

# Sara Williams - Winner of The 2008 Prairie Garden Award for Excellence

by Linda Pearn

---

*Linda Pearn is Chair of The Prairie Garden Awards Board. Information for this article was excerpted from the nomination papers for Sara Williams*

---

The Prairie Garden Award for Excellence is awarded annually to an individual or group making a significant contribution to the advancement and/or promotion of horticulture on the Northern Great Plains. This is the ninth year that The Prairie Garden Committee has presented this award.

At a luncheon in September, 2008, The Prairie Garden Award for Excellence was presented to Sara Williams. Members of the nominating committee in attendance were Gwenna Moss, Charlotte Caron, Violet Vogt and Hugh Skinner. Also in attendance were family and friends and members of The Prairie Garden Committee.

Sara Williams was born in Washington, DC and graduated from the University of Michigan with a BA. She taught as a Peace Corps volunteer in Tanzania and as a volunteer with the United Nations Association of Great Britain in the Amazon basin of Peru. It was in Tanzania that Sara had her very first plot of land on which to grow a garden. She emigrated to Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada where Sara received both Bachelors and Masters degrees from the University of Saskatchewan. She worked as the Horticulture Extension Specialist with the Extension Division, University of Saskatchewan in Saskatoon from 1989 until her retirement in 2001.

Through her employment and personal love of horticulture, Sara brought horticulture to many Saskatchewan gardeners. Some of her major projects were: founding editor of *The Saskatchewan Gardener / The Gardener for The Prairies*; initiation and managing the Saskatchewan Master Gardener Program; and was a member of the team which developed the Prairie Horticulture Certificate.

Sara is the author or co-author of a number of books and articles on a wide range of horticulture topics. Books titles include *Creating the Prairie Xeriscape*, *Best Trees and Shrubs for the Prairies* (co-authored with Hugh Skinner), *Best Groundcovers & Vines for the Prairies* (co-authored with Hugh Skinner), *Perennials for the Plains and Prairies* (co-authored with Edgar W. Toop), and *In a Cold Land: Saskatchewan's Horticultural Pioneers*. In addition Sara has

written many newspaper and magazine articles and established herself as a well-known radio and television presence.

Hundreds of horticulture related workshops and talks have been presented by Sara to both home gardeners and professional groups throughout the Prairie Provinces, B.C., Ontario, North Dakota and Minnesota.

She has led garden tours to Great Britain, Ireland, Costa Rica and Hawaii organized under the auspices of the University of Saskatchewan and the Saskatoon Perennial Society. As well, she has been involved in garden tours in Saskatchewan, Alberta and BC.

Volunteer work and organizations include Saskatoon's Forestry Farm Park; Gardening at the Zoo; Perennial Plant Association; Saskatchewan Perennial Society; Skinner Arboretum Corporation; Saskatchewan Horticultural Association, to name a few. In addition Sara has received many awards and honours over the years.

Sara currently resides on five acres of sandy soil near Saskatoon where she has developed a beautiful and extensive garden – a popular garden tour destination.

Congratulations to Sara Williams for her contribution to the advancement and promotion of horticulture on the Northern Great Plains.

For more details on The Prairie Garden Award for Excellence and previous winners see [www.theprairiegarden.ca/award.html](http://www.theprairiegarden.ca/award.html). 🌱



*Sara Williams*