The characteristic climatic features are wide variations in temperature, low annual precipitation, strong winds, and a high percentage of sunshine. The figures for some stations on the prairie are given below.

METEOROLOGICAL RECORDS IN THE PRAIRIE REGION.

Place.	Absolute Minimum Range.	Mean Temperature.		Average Rain, June to Sept.	Average Sunshine, May to October.
		January.	July.		
	°F.	°F.	°F.	in.	hr.
Winnipeg, Man.	−45 to −21	−2·6	66·7	10·75	1,373·0
Brandon, Man.	−51 to −26	−2·6	64·6	9·57	1,278·0
Indian Head, Sask.	−50 to −20	−1·0	63·5	9·87	1,228·6
Saskatoon, Sask.	−55 to −16	−2·7	62·8	8·63	[1]
Rosthern, Sask.	−59 to −19	−4·2	62·5	8·29	1,398·3
Swift Current, Sask.	−54 to −12	6·9	65·7	8·43	1,487·2
Lethbridge, Alta.	−45 to 4	15·0	65·0	7·93	1,542·6
Edmonton, Alta.	−52 to −10	6·2	61·4	10·08	1,349·8
Beaverlodge, Alta.	−56 to − 3	0·6	57·0	7·34	1,360·5

[1] Data not available.

While the typical prairie is treeless—except along the river valleys—there is a transitional belt of mixed prairie and woodland along the eastern and northern sides. In marked contrast to the Eastern and Interlacustrine Regions there is no family of plants confined in Canada to the Prairie Region. The number of genera which occur only on the prairie is also much reduced, amounting to 15 altogether. There are, however, about 267 species characteristic of the prairie and not occurring elsewhere, about half of which are included under the three families of composites, leguminous plants, and grasses.

A characteristic feature of certain parts of the Prairie Region is the presence of lakes with no outlet, around the margin of which the soil is saline or alkaline. In such localities plants occur which elsewhere are found on the sea coast, such as Spike Grass *(Distichlis spicata)*, Sea Crowfoot *(Ranunculus Cymbalaria)*, Sea Milkwort *(Glaux maritima)*, and others.

On the dry prairie a marked feature of the vegetation is the abundance of xerophytes, that is, plants with adaptations calculated to counteract the loss of water from the plant by evaporation. As examples, the following species, which are confined in their distribution to the Prairie Region, may be mentioned. Among shrubby types, the Winter Fat *(Eurotia lanata)* has a dense covering of hairs, while the Thorny Buffalo Berry *(Shepherdia argentea)* has scales on the leaves. Of the herbaceous types, the Hoary Sage-brush *(Artemisia cana)* is covered with hairs; the Beard-tongue *(Pentstemon nitidus)* is glaucous; the Purple Skeleton-weed *(Lygodesmia juncea)* has the leaves much reduced in size; while in the Purple Cactus *(Mammillaria vivipara)* the stem is fleshy and leaves are absent altogether. As mentioned above, some of the prairie plants are deep-rooting and are thus enabled to withstand a period of drought.

The 15 genera which are confined to the Prairie Region are as follows: the family *Gramineae* includes *Buchloë*, *Munroa*, and *Schedonnardus;* the family *Leguminosae* includes *Amorpha*, *Petalostemon*, and *Thermopsis;* the family *Compositae* includes *Actinea*, *Gutierrezia*, *Hymenopappus*, and *Thelesperma;* while the other genera are *Eurotia*, *Paronychia*, *Mammillaria*, *Musineon*, and *Heliotropium*.