

Lower Allergen Landscape Planting Resource List

This plant list is intended to assist in the selection of lower allergen landscape plantings and is not a comprehensive list. For additional resources please refer to the document Pollinator and Allergy-Friendly Gardening in the City of Victoria. Below are some tips to help increase the success of your lower allergen planting.

- Contrary to popular belief, most pollinator friendly species are lower allergen. Plants with bright showy flowers are typically the ones that are insect-pollinated, and are inherently lower allergic reaction inducing due to having less pollen than wind-pollinated plants, and pollen that is heavier and stickier, and less likely to be airborne.
- Right Plant Right Place. This old adage bears true. Plants that are stressed are commonly associated with increased molds, insect frass, and even increased pollen production! Spend the time to ensure the plants you are choosing are appropriate for your site.
- Consider proximity of plantings to high traffic or gathering areas to reduce the potential for plant species that can attract unwanted pests i.e. social wasps such as yellow jackets
- When possible, plant females of dioecious species. This is not always feasible but speak with the experts at your local garden centre about availability and to help you identify the best plant for your situation.
- Careful thought and research into your plant choices will help you to create a successful lower allergen planting that all can enjoy!

The OPALS ranking system has been used here as the primary tool in the assessment of the allergenicity of plant species. Currently, it is the only numerically valued system to rate allergenicity and is not all inclusive of lower allergen plant species available for use in our region. Research and understanding of pollen dispersal methods and other allergy inducing attributes of plants is important in making informed decisions.

| Plant Type | Species | Common Name | OPALS RANK: 1-5 Lower Risk; 6-8 Med Risk; 9-10 High Risk | Native | Pollinator Friendly | Drought Resistant | Exposure: S (Sun); PS (Part Sun); SH (Shade) | General Comments |
|---------------|-----------------------------|-----------------|---|--------|---------------------|-------------------|---|--|
| Annuals/Bulbs | <i>Begonia spp.</i> | Begonia | 2 to 4 | | | | S/PS/SH | Fibrous 2, Tuberous 4 |
| | <i>Allium cernuum</i> | Nodding Onion | 2 | • | • | • | S/PS | Native flowering onion. Naturalizes easily |
| | <i>Allium spp.</i> | Flowering Onion | 2 | | • | • | S/PS | Hardy and easy to grow |
| | <i>Camassia leichtlinii</i> | Great Camas | 2 | • | • | • | S/PS | Native bulb grown best in heavy soils |
| | <i>Camassia quamash</i> | Common Camas | 3 | • | • | • | S/PS | Native bulb grown best in heavy soils |
| | <i>Cleome spinosa</i> | Spider Flower | 3 | | • | | S/PS | Easy to grow, tall annual |
| | <i>Coleus spp.</i> | Coleus | 1 | | | | PS/SH | Excellent foliage plant |
| | <i>Crocus spp.</i> | Crocus | 2 | | • | • | S/PS/SH | Naturalizing bulb with many options available |
| | <i>Cyclamen</i> | Cyclamen | 1 | | • | • | PS/SH | Tuberous perennial |
| | <i>Erythronium oregonum</i> | Fawn Lily | 2 | • | • | • | SH | Plant in moist shady areas |
| | <i>Impatiens spp.</i> | Impatiens | 1 | | • | | PS/SH | One of the best lower allergen annuals |
| | <i>Lathyrus odorata</i> | Sweet Pea | 3 | | • | | S | Scent may bother some |
| | <i>Lobelia</i> | Lobelia | 1 to 4 | | | | S | Rank dependant on sex |
| | <i>Narcissus spp.</i> | Daffodil | 4 | | • | • | S | May naturalize in optimal conditions |
| | <i>Viola</i> | Pansy | 1 | | | | S/PS | Produce very little pollen |
| | <i>Pelargonium</i> | Geranium | 3 | | | • | S | Very drought resistant – scent may bother some |
| | <i>Petunia</i> | Petunia | 2 | | | | S | Requires good soils, adequate moisture |
| | <i>Tulipa</i> | Tulip | 1 to 3 | | | | S | Singles 1, Doubles 3 |

