



Growing Native Plants

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With the growing emphasis on caring for and being kind to the environment, more and more gardeners are interested in growing native plants. By definition, native plants are well-adapted to the climate, are usually low-maintenance and thrive under a range of conditions, offering a wide array of colors, shapes and textures. Planted strategically in your garden they will attract butterflies and beneficial birds and insects and are natural choices for the New England landscape. As a bonus, they're already used to the extreme weather conditions we sometimes find here in Connecticut!

The soil they grow in suits them and, watered regularly during their first season, they require little on-going care and are generally resistant to diseases and insects. Even better, they don't need fertilization or winter protection in order to thrive and will readily adapt to changing light and soil patterns.

By planting native plants you help to restore part of Connecticut's natural ecology. Birds, in the fall, will look for native trees and shrubs for food and nesting places for the winter. Even more importantly, planting natives is an investment in the future.

Nursery-propagated plants are readily available for the listed natives. Please do not remove native plants from the wild.

Here are partial listings of some of the natives available at Acer Gardens. An extended listing of our many selections is available at the nursery. Please talk to staff if you have special requirements and let us help you design a native, virtually maintenance-free garden.

Native Wildflowers/Perennials

<i>Aquilegia canadensis</i>	Wild Columbine	Flowers in May Tolerates full sun to some shade Attracts hummingbirds
<i>Asclepias tuberosa</i>	Butterfly Weed	Flowers in May Prefers sun but drought-resistant Attracts butterflies
<i>Aster novae-angliae</i>	New England Aster	Clusters of purple blossoms in Sept. Takes sun to partial shade Re-seeds itself
<i>Coreopsis verticillata</i>	Threadleaf Coreopsis	Yellow flowers throughout summer Requires full sunlight Wide range of soil tolerance

Echinacea purpurea	Cone Flower	Purple flowers from late June-Sept. Needs well-drained soil Tolerates drought once established
Liatris spicata	Spike Gayfeather	Purple flowers from Mid-July – Sept. Grows best in sunny, moist soil Attracts bees
Lobelia cardinalis	Cardinal Flower	Red flowers in August Needs moist soil Should have winter mulch
Phlox divaricata	Wild Blue Phlox	Blue-lilac flowers in April-May Lightly fragrant Prefers shade
Physostegia virginiana	Obedient Plant	Pink flowers July-August Can act as a ground cover Wants sun and moist soil
Tiarella cordifolia	Foamflower	Fluffy white flowers in late spring Can be used as ground cover Needs average to moist soil

Ferns

Adiantum pedatum	Maidenhair Fern	Needs shade Prefers moist, loose soil
Dryopteris cristata	Toothed Wood Fern	Fronds can stay green all winter 2' tall Can take some sun
Matteuccia struthiopteris	Ostrich Fern	Large fern forming clumps Spreads aggressively by the roots With sun and moisture will grow to 5'
Osmunda cinnamomea	Cinnamon Fern	Forms dense, 5' clumps Needs moist soil and part shade
Polystichum acrostichoides	Christmas Fern	Useful under trees Tolerates dry soil Grows 1 ½' tall

Ornamental Grasses

Acorus calamus	Sweet Flag	Tolerates full sun to part shade Water-loving A marginal plant for streams and ponds
Carex pennsylvanica	Pennsylvania Sedge	Drought tolerant Can be grown as a groundcover Will thrive in full sun or shade

<i>Chasmanthium latifolium</i>	Northern Sea Oat	Prefers moist soil and full sun Established plants are drought-tolerant Leaves and seed heads turn to bronze
<i>Panicum virgatum</i>	Switchgrass	3' – 5' Purplish flower heads in early fall Grass is tan in winter
<i>Schizachyrium scoparium</i>	Little Bluestem	Forms large clumps Tolerates wide range of soils Handles drought well

Vines

<i>Lonicera sempervirens</i>	Trumpet Honeysuckle	Scarlet flowers in summer/autumn Needs support A favorite of hummingbirds
<i>Parthenocissus quinquefolia</i>	Virginia Creeper	Vigorous grower to 50' Brilliant red leaves in fall

Shrubs

<i>Clethra alnifolia</i>	Sweet Pepperbush	Fragrant white flowers from July on Prefers acidic soil 6' – 9' tall
<i>Hydrangea arborescens</i>	Annabelle	Takes sun but thrives in shade Suckers freely Blooms on new wood
<i>Ilex glabra</i>	Inkberry	Evergreen foliage Prefers full sun
<i>Itea virginica</i>	Sweetspire	White flowers in early summer
<i>Kalmia latifolia</i>	Mountain Laurel	CT's state flower Flowers in June Full sun produces more flowers
<i>Rhododendron maximum</i>	Rosebay	Prefers a.m. sun, p.m. shade Moist soil a plus Very showy shrub
<i>Rhododendron viscosum</i>	Swamp Azalea	White flowers in summer Enjoys a soggy spot 3' – 7'
<i>Rhus aromatica</i>	Fragrant Sumac	Yellow flowers in late March Slow growth rate Showy Autumn foliage

Spirea latifolia	Meadowsweet	Thrives near beaches Blooms in mid-summer
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Viburnum trilobum	Highbush Cranberry	White flowers in spring Red peppers in late summer Berries make good preserves
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Trees

Acer rubrum	Red Maple	Fast-growing Silvery bark 40' – 70' tall
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Betula nigra	River Birch	Tolerates summer heat Forms a handsome clump Seldom troubled by insect pests
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Carpinus caroliniana	American Hornbeam	Blue-green foliage 20 - 40' tall Will grow along rivers and streams
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Cercis canadensis	Redbud	Good companion to dogwood Showy deep-pink flowers Blooms heavily from a young age
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Cornus florida	Flowering Dogwood	Ornamental spring-bloomer Prefers consistently moist soil Red-purple leaves in the fall
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Fagus grandifolia	American Beech	Prefers moist, rich soil Can grow 90' tall Good food source for wildlife
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Nyssa sylvatica	Sour Gum	Excellent tree for fall color Transplants easily Will not tolerate very dry soil
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Pinus strobus	White Pine	Largest northeastern conifer Winter cover for birds Can grow 100' tall
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Prunus pensylvanica	Fire Cherry	Does well in sunny locations Tolerate poor soil and strong winds Fall color is yellow to red
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Quercus alba	White Oak	Connecticut's state tree Can live for centuries Attracts wildlife
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