

HOME GROUNDS FACT SHEET



Cornell University
Cooperative Extension
Nassau County



Horticulture Center
Demonstration & Community Gardens
at East Meadow Farm
832 Merrick Avenue
East Meadow, NY 11554
Phone: 516-565-5265

Native Plants

As wilderness shrinks, and backyard acreage increases, the home gardener can play an important role in planting a variety of native plants that reflect our natural ecology, and recreate some of our native habitats. Many imported plants have jumped the garden gate and swamped our native vegetation. Park and preserve managers struggle daily to control these invasive pests.

THE FOLLOWING IS A LIST OF A FEW CHOICE NATIVES

- Witchhazel (*Hamamelis virginiana*) Blooms yellow in late autumn
- Bayberry (*Myrica pensylvanica*) Sun or light shade, seaside hardy
- Spice Bush (*Clethra alnifolia*) Blooms late summer, tolerates wet or dry areas
- Shadbush (*Amelanchier sp.*) Early white flower, contrasting gray bark in winter
- Lowbush Blueberry (*Vaccinium angustifolium*) Shady woodland shrub
- Mountain Laurel (*Kalmia latifolia*) 15' tall shrub, acid well-drained soils, pink flowers
- Cardinal Flower (*Lobelia cardinalis*) Near ponds and wet area
- Partridgeberry (*Mitchella repens*) Evergreen, low grower
- Fringed Bleeding Heart (*Dicentra exia*) Plant in shade among wildflowers and ferns
- Cinnamon Fern (*Osmunda cinnamomea*) Changes from fiddlehead to cinnamon stick
- Royal Fern (*Osmunda regalis*) Combines well in a border
- Maidenhair Fern (*Adiantum pedatum*) Delicate – looks well with rough textures
- Polypody rock Fern (*Polypodium vulgare*) Low growing, attractive in a rock garden
- American Columbine (*Aquilegia canadensis*) Seeds itself, long blooming period
- Bloodroot (*Sanguinaria canadensis*) Early bloomer, good ground cover foliage
- Jack in The Pulpit (*Arisaema sp.*) Exotic, but native, unique specimen plant
- Yellow and Snow trillium (*Trillium luteum*, / *T. grandiflora*) Naturalizes as a ground cover
- Virginia bluebells (*Mertensia virginica*) Good contrast under rhododendrons, self seeds
- Marsh Marigold (*Caltha palustris*) Early flowering, wet areas. **Beware** not to purchase (Lesser Celandine), a look alike that often has the same common name, but is very invasive.
- Crested Iris (*Iris versicolor*) Near rocks, dependable
- Wild Geranium (*Geranium maculatum*) seeds itself, long blooming
- Mayapple (*Podophyllum peltatum*) Establishes a stand, best planted on a slope to see flowering.
- Wild Ginger (*Asarum canadense*) Deep green ground cover
- False Solomon's Seal (*Smilaciana racemosa*) Woodland groundcover
- Butterfly Weed (*Asclepias tuberosa*) Attracts butterflies, orange flower
- New England Aster (*Aster novae-angliae*) Clusters of lavender, pink or violet flowers
- Purple Coneflower (*Echinacea purpurea*) Rich purple flowers throughout the summer
- Black Eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia subtomentosa*) Bright yellow flowers all summer
- Blue Wild Lupine (*Lupinus perennis*) Lavender to blue flowers typical of the pea family
- Penstemons (*Penstemon species*) Spike like flowers in red, yellow, white and blue
- Evening Primrose (*Oenothera sp.*) Full sun, well drained soil

This is just a starter list to get you started on native plants. All of the above plants have additional features that may benefit your garden. Remember the aim of using natives is to create an ecologically diverse garden that supports all the interacting plants and animals that make up a viable natural community. Combine plants that have similar growing needs, and plant them in the right site.

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