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| Groundcovers/Ferns | <i>Adiantum pedatum</i> | Maiden Hair Fern | 3 | • | | | SH | Good fern that produces small amounts of spores |
| | <i>Arctostaphylos uva-ursi</i> | Kinnikinnick | 2 | • | • | • | S | Best in full sun. Does well in poor soils |
| | <i>Armeria maritima</i> | Sea Thrift | 1 | • | • | • | S | Excellent low growing native groundcover |
| | <i>Blechnum spicant</i> | Deer Fern | 4 | • | | | PS/SH | Evergreen fern suitable for moist understory plantings |
| | <i>Fragaria chiloensis</i> | Coastal Strawberry | 1 | • | • | | S | Hardy fruiting groundcover |
| | <i>Gaultheria shallon</i> | Salal | 1 to 5 | • | • | | PS/SH | Males 5, Females 1 |
| | <i>Mahonia nervosa</i> | Short Oregon Grape | 2 | • | • | • | S/PS | Evergreen with spikes of yellow flowers |
| | <i>Mahonia repens</i> | Creeping Oregon Grape | 2 | | • | • | S/PS | Good spreading native ground cover |
| | <i>Oxalis oregana</i> | Wood Sorrel | 1 | • | • | | PS/SH | Small low growing perennial |
| | <i>Polystichum munitum</i> | Sword Fern | 4 | • | | • | S/PS/SH | Easy to grow, tolerant or many conditions |
| | <i>Sagina subulata</i> | Scotch Moss | 1 | | | | S/PS | Moss like perennial |
| | <i>Sedum spathulifolium</i> | Broad-Leaved Stonecrop | 2 | • | • | • | S | An excellent native groundcover for full sun/drought conditions |
| | <i>Sedum spp.</i> | Stonecrop | 2 | | • | • | S | A large group of succulent perennials |
| | <i>Thymus spp.</i> | Thyme | 3 | | • | • | S | Flowering perennial groundcover. Be mindful of stinging insects at foot level |
| Perennial | <i>Acanthus mollis</i> | Bear's Breech | 1 | | | | PS/SH | Shade loving perennial with large leaves and tall spiky flowers |
| | <i>Achillea millefolium</i> | Yarrow | 4 | • | • | • | S | Easy to grow native perennial with many cultivars available |
| | <i>Agapanthus orientalis</i> | Lily of the Nile | 2 | | • | | S | Possible skin rash from sap |
| | <i>Aquilegia formosa</i> | Red Columbine | 1 | • | • | | S/PS | Easy to grow woodland perennial |
| | <i>Arabis caucasica</i> | Rock Cress | 1 | | • | • | S/PS | Good rock garden plant with profuse flowering |
| | <i>Astilbe chinensis</i> | Astilbe | 4 | | • | | PS/SH | Best in rich fertile soil |
| | <i>Bergenia crassifolia</i> | Elephant Ear | 2 | | • | • | S | Large leaf evergreen |
| | <i>Brunnera macrophylla</i> | Brunnera | 2 | | | | PS/SH | Attractive foliage with light airy flowers for shady locations |
| | <i>Campanula spp.</i> | Bell Flower | 1 | | • | • | S/PS/SH | Diverse genus with many species available |
| | <i>Delphinium spp.</i> | Larkspur | 3 | | • | | S | Thrives in full sun, with rich acidic soils. |
| | <i>Dicentra formosa</i> | Pacific Bleeding Heart | 4 | • | • | | S/PS | Prefers shady moist locations – handling this plant sometimes causes skin rashes |
| | <i>Echinacea purpurea</i> | Coneflower | 5 | | • | • | S | Hardy, showy perennial |
| | <i>Geranium spp.</i> | Cranesbill Geranium | 3 | | • | • | S/PS | Low growing spreading perennial |
| | <i>Helleborus orientalis</i> | Christmas Rose | 4 | | • | | PS/SH | Can cause skin rash in some |
| | <i>Hemerocallis spp.</i> | Daylily | 6 | | | • | S | Easy to grow with many options available. Potential for skin rash |
| | <i>Heuchera spp.</i> | Coral Bells | 1 | | | | S/PS | Low growing perennial typically used for its foliage |
| | <i>Hosta spp.</i> | Hosta | 1 | | • | | PS/SH | Large ornamental leaves. Does best in rich fertile soils |
| | <i>Iris spp.</i> | Iris | 1 to 4 | | • | | S/PS | Dependant on cultivar/species |
| | <i>Liatris spicata</i> | Blazing Star | 4 | | • | • | S | Tall showy perennial with spiky flowers. Excellent pollinator plant |
| | <i>Lupinus polyphyllus</i> | Large Leaved Lupine | 3 | • | • | • | S | Showy perennial popular in garden displays or naturalized plantings |
| <i>Myosotis spp.</i> | Forget Me Nots | 2 | | • | | S/PS | Great for perennial border edging | |

