

Native Plants for Virginia's Capital Region



Plant RVA
Natives
A CAPITAL IDEA!

The logo for 'Plant RVA Natives' includes a yellow and black butterfly in the top right, a red cardinal in the bottom left, and a cluster of white flowers in the bottom right. The text 'Plant RVA Natives' is in a large, dark green font, and 'A CAPITAL IDEA!' is in a smaller, dark green font below it.

Plant Virginia Capital Region Natives!



This guide showcases the attractive variety of plants native, according to the Flora of Virginia, to the Virginia Capital Region, which includes Henrico, Hanover, City of Richmond, Chesterfield, Charles City, New Kent, Powhatan, Goochland, Cumberland, and Amelia. Native plant species have evolved within specific areas and been dispersed throughout their range without known human involvement. These plants form the primary structure of the living landscape and provide food and shelter for native animal species.

This guide does not provide a comprehensive list of all plants native in the region. Rather, the native plants featured here were selected because they are attractive, relatively easy for the home gardener to acquire, easy to maintain, and offer various benefits, sometimes critical, to wildlife and the environment.

The Plant RVA Natives Campaign provides this guide to promote the use of these plants in the urban and suburban landscapes of the Virginia Capital Region for their many social, cultural, ecological, and economic benefits, and to increase the availability, through demand, of these native plants in retail centers throughout the region.

Campaign Steering Team Partners

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 Chesapeake Bay Foundation
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 Hanover-Caroline Soil and Water Conservation District
 Hanover Master Gardeners
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Cover Photos: (left to right) *Amelanchier canadensis*, Canada Serviceberry, Juneberry by Phillip Merritt/John Clayton Chapter, VNPS; *Symphoricarpos novae-angliae*, New England Aster by Margaret Fisher; *Vaccinium stamineum*, Deerberry by Irvine Wilson, DCR-DNH; *Rhexia virginica*, Virginia Meadow Beauty by Gary Fleming, DCR-DNH.

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Hepatica americana, Round-lobed Hepatica, Liverleaf - Gary Fleming/DCR Natural Heritage Program

Key to Terms & Symbols





Light requirement:

-  *Full sun*: 6 or more hours sun
-  *Part shade*: 2 to 6 hours sun
-  *Full shade*: 2 hours or less sun

Soil moisture:

-  *Dry*: no signs of moisture
-  *Moist*: looks & feels damp
-  *Wet*: saturated

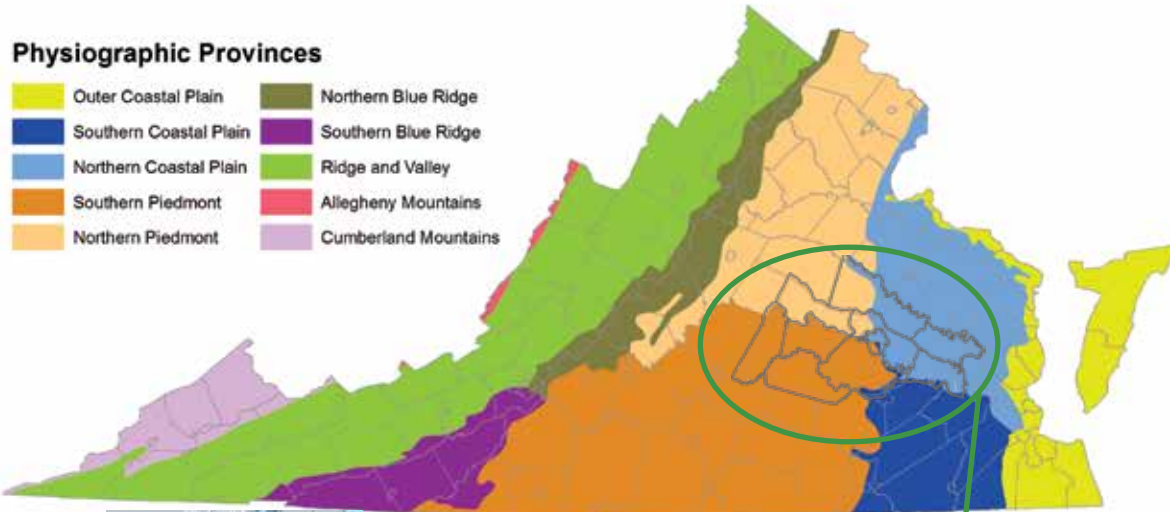
Wildlife supported by plant:

-  Food source for birds (*berries, nectar or insects resident on plant*)
-  Nectar and/or pollen source for pollinators - butterflies, moths, bees or other insects
-  Larval host for butterflies or moths (*larva are newly hatched forms of insects before they undergo metamorphosis*)
-  Supports native bees.

What Area Does This Guide Cover?

