamagrostis canadensis</i>	Perennial	Native	Decreaser	Fair
Mat muhly	<i>Muhlenbergia richardsonii</i>	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Fair
Meadow brome	<i>Bromus biebersteinii</i>	Perennial	Introduced	Invader	Fair
Meadow fescue	<i>Festuca pratensis</i>	Perennial	Introduced	Invader	Good
Meadow foxtail	<i>Alopecurus pratensis</i>	Perennial	Introduced	Invader	Fair
Mountain brome	<i>Bromus carinatus</i>	Perennial	Native	Decreaser	Good
Needle-and-thread grass	<i>Hesperostipa comata</i>	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Good
Northern awnless brome	<i>Bromus inermis</i> var. <i>pumpellianus</i>	Perennial	Native	Decreaser	Good
Northern manna grass	<i>Glyceria borealis</i>	Perennial	Native	Decreaser	Good
Northern reed grass	<i>Calamagrostis inexpansa</i>	Perennial	Native	Decreaser	Fair
Northern wheatgrass	<i>Agropyron dasystachyum</i>	Perennial	Native	Decreaser	Good
Nuttall's alkali grass	<i>Puccinellia nuttalliana</i>	Perennial	Native	Decreaser	Good
Orchard grass	<i>Dactylis glomerata</i>	Perennial	Introduced	Invader	Good
Parry oat grass	<i>Danthonia parryi</i>	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Good
Pine grass	<i>Calamagrostis rubescens</i>	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Fair
Plains muhly	<i>Muhlenbergia cuspidata</i>	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Fair
Plains reed grass	<i>Calamagrostis montanensis</i>	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Fair
Plains rough fescue	<i>Festuca hallii</i>	Perennial	Native	Decreaser	Good
Purple reed grass	<i>Calamagrostis purpurascens</i>	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Fair
Quack grass	<i>Elytrigia repens</i>	Perennial	Introduced	Invader	Good
Red three-awn	<i>Aristida purpurascens</i> var. <i>longiseta</i>	Perennial	Native	Invader	Poor
Redtop	<i>Agrostis stolonifera</i>	Perennial	Introduced	Invader	Fair
Reed canary grass	<i>Phalaris arundinacea</i>	Perennial	Native/Intro'd	Increaser/Invader	Good
Richardson needle grass	<i>Stipa richardsonii</i>	Perennial	Native	Decreaser	Good
Rocky mountain fescue	<i>Festuca saximontana</i>	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Good
Russian wild rye	<i>Elymus junceus</i>	Perennial	Introduced	Invader	Good
Salt grass	<i>Distichlis stricta</i>	Perennial	Introduced	Increaser	Poor
Sand dropseed	<i>Sporobolus cryptandrus</i>	Perennial	Native	Decreaser	Fair
Sandberg bluegrass	<i>Poa sandbergii</i>	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Good
Sand grass	<i>Calamovilfa longifolia</i>	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Fair
Sheep fescue	<i>Festuca ovina</i>	Perennial	Introduced	Increaser	Good
Six weeks fescue	<i>Vulpia octoflora</i>	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Fair
Slender wheatgrass	<i>Elymus trachycaulus</i>	Perennial	Native	Decreaser	Good
Slough grass	<i>Beckmannia syzigachne</i>	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Good
Smooth wild rye	<i>Elymus glaucus</i>	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Fair
Smooth brome	<i>Bromus inermis</i>	Perennial	Introduced	Invader	Good
Spike trisetum	<i>Trisetum spicatum</i>	Perennial	Native	Decreaser	Fair
Sweet grass	<i>Hierochloa odorata</i>	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Fair
Tall fescue	<i>Festuca elatior</i>	Perennial	Introduced	Invader	Good
Tall manna grass	<i>Glyceria grandis</i>	Perennial	Native	Decreaser	Good
Tickle grass	<i>Agrostis scabra</i>	Perennial	Native	Invader	Fair

