

Emory Knoll Farms, Inc. proudly presents our new blog, established with the intent to keep our fellow plantfolk keyed in to what's been happening at the farm, functional planting projects, species/genera highlights, and more! I hope that you will be inspired to think outside the box about how to apply plants in the landscapes around you.

Keep on growing,

Arden Pontasch

In this edition, we are going to focus on spring bloomers for high stress planting areas like green roofs and gravel gardens. Many of the plants known to thrive in the most stressful of environs tend to also be known for the mid-to-late summer blooming times. However, when considering seasonal interest for visitors to your gardens (humans and wildlife, too!), spring can often be a time of year that gets overlooked, yet it is one of the most important times to provide interest and ecological services! As they say, April showers bring May flowers, and while the plants below provide show-stopping blooms in springtime, they will also fulfill the functional requirements to slow down the stormwater events (and the snow melt!) that we all expect this time of year!



### *Campanula rotundifolia*

*Campanula rotundifolia* (pictured above) is a widespread American wildflower that ranges from Canada to the Gulf of Mexico. Because of its wide distribution, it is a food source for many insects. It has a late spring to early summer bloom of pale lavender-blue, bell-shaped flowers. This perennial will benefit from growing in a deeper soil profile, or in mounded green roof media, and may need some watering to survive on a roof, in most areas. We recommend planning for regular maintenance when using this plant on green roofs or other high-stress areas as it might need periodic watering during periods of extended drought.



*Geranium x cantabrigiense* 'Biokovo'

This is not your typical Geranium. It has thrived for many years in a shallow space surrounded by pavers, in full sun, here at the farm. Tougher than its woodland cousins, it tolerates full sun; though it is a slower spreader than Sedum, it can be used as a ground cover or as an accent. Green foliage turns red in fall before dormancy. Flowers are a dainty light pink. There is little that provides greater enjoyment than smelling the citrusy smelling leaves on a warm spring day.

*Potentilla neumanniana*

Cinquefoil spreads by seed and stolon, creating a carpet or living mulch - perfect for deer-resistant matrix and naturalized meadow plantings, along slopes and lawn substitutions. The numerous yellow flowers that appear in spring and persist well into the summer are a pop of cheerful yellow and are highly valued by early spring pollinators. In the autumn, the foliage turns a maroon red and keeps its color well into winter, and is often evergreen in warmer climates.





*Sesleria caerulea*

Still a rather understated and underutilized graminoid that always makes a statement no matter where it's applied is *Sesleria caerulea*. True blue foliage offers texture and contrast in the cool weather when not much else is seen. Wonderful when planted next to *Sedum spurium* and *Phedimus takesimensis*, among other perennials with brightly colored foliage and blooms. Foliage becomes bluer in cooler temperatures. As with most grasses on green roofs, it will benefit from growing in a deeper soil profile or in mounded green roof media, with regular watering to help become established.

Bulb: *Muscari armeniacum*

One of the surest signs of spring, Grape Hyacinth should be planted en-masse and allowed to naturalize the area; it goes summer dormant so mix in other low growing foliage species. Sold as bare root Bulbs, and is shipped from October through May from our farm here in Maryland.