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| Perennial | <i>Nepeta racemosa</i> | Catmint | 2 | | • | • | S/PS | Needs moist soil. Great pollinator plant |
| | <i>Papaver orientalis</i> | Oriental Poppy | 3 | | • | • | S | Thrives in full sun and poor soils |
| | <i>Perovskia atriplicifolia</i> | Russian Sage | 1 | | • | • | S | Excellent pollinator plant. Be mindful of stinging insects. |
| | <i>Rudbeckia spp.</i> | Black Eyed Susan | 5 | | • | • | S | Good drought resistant perennial with attractive flowers |
| | <i>Salvia spp.</i> | Sage | 1 to 4 | | • | • | S/PS | Rank dependant on species and cultivars. Square stems with attractive blooms |
| | <i>Solidago lepida</i> | Canada Goldenrod | 6 | • | • | • | S | May cause skin rash. Some allergy sufferers may be affected. |
| | <i>Verbena bonariensis</i> | Tall Verbena | 3 | • | • | • | S/PS | Tall airy perennial with clusters of purple flowers. Occasionally causes skin rash |
| | <i>Zantedeschia aethiopica</i> | Call Lily | 4 | | • | • | S/PS | Attractive perennial with unique flower. Prefers moist soil but has been shown to be drought resistant as well |
| Shrubs | <i>Arbutus unedo</i> | Strawberry bush | 3 | | • | • | S/PS | Drought resistant evergreen shrub with attractive bark |
| | <i>Aucuba japonica</i> | Japanese laurel | 1 to 6 | | | | PS/SH | Females 1, Males 6 |
| | <i>Azalea japonica</i> | Azalea | 3 | | • | | PS/SH | Attractive showy shrub with may species available |
| | <i>Berberis thunbergii</i> | Barberry | 3 | | • | • | S/PS | Tough, easy to grow. 'Concorde' is a good smaller variety |
| | <i>Callicarpa bodinieri</i> | Beauty Berry | 3 | | | | S/PS | Good shrub for winter interest with clusters of small purple berries |
| | <i>Camelia japonica</i> | Camelia | 1 to 3 | | • | • | S/PS | Doubles 1, Singles 3 |
| | <i>Ceanothus thyrsiflorus</i> | California Lilac | 4 | | • | • | S | Drought resistant evergreen shrub with a profusion of blue/lilac blooms in spring |
| | <i>Choisya ternata</i> | Mexican Orange | 3 | | • | • | S/PS | Evergreen shrub with fragrant white blooms |
| | <i>Cistus corbariensis</i> | Rock Rose | 3 | | • | • | S | Drought resistant evergreen shrub good for poor soils in full sun |
| | <i>Cornus spp</i> | Red Osier Dogwood | 5 | | • | • | S/PS | Large group of deciduous shrubs capable of surviving drought and moist conditions |
| | <i>Cornus sericea</i> | Red Osier Dogwood | 5 | • | • | • | S/PS | 'Kelseyii' good low growing cultivar of the native species |
| | <i>Erica spp.</i> | Heather | 4 | | • | • | S | Small flowering shrub. Needs fast draining soil and good light. |
| | <i>Escallonia 'Pink Princess'</i> | Escallonia | 3 | | • | • | S | Drought resistant evergreen shrub. Good as a hedgerow planting |
| | <i>Fatsia japonica</i> | Japanese aralia | 4 | | | • | PS/SH | Large leaved evergreen for partial shade |
| | <i>Fuchsia magellanica</i> | Fuchsia | 3 | | • | • | S/PS | Best in filtered sunlight with rich soils |
| | <i>Garrya elliptica</i> | Silk Tassel | 1 to 7 | | | • | S/PS | Female 1, Male 7 |
| | <i>Hebe spp.</i> | Shrubby Veronica | 2 | | • | • | S | Evergreen shrubs with many varieties available. |
| | <i>Holodiscus discolor</i> | Ocean Spray | 6 | • | • | • | S/PS | Grows best in sunny, dry locations |
| | <i>Hydrangea macrophylla</i> | Big Leaf Hydrangea | 3 | | • | • | PS/SH | Broad leaved, deciduous shrub with large flower heads |
| | <i>Juniperus squamata 'Blue Star'</i> | Blue Star Juniper | 1 | | | • | S | Female variety. Excellent drought resistance for many applications |
| <i>Kerria japonica</i> | Japanese kerria | 2 | | • | • | PS/SH | Easy to grow, yellow flowering shrub | |
| <i>Kolkwitzia amabilis</i> | Beauty Bush | 3 | | • | • | S/PS | Deciduous shrub with honeysuckle like flowers | |
| <i>Lavandula spp.</i> | Lavendar | 5 | | • | • | S | Not typically associated with pollen allergies but rather the scent can be bothersome to some. Be mindful of stinging insects | |
| <i>Mahonia aquifolium</i> | Tall Oregon Grape | 2 | • | • | • | S/PS | Evergreen native shrub with yellow flowers and edible fruit | |