## Grasses *(continued)*

Common name	Scientific name	Life span	Origin	Grazing response	Forage value
Timothy	<i>Phleum pratense</i>	Perennial	Introduced	Invader	Good
Tufted hair grass	<i>Deschampsia caespitosa</i>	Perennial	Native	Decreaser	Good
Tumble grass	<i>Schedonnardus paniculatus</i>	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Poor
Water foxtail	<i>Alopecurus aequalis</i>	Perennial	Native	Decreaser	Good
Western porcupine grass	<i>Stipa curtiseta</i>	Perennial	Native	Decreaser	Good
Western wheatgrass	<i>Pascopyrum smithii</i>	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Good
White-grained mountain rice grass	<i>Oryzopsis asperifolia</i>	Perennial	Native	Decreaser	Fair
Woodland bluegrass	<i>Poa interior</i>	Perennial	Native	Decreaser	Good

## Grass-like plants

Common name	Scientific name	Life span	Origin	Grazing response	Forage value
Alpine rush	<i>Juncus alpinoarticulatus</i>	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Fair
Atrosquama sedge	<i>Carex atrosquama</i>	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Fair
Awned sedge	<i>Carex atherodes</i>	Perennial	Native	Decreaser	Good
Baltic rush	<i>Juncus balticus</i>	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Poor
Beaked sedge	<i>Carex rostrata</i>	Perennial	Native	Decreaser	Good
Blunt sedge	<i>Carex obtusata</i>	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Fair
Brownish sedge	<i>Carex brunnescens</i>	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Fair
Creeping spike rush	<i>Eleocharis palustris</i>	Perennial	Native	Decreaser	Good
Elk sedge	<i>Carex geyeri</i>	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Fair
Field/graceful sedge	<i>Carex praegracilis</i>	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Good
Golden sedge	<i>Carex aurea</i>	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Poor
Hair-like sedge	<i>Carex capillaris</i>	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Poor
Hay sedge	<i>Carex siccata</i>	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Fair
Hood's sedge	<i>Carex hoodii</i>	Perennial	Native	Decreaser	Fair
Kobresia	<i>Kobresia myosuroides</i>	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Fair
Long-bracted sedge	<i>Carex athrostachya</i>	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Fair
Low sedge	<i>Carex eleocharis</i>	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Poor
Meadow sedge	<i>Carex praticola</i>	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Fair
Mud rush	<i>Juncus tracyi</i>	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Fair
Raymond sedge	<i>Carex raymondii</i>	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Fair
Ross' sedge	<i>Carex rossii</i>	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Fair
Rush-like sedge	<i>Carex scirpoidea</i>	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Fair
Small-flowered woodrush	<i>Luzula parviflora</i>	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Fair
Sprengel's sedge	<i>Carex sprengelii</i>	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Good
Sun-loving sedge	<i>Carex pensylvanica</i>	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Good
Thick-spike sedge	<i>Carex microptera</i>	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Fair
Thread leaf sedge	<i>Carex filifolia</i>	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Good
Water sedge	<i>Carex aquatilis</i>	Perennial	Native	Decreaser	Good
Woolly sedge	<i>Carex lanuginosa</i>	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Good

