Potentilla or Shrubby Cinquefoil
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Shrubby Cinquefoil
(Potentilla fruticosa)

General Description
A very hardy and widely used native in landscape plantings across the state. Popular for its floral display throughout most of the summer season. There are several herbaceous forbs that belong to the Potentilla genus native to the North Dakota prairie.

Leaves and Buds
Bud Arrangement - Alternate.
Bud Color - Brown.
Bud Size - 1/6 inch.
Leaf Type and Shape - Pinnately compound, usually 3 to 5 elliptic leaflets.
Leaf Margins - Revolute margins.
Leaf Surface - Silky, pubescent.
Leaf Length - 3/4 to 1 inch; leaflets 3/8 to 3/4 inch.
Leaf Width - 1/2 to 1 inch; leaflets 1/8 to 3/8 inch.
Leaf Color - Dark green to gray.

Flowers and Fruits
Flower Type - Terminal cymes or solitary, 10 to 30 stamens. Primarily single-flowered, a few double cultivars.
Flower Color - Primarily yellow or white. Several varieties exhibit orange to pinkish-red shades.
Fruit Type - Achene.
Fruit Color - Brown.

Form
Growth Habit - Sub-shrub, may require rejuvenation every 5 to 6 years.
Texture - Fine, summer; medium-fine, winter.
Crown Height - 2 to 4 feet, depending on cultivar.
Crown Width - 2 to 5 feet.
Bark Color - Brown, shredding.
Root System - Fibrous, width of crown spread.

Environmental Requirement
Soils
Soil Texture - Clay to sandy loam.
Soil pH - 5.5 to 8.0. Adaptable to high pH, but variable by cultivar.
Windbreak Suitability Group - 1, 1K, 3, 4, 4C, 5, 6D, 6G.

Cold Hardiness
USDA Zone 2.

Water
Drought tolerant.

Light
Partial to full sun.

Uses
Conservation/Windbreaks
Not recommended due to short stature.

Wildlife
Cover for small ground birds.

Agroforestry Products
Food - Used as feed for livestock, cattle, horses, goats, pigs and geese.
Medicinal - Potentilla species have been used for cramps, mouth ulcers, spongy gums, loose teeth, respiratory ailments, and as a cardiac stimulant.

Urban/Recreational
Widely used for landscaping in foundation plantings, hedges and masses.

Cultivated Varieties
Potentilla fruticosa:
‘Abbotswood’ (Abbottswood Potentilla) - Flowers white with a pink blush.
‘Absaraka’ (Dakota Goldrush® Potentilla) - Yellow flowers, NDSU introduction.
‘Coronation Triumph’ (Coronation Triumph Potentilla) - 3 feet tall, abundant yellow flowers.
‘Dakota Sunrise’ (Dakota Sunrise Potentilla) - Flowers light yellow.
‘Day Dawn’ (Day Dawn Potentilla) - Flowers peach-pink, but in hot weather, creamy.
‘Fargo’ (Dakota Sunspot® Potentilla) - Yellow flowers, NDSU introduction.
‘Goldfinger’ (Goldfinger Potentilla) - Compact shrub, bright yellow flowers.
‘Hurstbourne’ (Hurstbourne Potentilla) - Bright yellow flowers all summer long.
‘Jackmanii’ (Jackman Potentilla) - 4 feet tall, large bright yellow flowers.
‘Katherine Dukes’ (Katherine Dykes Potentilla) - Lemon-yellow flowers.
‘Snowbird’ (Snowbird Potentilla) - Double white flowers.
‘Yellowbird’ (Yellowbird Potentilla) - Double yellow flowers.

Related Species
None.

Pests
Several leaf spot and mildew diseases. Spider mites often build up in warm, dry weather.