



COMMON NATIVE PLANTS OF MICHIGAN SAND DUNES

Native (indigenous) species are important to maintaining the diversity, quality, and function of Michigan's coastal dunes. They are adapted to the harsh growing conditions found along the shoreline. This is a list of some of the many native plant species found in sand dune communities, organized by the proximity to the lake where the plant is most likely to be found. Foredunes are closest to the lake, backdunes are further from the lake. Plants will grow where they find the necessary nutrients, water, and sun regardless of the distance from the shoreline. For example, plants listed as being in a transition dune may also be found in a foredune.

The plant's common name is followed by its scientific name in italics. Photos of the plants can be found in the [United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service Plants Database](#) or on the [University of Michigan Herbarium Michigan Flora](#) web site. For best search results, use the scientific name, as some plants have multiple common names.

This list was created in 1975 by Michigan State University using the Michigan Great Lakes Shorelands Zone Boundary Definitions. Additional plant species were added to the list by Department of Natural Resources staff in 1989, and reviewed by Hope College faculty in 2013.

Foredune

Common Name	Scientific Name	Category
Beach Grass or Marram Grass	<i>Ammophila breviligulata</i>	Grass
Sand Reed Grass	<i>Calamovilfa longifolia</i>	Grass
Common Milkweed	<i>Asclepias syriaca</i>	Herb
Sea-rocket	<i>Cakile edentula</i>	Herb
Harebell or Bluebell	<i>Campanula rotundifolia</i>	Herb
River-bank Grape	<i>Vitis riparia</i>	Vine
Sand Cherry	<i>Prunus pumila</i>	Shrub
Cottonwood	<i>Populus deltoides</i>	Tree

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Transition Dune

Further from the lake where the winds are less are dunes in transition. Plants common to this area can also be typical of open dune communities.

Common Name	Scientific Name	Category
Little Bluestem	<i>Schizachyrium scoparium</i>	Grass
Sand Cress	<i>Arabidopsis lyrata</i>	Herb
Wild Wormwood	<i>Artemisia campestris</i>	Herb
Bugseed	<i>Corispermum sp.</i>	Herb
Pitcher's Thistle or Dune Thistle	<i>Cirsium pitcheri</i>	Herb
Summer Grape	<i>Vitis aestivalis</i>	Vine
Bearberry or Kinnikinick	<i>Arctostaphylos uva-ursi</i>	Shrub
Blueleaf Willow	<i>Salix myricoides</i>	Shrub

Backdune

The backdunes are furthest from the shoreline and support plants growing on a more stable dune. Backdunes may be densely forested.



Hairy Puccoon

Common Name	Scientific Name	Category
Canada Wild Rye	<i>Elymus canadensis</i>	Grass
Flowering Spurge	<i>Euphorbia corollata</i>	Herb
Seaside Spurge	<i>Euphorbia polygonifolia</i>	Herb
Plains Puccoon or Hairy Puccoon	<i>Lithospermum carolinense</i>	Herb
Horse Mint or Dotted Mint	<i>Monarda punctata</i>	Herb
Common Evening Primrose	<i>Oenothera biennis</i>	Herb
Beach Pea	<i>Lathyrus japonicus</i>	Vine
Ground Juniper	<i>Juniperus communis</i>	Shrub
Creeping Juniper	<i>Juniperus horizontalis</i>	Shrub

Backdune Plants

continued



Common Name	Scientific Name	Category
Yew or Ground-hemlock	<i>Taxus canadensis</i>	Shrub
Kalm's St. John's-wort	<i>Hypericum kalmianum</i>	Shrub
False Heather or Beach-heath	<i>Hudsonia tomentosa</i>	Shrub
Red-osier Dogwood	<i>Cornus sericea</i>	Shrub
Serviceberry	<i>Amelanchier interior</i>	Shrub
Round-leaved Serviceberry	<i>Amelanchier sanguinea</i>	Shrub
Shadbush Serviceberry	<i>Amelanchier spicata</i>	Shrub
Alternate-leaved Dogwood	<i>Cornus alternifolia</i>	Tree
Smooth Shadbush	<i>Amelanchier laevis</i>	Tree
Hop-hornbeam or Ironwood	<i>Ostrya virginiana</i>	Tree
Basswood or Linden	<i>Tilia americana</i>	Tree
American Beech	<i>Fagus grandifolia</i>	Tree
Red Oak	<i>Quercus rubra</i>	Tree
Black Oak	<i>Quercus velutina</i>	Tree
Sugar Maple or Hard Maple	<i>Acer saccharum</i>	Tree
Red Maple	<i>Acer rubrum</i>	Tree
Red-cedar	<i>Juniperus virginiana</i>	Tree
White-cedar or Arbor Vitae	<i>Thuja occidentalis</i>	Tree
White Pine	<i>Pinus strobus</i>	Tree
Jack Pine	<i>Pinus banksiana</i>	Tree
Red Pine	<i>Pinus resinosa</i>	Tree
Hemlock	<i>Tsuga canadensis</i>	Tree
Balsam Fir	<i>Abies balsamea</i>	Tree

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