## Forbs

Common name	Scientific name	Life span	Origin	Grazing response	Forage value
Absinthe	<i>Artemisia absinthium</i>	Perennial	Introduced	Invader	Poor
Alfalfa	<i>Medicago sativa</i>	Perennial	Introduced	Invader	Good
Alpine milk vetch	<i>Astragalus alpinus</i>	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Fair
Alumroot	<i>Heuchera richardsonii</i>	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Poor
American milk vetch	<i>Astragalus americanus</i>	Perennial	Native	Decreaser	Good
American vetch	<i>Vicia americana</i>	Perennial	Native	Decreaser	Good
Ascending purple milk vetch	<i>Astragalus striatus</i>	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Fair
Arnica	<i>Arnica</i> spp.	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Poor
Aster	<i>Aster</i> spp.	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Fair
Baby's-breath	<i>Gypsophila paniculata</i>	Perennial	Introduced	Invader	Poor
Ball-head sandwort	<i>Arenaria congesta</i>	Perennial	Native	Invader	Poor
Balsam-root	<i>Balsamorhiza sagittata</i>	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Fair
Baneberry	<i>Actaea rubra</i>	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Poor and poisonous
Bastard toad-flax	<i>Comandra umbellata</i>	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Poor
Beard-tongue	<i>Penstemon</i> spp.	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Fair
Bird's-foot trefoil	<i>Lotus corniculatus</i>	Perennial	Introduced	Invader	Good
Black medick	<i>Medicago lupulina</i>	Perennial	Introduced	Invader	Good
Blazing star	<i>Liatris</i> spp.	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Poor
Bluebell	<i>Campanula rotundifolia</i>	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Poor
Blue-eyed grass	<i>Sisyrinchium montanum</i>	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Poor
Broomweed	<i>Gutierrezia sarothrae</i>	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Poor and poisonous
Buffalo bean/golden bean	<i>Thermopsis rhombifolia</i>	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Poor
Buttercup/crowfoot	<i>Ranunculus</i> spp.	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Poor
Canada anemone	<i>Anemone canadensis</i>	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Poor
Canada milk vetch	<i>Astragalus canadensis</i>	Perennial	Native	Decreaser	Good
Canada thistle	<i>Cirsium arvense</i>	Perennial	Introduced	Invader	Good
Cicer milk vetch	<i>Astragalus cicer</i>	Perennial	Introduced	Increaser	Good
Cinquefoil	<i>Potentilla</i> spp.	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Poor
Clover	<i>Trifolium</i> spp.	Perennial	Introduced	Increaser	Good
Common horsetail	<i>Equisetum arvense</i>	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Poor
Common nettle	<i>Urtica dioica</i>	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Poor
Common peppergrass	<i>Lepidium densiflorum</i>	Annual	Native	Invader	Poor
Common scouring rush	<i>Equisetum hyemale</i>	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Poor
Common tansy	<i>Tanacetum vulgare</i>	Perennial	Introduced	Invader	Poor
Common yarrow	<i>Achillea millefolium</i>	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Poor
Corydalis/touch-me-not	<i>Corydalis &amp; Impatiens</i> spp.	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Poor
Cow parsnip	<i>Heracleum lanatum</i>	Perennial	Native	Decreaser	Good
Cream-coloured pea vine	<i>Lathyrus ochroleucus</i>	Perennial	Native	Decreaser	Good
Cut-leaved anemone	<i>Anemone multifida</i>	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Poor
Dandelion	<i>Taraxacum officinale</i>	Perennial	Introduced	Invader	Fair
Death camas	<i>Zigadenus venenosus</i>	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Poor and poisonous
Dock/sorrel/wild begonia	<i>Rumex</i> spp.	Perennial	Native	Invader/Increaser	Poor
Dotted blazing star	<i>Liatris punctata</i>	Perennial	Native	Decreaser	Good
Drummond milk vetch	<i>Astragalus drummondii</i>	Perennial	Native	Decreaser	Good
Early blue violet	<i>Viola adunca</i>	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Poor

