

## ***Phlox pilosa* – Downy Phlox**

COMMON NAME: Downy Phlox, Prairie Phlox

SCIENTIFIC NAME: *Phlox pilosa* – comes from Greek *phlox* meaning “flame” and *pilosus* for “soft” or “hairy”

FLOWER: Loose clusters of pinkish magenta blossoms each with 5 petals

BLOOMING PERIOD: Mid-May through June

SIZE: Low plant, 6 to 18 inches tall

BEHAVIOR: Considered an indicator of a rich prairie, but is able to persist through some types of disturbance.

SITE REQUIREMENTS: Tolerant of a broad range of soil types and moisture levels from moderately wet to quite dry. Flowers best in full sun, but can persist in light shade. Often found along railroads, in oak openings, prairie remnants.

NATURAL RANGE: Eastern U.S. from southern New England west to Wisconsin, in Canada west to Saskatchewan, and south to Florida, Texas and Missouri. In Wisconsin it is common except in the Northern Highlands.

SPECIAL FEATURES: This plant has beautiful flowers and a prolonged blooming period. Stems, leaves and the base of the flowers are covered with fine hairs giving it a “downy” appearance. The similar *Smooth Phlox* does not have these fine hairs. This flower provides a good late spring nectar source for butterflies.

SUGGESTED CARE: Water well to establish new plantings. Then little care should not be needed.

COMPANION PLANTS: Little bluestem, shooting star, wild strawberry, alum root, yellow star grass, black-eyed Susan, compass plant blue-eyed grass, stiff goldenrod, needle grass and golden Alexanders. On sandy sites it may also be found with sky blue aster, flowering spurge, round-headed bushclover, rough blazingstar, showy goldenrod and spiderwort.