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| Shrubs | <i>Nandina domestica</i> | Heavenly Bamboo | 1 | | | • | S | Very drought tolerant |
| | <i>Philadelphus lewisii</i> | Mock Orange | 3 | • | • | • | PS | Fragrant white blooms |
| | <i>Physocarpus capitatus</i> | Ninebark | 4 | • | • | • | S | Easy to grow deciduous shrub with white flowers |
| | <i>Pieris japonica</i> | Lily of the Valley Shrub (bush) | 3 | | • | • | S/PS | Evergreen shrubs of many varieties. Attractive flower clusters |
| | <i>Prunus lusitanica</i> | Portuguese Laurel | 5 | | • | • | S/PS | Good as a hedge |
| | <i>Rhododendron spp.</i> | Rhododendron | 4 | | • | • | S/PS/SH | Evergreen shrub with large flower clusters in spring. Stamens are large so direct contact with pollen is possible |
| | <i>Rosa spp.</i> | Rose | 2 to 6 | | • | • | S | Low scent, double variety is best |
| | <i>Rosmarinus officinalis</i> | Rosemary | 3 to 5 | | • | • | S | Rank dependant on selection |
| | <i>Rubus parviflorus</i> | Thimbleberry | 3 | • | • | | S/PS/SH | Prefers moist humus rich soil |
| | <i>Sambucus nigra</i> | Elderberry | 5 | | • | • | S/PS | Attractive shrub with black fruit |
| | <i>Sarcococca humilis</i> | Sweet Box | 5 | | • | | PS/SH | Small evergreen. Scent may cause allergic reaction |
| | <i>Skimmia japonica</i> | Japanese Skimmia | 1 to 5 | | • | | PS/SH | Females 1, Males 5 |
| | <i>Spiraea douglasii</i> | Douglas Spiraea | 5 | • | • | • | S/PS | Tolerant of wet soil |
| | <i>Spiraea japonica</i> | Bridal wreath | 5 | | • | • | S | Medium sized shrub with bright flowers. Drought resistant but not for extended periods |
| | <i>Symphoricarpos albus</i> | Snowberry | 3 | • | • | • | S/PS | Thrives in almost any conditions. Small white berries retain |
| | <i>Syringa vulgaris</i> | Lilac | 6 | | • | • | S/PS | Fragrance may be problematic for some |
| | <i>Taxus x media 'Hicksii'</i> | Yew | 1 | | | • | S/PS | Female cultivar. Drought resistant and tolerant of poor rocky soils |
| | <i>Vaccinium ovatum</i> | Huckleberry | 2 | • | • | • | S/PS | Native evergreen shrub bearing small black fruit |
| | <i>Vaccinium spp.</i> | Blueberry, Cranberry, Huckleberry etc. | 2 | | • | • | S/PS | Large group of evergreen / deciduous shrubs with edible fruits |
| | <i>Viburnum spp.</i> | Viburnum | 1 to 5 | | • | • | S/PS | Sterile varieties 1, deciduous 3, evergreen 5. Some individuals may be sensitive to fragrance of select varieties |
| <i>Weigela florida</i> | Weigela | 3 | | • | | S/PS | May varieties available, easy to grow but need adequate moisture | |
| Ornamental Grasses | <i>Carex morrowii</i> | Japanese sedge | 6 | | | • | S/PS | To reduce pollen exposure, remove seed heads when flowering |
| | <i>Festuca glauca</i> | Blue Oat Grass | 6 | | | • | S | To reduce pollen exposure, remove seed heads when flowering |
| | <i>Liriope muscari</i> | Lilyturf | 3 | | • | | S/PS | Grass like evergreen perennial. Small flowering spikes of lilac or white color |
| | <i>Ophiopogon nigrescens</i> | Black Mondo Grass | 3 | | | • | S/PS | Grass like evergreen perennial. Tough to establish |
| | <i>Pennisetum purpureum hyb.</i> | Fountain Grass Hybrids | 1 | | | | S | New hybrid varieties are becoming available that are pollen free. Inquire when purchasing to ensure they are pollen free varieties |
| | <i>Phormium tenax</i> | New Zealand Flax | 3 | | | • | S | Grass like large evergreen perennials available in many sizes and shades |