## Forbs *(continued)*

Common name	Scientific name	Life span	Origin	Grazing response	Forage value
False dandelion	<i>Agoseris glauca</i>	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Fair
False hellebore	<i>Veratrum eschscholtzii</i>	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Poor and poisonous
Field chickweed	<i>Cerastium arvense</i>	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Fair
Fireweed/willow-herb	<i>Epilobium</i> spp.	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Fair
Fleabane	<i>Erigeron</i> spp.	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Poor
Gaillardia	<i>Gaillardia aristata</i>	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Poor
Geranium	<i>Geranium</i> spp.	Perennial	Native	Decreaser	Good
Goat's-beard	<i>Tragopogon dubius</i>	Biennial	Introduced	Invader	Poor
Goldenrod	<i>Solidago</i> spp.	Perennial	Native	Invader	Poor
Ground plum	<i>Astragalus crassicaarpus</i>	Perennial	Native	Decreaser	Good
Gumweed	<i>Grindelia squarrosa</i>	Biennial	Native	Increaser	Poor
Hairy golden aster	<i>Heterotheca villosa</i>	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Fair
Hawksbeard	<i>Crepis</i> spp.	Perennial	Native	Decreaser	Fair
Hawkweed	<i>Hieracium</i> spp.	Perennial	Native	Decreaser	Good
Hedysarum	<i>Hedysarum</i> spp.	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Fair
Indian milk vetch	<i>Astragalus aboriginum</i>	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Good
Knapweed	<i>Centaurea</i> spp.	Biennial	Introduced	Invader	Poor
Lamb's-quarters	<i>Chenopodium album</i>	Introduced	Annual	Invader	Poor
Larkspurs	<i>Delphinium</i> spp.	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Poor and poisonous
Leafy spurge	<i>Euphorbia esula</i>	Perennial	Introduced	Invader	Poor and poisonous
Little clubmoss	<i>Selaginella densa</i>	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Poor
Locoweed	<i>Oxytropis</i> spp.	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Poor and poisonous
Long-leaved chickweed	<i>Stellaria longifolia</i>	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Fair
Lupine	<i>Lupinus</i> spp.	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Poor and poisonous
Meadow rue	<i>Thalictrum</i> spp.	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Poor
Missouri milk vetch	<i>Astragalus missouriensis</i>	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Fair
Moss phlox	<i>Phlox hoodii</i>	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Poor
Narrow-leaved milk vetch	<i>Astragalus pectinatus</i>	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Poor and poisonous
Narrow-leaved wormwood	<i>Artemisia dracunculus</i>	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Poor
Northern bedstraw	<i>Galium boreale</i>	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Poor
Northern gentian	<i>Gentianella amarella</i>	Annual / Biennial	Native	Increaser	Poor
Ox-eye daisy	<i>Chrysanthemum leucanthemum</i>	Perennial	Introduced	Invader	Poor
Paint-brush	<i>Castilleja</i> spp.	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Poor
Pasture sage	<i>Artemisia frigida</i>	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Poor
Plantain	<i>Plantago</i> spp.	Annual	Native	Increaser	Poor
Prairie clovers	<i>Petalostemon</i> spp.	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Fair
Prairie cone-flower	<i>Ratibida columnifera</i>	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Poor
Prairie crocus	<i>Anemone patens</i>	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Poor
Prairie onion	<i>Allium textile</i>	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Fair
Prairie sage	<i>Artemisia ludoviciana</i>	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Poor
Purple milk vetch	<i>Astragalus dasyglottis</i>	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Fair
Purple pea vine	<i>Lathyrus venosus</i>	Perennial	Native	Decreaser	Good
Pussy-toes/everlasting	<i>Antennaria</i> spp.	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Poor
Prostrate pigweed	<i>Amaranthus graecizans</i>	Annual	Native	Invader	Poor

## Forbs *(continued)*

Common name	Scientific name	Life span	Origin	Grazing response	Forage value
Rock cress	<i>Arabis</i> spp.	Biennial	Native	Increasers	Poor
Russian thistle	<i>Salsola kali</i>	Annual	Introduced	Invader	Poor
Sainfoin	<i>Onobrychis viciifolia</i>	Perennial	Introduced	Invader	Good
Scarlet mallow	<i>Sphaeralcea coccinea</i>	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Poor
Scentless chamomile	<i>Matricaria perforata</i>	Perennial	Introduced	Invader	Poor
Seaside arrow-grass	<i>Triglochin maritima</i>	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Poor and poisonous
Showy milkweed	<i>Asclepias speciosa</i>	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Poor and poisonous
Silver saltbush	<i>Atriplex argentea</i>	Annual	Native	Increaser	Fair
Slender milk vetch	<i>Astragalus flexuosus</i>	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Fair
Sow thistle	<i>Sonchus</i> spp.	Perennial	Introduced	Invader	Fair
Spiny ironplant	<i>Haplopappus spinulosus</i>	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Poor
Star-flowered solomon's seal	<i>Smilacina stellata</i>	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Fair
Sticky geranium	<i>Geranium viscosissimum</i>	Perennial	Native	Decreaser	Good
Strawberry blite	<i>Chenopodium capitatum</i>	Annual	Introduced	Invader	Poor
Sweet clover	<i>Melilotus</i> spp.	Biennial	Introduced	Invader	Good; mature plants become poor
Three-flowered avens (old man's whiskers)	<i>Geum triflorum</i>	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Poor
Timber milk vetch	<i>Astragalus miser</i>	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Poor and poisonous
Tumbleweed	<i>Amaranthus albus</i>	Annual	Native	Invader	Poor
Water hemlock	<i>Cicuta maculata</i>	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Poor and poisonous
Water parsnip	<i>Sium suave</i>	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Poor
Water smartweed	<i>Polygonum amphibium</i>	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Poor
Wavy-leaved thistle	<i>Cirsium undulatum</i>	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Fair
Western Canada violet	<i>Viola canadensis</i>	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Fair
Western wood lily	<i>Lilium philadelphicum</i>	Perennial	Native	Decreaser	Fair
White camas	<i>Zigadenus elegans</i>	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Poor and poisonous
Wild blue flax	<i>Linum lewisii</i>	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Poor
Wild licorice	<i>Glycyrrhiza lepidota</i>	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Poor
Wild strawberry	<i>Fragaria virginiana</i>	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Poor
Yellow umbrella plant	<i>Eriogonum flavum</i>	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Poor

