

Showy Prairie Gentian



Eustoma exaltatum spp. *russellianum* (other names: *Eustoma grandiflora* and *Eustoma russellianum*)

Identification

Showy prairie gentian may act as an annual or perennial, however, mostly perennial in its native range. The bell-shaped, upright flowers are usually blue or purple, occurring singly at the ends of short branches near the top of the plant. The erect stems and leaves are blue-gray or blue-green and waxy. The plants are 10-24 in/25-60 cm tall and arise from a taproot. This herbaceous plant that is found along streams and in wet meadows from South Dakota to Texas and Mexico.



Photo credit: Mlamar (iNaturalist)

Observation Tips

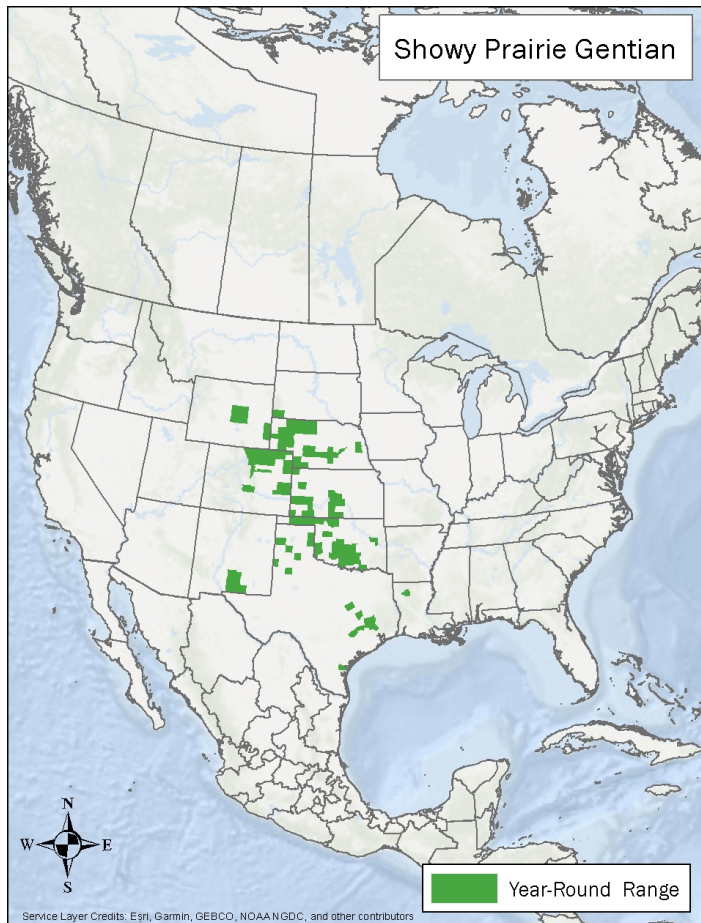
Showy prairie gentian is often found along prairie streams and in wet meadows and pastures blooming from June until September.

Interesting Fact

Showy prairie gentian is considered one of the handsomest prairie wildflowers.

Ideal Habitat

Across its range, the showy prairie gentian is found in moist places in fields and prairies, especially in areas adjacent to streams. Soils are described as sandy or sandy loams. In Colorado, the showy prairie gentian is often found in alkaline soils and at elevations of 3,500-6,000ft/1,070-1,830m.



Range Map provided by US Department of Ag, PLANTS Database

Management Activities that Benefit Species – Best Management Practices (BMPs)

Maintain areas of native grasslands and riparian areas along streams to provide habitat for showy prairie gentian. Managing for diverse grazing lands should benefit this species.

Management Activities to Avoid

Avoid ground disturbing activities such as road or pipeline development in areas with these plants. Avoid extensive flower collection as overcollection is a threat to their continued presence. Also avoid activities that promote noxious weed invasion and expansion. When spraying for noxious weeds, use the least amount of chemical needed to avoid impacting native species.

Other Species that Benefit from Similar Habitat Management

Other prairie and riparian plants and animals will benefit from management for showy prairie gentian.

Other Resources

Kansas Wildflowers: [Showy prairie gentian](#)

Ladybird Johnson Wildflower Center: Plant Database: [Showy prairie gentian.](#)

Montana Field Guide: [Showy prairie gentian.](#)

Spackman, S., B. Jennings. J. Coles. C. Dawson, M. Minton, A. Kratz, and C. Spurrier. 1997. Colorado Natural Heritage Program. [Colorado Rare Plant Field Guide.](#) Prepared for the Bureau of Land Management, US Forest Service and US Fish and Wildlife Service.

US Department of Agriculture, NRCS. 2020. The PLANTS Database. National Plant Data Team, Greensboro, NC 27401-4901, USA. [Showy prairie gentian](#)