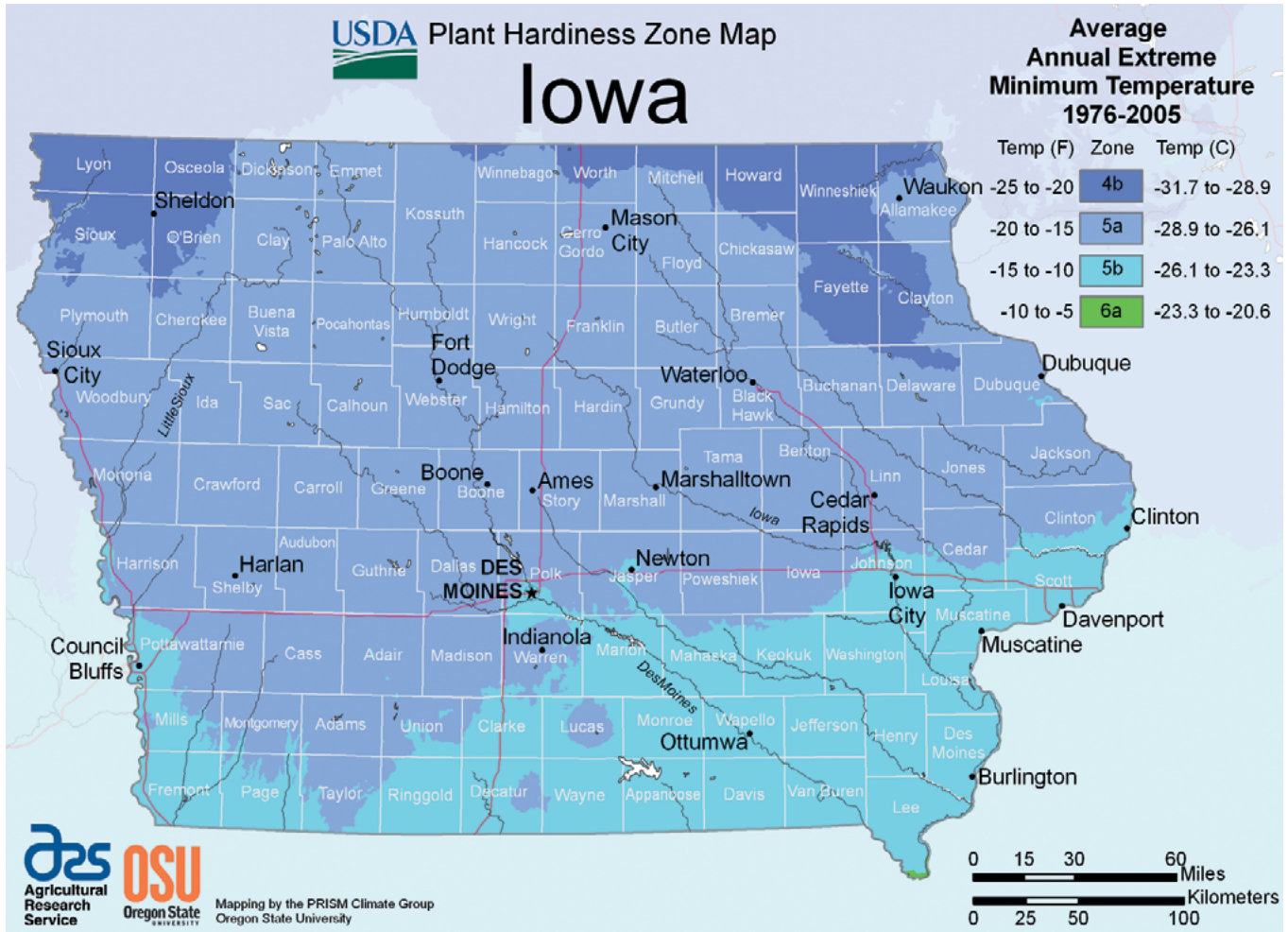




Gardening in Iowa Zones

Zone maps are a gardener's best tool for selecting plants that will do well in local gardens.



2012 USDA Plant Hardiness Zone Map

Most gardeners are familiar with the United States Department of Agriculture's Plant Hardiness Zone Map as a standard guide to a plant's cold tolerance. It has been an important tool when selecting trees, shrubs, and perennials for the landscape for over 40 years. The data on which the 2012 map is based was gathered from 1976 to 2005. Most American reference books, nursery catalogs, and gardening magazines describe a plant's ability to survive cold temperatures using USDA plant hardiness zones.

The USDA Plant Hardiness Zone Map divides the country into 13 zones based on average annual minimum temperatures. Zone 1 is the coldest area where minimum temperatures can go down to minus 60°F. At the other extreme, Zone 13 is the warmest zone in tropical locations where lows don't drop below 60°F. The zones are divided by 10-degree increments. According to the 2012 version of the map, most of Iowa is in Zone 5. Small areas in northwest and northeast Iowa are in Zone 4.