

A GARDEN OF SMILES

By Shirley Froehlich, BSA

The fanciful names and descriptions of some of our prairie plants have inspired an idea for having some fun in the garden. Why not create a happy face?

For the Hair : Grass is known as the “**Hair of the Earth**”. Use a mix of Blue Grama and June Grass for conservative hair. Use Side Oats Grama and Sheep Fescue for spiky, more flamboyant hair.

For the Eyes : Blue Eyed Grass has star shaped flowers in spring to give eyes a sparkle.

For the Eyebrows : Upland White Aster would give nice bushy eyebrows.

For the Ears : Prairie Crocus is known as “**Ears of the Earth**”

For the Nose : You have some latitude here. Use Early Blue Violet for a button nose, Dotted Blazing Star for a medium size nose, or Purple Prairie Clover for a big honker.

For the Mouth : Cutleaf Anemone – the pink flowers in June are the lips and the round white seed heads later on give a toothy grin. Make sure the corners are turned up for a smile, not down.

For the Whiskers : Three Flowered Avens has pink plummy seed heads. It is also called “**Grandfather’s Whiskers**”.

All these can be planted on a background of Pussy Toes. The Pussy Toes outline the face as well as covering the ground between the facial features to reduce weeding. Choose a sunny, dry to medium site for the plants listed above. A little bit of a slope would make the face easier to see but is not necessary. If you have heavy soil, a slope will also help to give better drainage.

That’s all there is to it. Go ahead. Be brave. Be creative. I’ll bet everyone who sees your prairie face will have to smile or chuckle. And that’s a great reward!

Shirley is the owner of Prairie Originals, a nursery specialising in wildflowers and native prairie grasses near Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada. www.prairieoriginals.com