



Find inspiration at demonstration gardens across Wyoming

Wondering what to plant this year to beautify your place, support pollinators, or grow some food for your family or community? Demonstration gardens are great places to see what plants might fit your conditions, how they might be placed to look or grow their best, and more!

As you seek new ideas, here are a few Wyoming sites you might want to check out.

Casper

A great place to start your explorations lies on the west side of Casper, near the county fairgrounds. The gardens at the **Agricultural Resource and Learning Center** serve as outdoor classrooms and feature a diverse array of plants.

The gardens were first planted in 1987, when the building was constructed, and have evolved to

showcase water-wise plant choices. The raised berm on the west side of the building comprises a wide variety of plants chosen for their ability to survive and thrive in this arid environment. From flowering plants to shrubs and trees, there is something for everyone.

Featured plants include cactus, leadplant, chocolate flower, and penstemons; shrubs and sub-shrubs, such as 'Dark Knight' Blue Mist spirea, junipers, and mountain mahogonies; grasses, such as big bluestem and blue oat grass; and trees, including bristle cone pine, wavy leaf oak, Tatarian maple, and Russian hawthorn.

Since 2003, the Agricultural Resource and Learning Center has also served as a trial site for the Plant Select® program. The plants in this program are under consideration for introduction to the horticulture

trade or are underutilized in the green industry and recommended for increased use in xeric gardens or water-wise landscapes.

The gardens are maintained by a seasonal groundskeeper and University of Wyoming Extension Master Gardener volunteers. Other gardens on the property include a shade garden, an alternative turf area, a hummingbird garden, a perennial garden, a small sensory garden area, a silver garden, and areas that are being developed into an arboretum and urban orchard.

Pinedale

Visiting or passing through Pinedale? Take some time to check out the **Pinedale Water-Wise Demonstration Garden**. This garden is made possible by the Sage and Snow Garden Club, Sublette Native Plant Society, and the Town of



Demonstration garden at the Agricultural Resource and Learning Center in Casper in early fall. Photo by David Keto.



Volunteers planting the Pinedale Water-Wise Demonstration Garden. Photo by Julie Kraft.

Pinedale. Located on the corner of Maybell and Magnolia Streets, the garden was created in 2014.

This site features plants that are low maintenance and grow well in Pinedale with minimal water. Common plants found in the garden include Rocky Mountain penstemon, Maximilian sunflower, yarrow, wild iris, wild geranium, cranesbill lupine, and native asters. Other featured plants include primroses, three-flowered avens, pussytoes, heartleaf arnica, shooting stars, wild hollyhock, buckwheat, blue flax, scarlet gilia, scarlet globeflower, stonecrop, and bitterroot.

Laramie

Coming to Laramie for a summer event or to visit a favorite student? Make sure to check out one of several places you can catch the greenery. A stroll around Laramie's LaBonte Park walking path is a great way to start or end your visit. While the kids get some energy out on the play structures, you can enjoy the **water-wise demonstration garden** near the corner of Shield Street and N. 9th Street.

Planted in 2007, the south side of this large garden bed showcases a mixture of non-native and native water-wise plants (flowers and grasses), while the north side features native plants only. Visiting around the end of June, you'll find your eyes awash in a flood of color as the native penstemons reach full bloom.

This demo garden is made possible by UW Extension, Laramie Rivers Conservation District, the City of Laramie, and volunteers from the Laramie Garden Club. A brochure with featured plants from the garden is located at <https://bit.ly/labonte-demo-garden>.

Done with the park? Shift gears and head to the University of Wyoming campus, where you can visit **"The Berry Prairie" Green Roof**. This space, which is part of the Berry Biodiversity Conservation Center, features a variety of native plants. Outside the Berry Center, there are also mini-gardens planted with penstemons, Indian paintbrush, and more.

As you explore other areas of campus, don't forget to check out



Perennial grasses in winter on display at the Agricultural Resource and Learning Center. Photo by Donna Hoffman.

the wide array of tree and shrub species sprinkled throughout the grounds.

Visiting during the cold season? Nothing beats a stroll through the **Williams Conservatory** to help chase away the winter blues. This greenhouse-type structure is home to more than 600 tropical, neotropical, temperate, and arid species from around the world. Located at the intersection of 9th Street and University Avenue, the conservatory is connected to the Aven Nelson Building.

Cheyenne

If you live in Cheyenne, you don't have far to travel! The **Cheyenne Botanic Gardens**, located in Lions Park, offer a wonderful source of inspiration. The Paul Smith Children's Village provides a full afternoon of fun for the younger set, while the rose, crevice, and pollinator habitat gardens, as well as the Shane Smith Grand Conservatory, offer a delightful and educational experience for all ages.