## Shrubs

Common name	Scientific name	Life span	Origin	Grazing response	Forage value
Alder	<i>Alnus</i> spp.	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Poor
Ball/pincushion cactus	<i>Coryphantha vivipara</i>	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Poor
Buckbrush/wolfberry	<i>Symphoricarpos occidentalis</i>	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Poor
Bush cranberry	<i>Viburnum</i> spp.	Perennial	Native	Decreaser	Fair
Canada buffalo-berry	<i>Shepherdia canadensis</i>	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Poor
Choke cherry	<i>Prunus virginiana</i>	Perennial	Native	Decreaser	Fair but young leaves poisonous
Currants/gooseberry	<i>Ribes</i> spp.	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Poor
Dwarf/bog/water birch	<i>Betula</i> spp.	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Fair
Greasewood	<i>Sarcobatus vermiculatus</i>	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Fair but poisonous



## Shrubs *(continued)*

Common name	Scientific name	Life span	Origin	Grazing response	Forage value
Honeysuckle	<i>Lonicera</i> spp.	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Poor
Juniper	<i>Juniperus</i> spp.	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Poor
Kinnikinnick/bearberry	<i>Arctostaphylos uva-ursi</i>	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Fair
Mountain maple	<i>Acer glabrum</i>	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Fair
Oregon grape (creeping mahonia)	<i>Berberis repens</i>	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Poor
Pin cherry	<i>Prunus pensylvanica</i>	Perennial	Native	Decreaser	Fair
Prickly pear cactus	<i>Opuntia</i> spp.	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Poor
Rabbit-brush	<i>Chrysothamnus nauseosus</i>	Perennial	Native	Invader	Poor and poisonous
Red osier dogwood	<i>Cornus stolonifera</i>	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Good
Roses	<i>Rosa</i> spp.	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Poor
Salt sage/Nuttall's atriplex	<i>Atriplex nuttallii</i>	Perennial	Native	Decreaser	Good
Saskatoon	<i>Amelanchier alnifolia</i>	Perennial	Native	Decreaser	Good
Shrubby cinquefoil	<i>Potentilla fruticosa</i>	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Poor
Silver-berry/wolf willow	<i>Elaeagnus commutata</i>	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Fair
Thorny buffalo-berry	<i>Shepherdia argentea</i>	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Poor
Sagebrush	<i>Artemisia cana</i>	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Fair
Skunk-bush	<i>Rhus trilobata</i>	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Poor
Snowberry	<i>Symphoricarpos albus</i>	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Poor
Western mountain ash	<i>Sorbus scopulina</i>	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Fair
Wild raspberry	<i>Rubus idaeus</i>	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Fair
Willows	<i>Salix</i> spp.	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Fair
Winter fat	<i>Eurotia lanata</i>	Perennial	Native	Decreaser	Good

## Trees

Common name	Scientific name	Life span	Origin	Grazing response	Forage value
Aspen poplar	<i>Populus tremuloides</i>	Perennial	Native	Increaser/Invader	Fair
Balsam poplar/cottonwoods	<i>Populus</i> spp.	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Poor
Paper/white birch	<i>Betula papyrifera</i>	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Fair
Pines	<i>Pinus</i> spp.	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Poor
Spruce	<i>Picea</i> spp.	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Poor
Tamarak	<i>Larix laricina</i>	Perennial	Native	Increaser	Poor

## References

Tannas, K. *Common Plants of the Western Rangelands, Volumes 1 - 3*. Alberta Agriculture. Agdex 134/30-1, 30-2, 30-3.

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