

Common Yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*)

Family: Aster (*Asteraceae*)

DESCRIPTION: A common and widespread native Minnesota perennial, common yarrow is also known as milfoil, bloodwort or soldier's woundwort. Common yarrow prefers prairies, open woods, roadsides, fields and other mildly disturbed soils. Blooming from mid-July to early October, it produces one or more flat, dome-shaped flower heads ranging from yellow to white or pink. Insects pollinate the plant. Its flowers provide nectar; its stems provide habitat for larvae. It's named after the Trojan war hero Achilles.

USES: The fragrant foliage is used in fresh or dried floral arrangements. Historically, the stalk was used to treat pain and hemorrhaging. Tea made from leaves was used as a fever reducer, sleep aid and to treat stomach disorders. As a steam inhalant, it was used to treat headaches.

REFERENCES:

[USDA](#)
[Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center](#)
[Illinois Wildflowers](#)
[Minnesota Wildflowers](#)



Range Map Credit: NRCS Plants Database



Photo Credit: Ann Wessel, BWSR

Planting Recommendations

Drought-tolerant common yarrow does best in dry, well-drained soil but can grow in a variety of soil types including clay. Plant seeds no more than a quarter-inch deep in full sun or light shade. Seeds require light for germination, and temperatures between 65 and 75 degrees. Unlike most forb species, common yarrow seed does not require pretreatment.

It's more economical to start large plantings from seed. Container plants or plugs may be suited to smaller gardens, but this species can be aggressive and is best in larger pollinator meadow settings. Suggested complimentary native plants are prairie smoke, blue giant hyssop, pale purple coneflower, sneezeweed, longbract spiderwort and prairie dropseed.

SIMILAR SPECIES: The fernlike foliage of the invasive, noxious weeds Queen Anne's lace (*Daucus carota*) and common tansy (*Tanacetum vulgare*) is similar. Queen Anne's lace flowers appear delicate, often with a single, dark-red flower at the center of the umbel, and long, showy tracts extending from umbels' base. Common tansy is a larger plant; its ray flowers are smaller or absent. **Do not plant Queen Anne's lace or common tansy.**

Developed by Tasha Kurtz

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STATEWIDE WETLAND INDICATOR STATUS: GP, MW, NCNE: FACU

ID: Growing 1 to 3 feet tall, the plant produces one to several stems. Cobweblike hairs cover its pale green central stem. Alternate leaves are evenly distributed, with varying degrees of hairiness. The lance-shaped, finely divided fernlike leaves range from a quarter-inch to 1.25 inch wide and 1.25 to 6 inches long. The smallest leaves are near the top. Ray flowers' petals are often slightly notched at the tip. The fruit is a dry seed.