Want more? Swing by the **Library Pollinator Habitat** at the

Laramie County Public Library (visit <https://bit.ly/bb-lcl-pollinator-habitat> to learn more) or visit the **High Plains Arboretum**, located on the western edge of Cheyenne.

Seeing plants in place

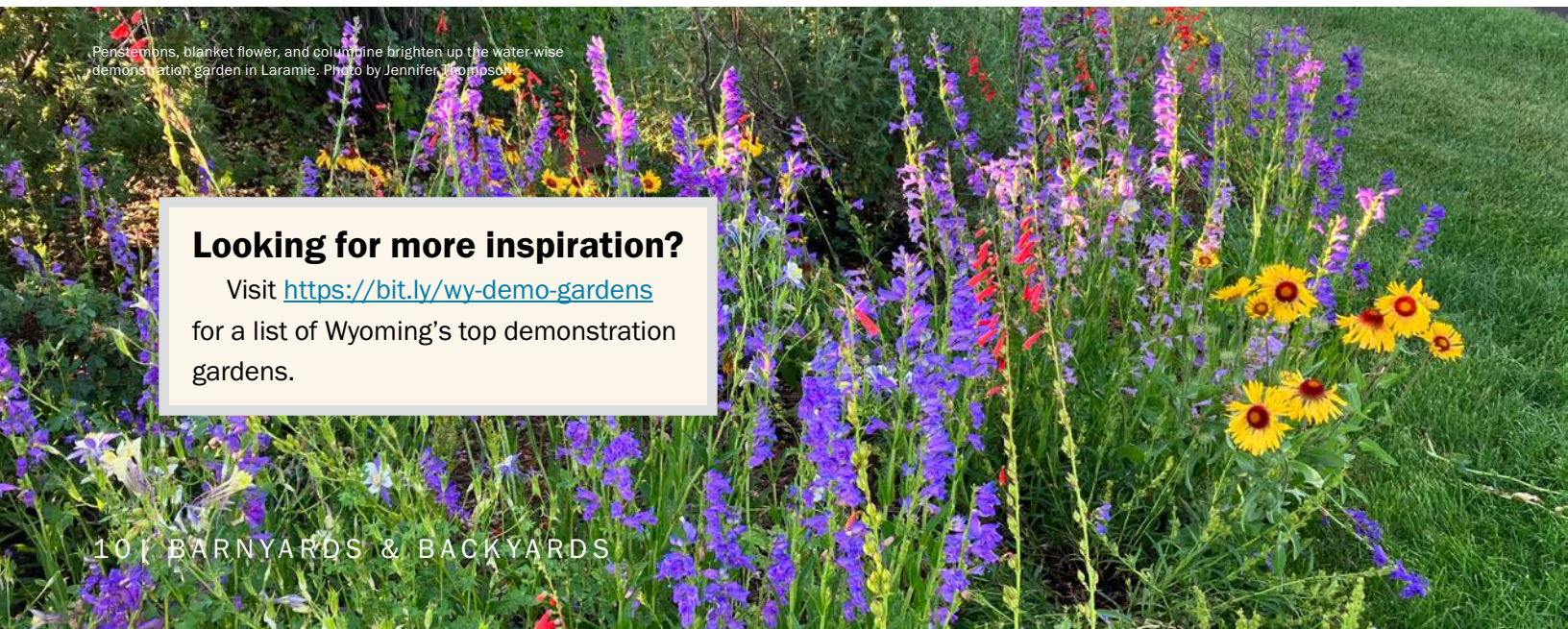
Demonstration gardens offer great ideas for new plants to add to your landscape—and might even inspire a whole new approach to your yard or garden. As you settle in for the winter, consider making plans to visit some of these plant-rich spots.

Keep in mind that it can be fun to check out demo gardens at different times of the year, as the plants in bloom change throughout the season. Some sites may offer inspiration even during the colder months.

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Donna Hoffman and Jennifer Thompson

are Wyoming gardening gurus who can't resist a good demonstration garden. A plant lover from way back, Hoffman is the state Master Gardener coordinator and can be reached at (307) 235-9400 or dhoffman@natronacounty-wy.gov.

Thompson, who is UW Extension's small acreage outreach coordinator, has a chronic case of penstemonia (i.e., penstemon-mania), a horticulture background, and a love of native plants.



Penstemons, blanket flower, and columbine brighten up the water-wise demonstration garden in Laramie. Photo by Jennifer Thompson.

Looking for more inspiration?

Visit <https://bit.ly/wy-demo-gardens> for a list of Wyoming's top demonstration gardens.