Physiographic Provinces

Outer Coastal Plain	Northern Blue Ridge
Southern Coastal Plain	Southern Blue Ridge
Northern Coastal Plain	Ridge and Valley
Southern Piedmont	Allegheny Mountains
Northern Piedmont	Cumberland Mountains



Coastal Plain & Piedmont Plateau Physiographic Provinces

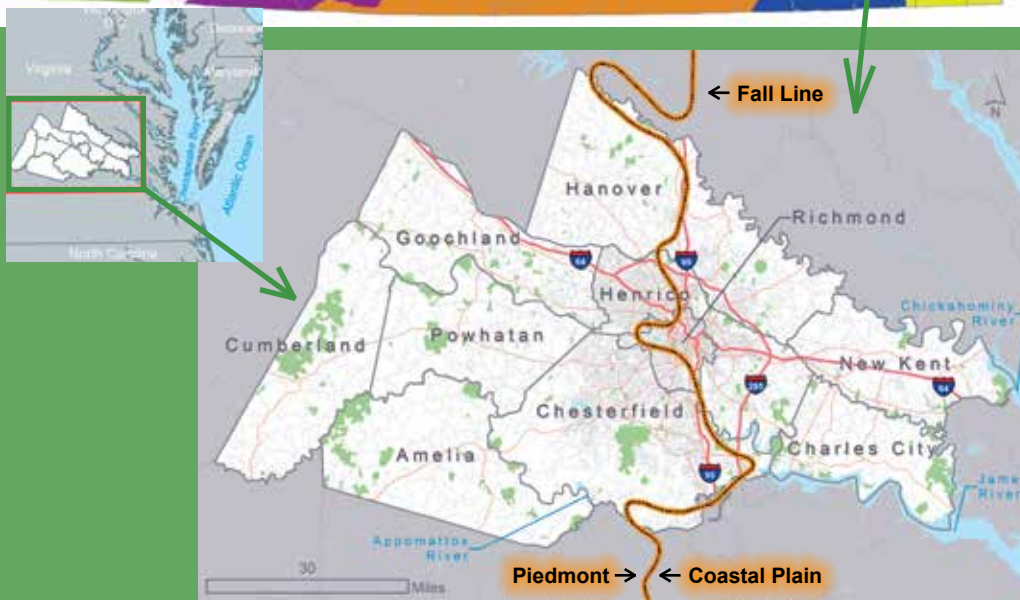
Virginia is divided into several physiographic provinces based on geologic history. Each province is unique in topography, soil pH, soil depth, elevation, availability of light, and hydrology. These characteristics all combine to influence the species of plants and animals found there.

Virginia's Coastal Plain and Piedmont Plateau are divided by the Fall Line, which marks the zone of transition from the hard, resistant bedrock underlying the Piedmont to the softer sediments underlying the Coastal Plain. Streams are able to cut more easily through the sands, gravels, and clays of the Coastal Plain, and rivers widen as the topography flattens. In the northern part of the state this boundary is sharply delineated by falls and rapids. From foothills to rapids, these varying site conditions support a mosaic of plant communities.

The Coastal Plain province varies in topography from north to south, from somewhat hilly and well drained to flat and basically level. These subtle differences in topography and the variety of fresh, brackish, and saltwater systems from ocean and inland bay to rivers, ponds, and bogs, have contributed to the great variety of natural communities found on the Coastal Plain.

Virginia's Piedmont Plateau province is a gently rolling upland bounded on the east by the Fall Line and the west by the Blue Ridge Mountains. To the east, the Piedmont continues to slope more gently towards the Fall Line.

For a detailed description of these natural communities, go to www.dcr.virginia.gov/natural-heritage/natural-communities/nctoc and www.dcr.virginia.gov/natural-heritage/natural-communities/document/ncoverviewphys-veg.pdf.



This guide highlights native plants found in the capital region of Virginia, including Henrico, Hanover, City of Richmond, Chesterfield, Charles City, New Kent, Powhatan, Goochland, Cumberland, and Amelia. This region encompasses a portion of the Northern Coastal Plain, as well as a portion of the Northern Piedmont and Southern Piedmont along the James River.

Why Virginia Natives Are the Best Choice



Hypericum prolificum, Shrubby St. Johnswort Gary Fleming, DCR-DNH

Virginia Capital Region native plants provide visual beauty year round. Unique flowers, vibrant fall colors of leaves and stems, fruit shapes and colors, and bark textures are all reasons to purchase native plants.

Local native plants support more wildlife species than non-native plants. Native plants host specific insect species and are essential for pollinators. Birds, mammals, and invertebrates rely on insects to survive. Native trees, shrubs, and vines that feed the insects, birds, and animals are essential for maintaining biodiversity. As natural habitats are lost, home gardeners more than ever need to landscape with native plants to support the local ecosystem and plant communities to help prevent the extinction of species.

Virginia Capital Region native plants show a sense of place. American Beech, Flowering Dogwood, and White Oaks let you know you are in Virginia's central northern Coastal Plain. There are local native species unique to this region not found in other parts of Virginia. If the general public demands more local native plants, the supply will become greater, and more plant species will become available for the home garden.

Planting Virginia Capital Region native plants is essential for a healthy watershed. Local native plants provide oxygen and habitat for freshwater and saltwater ecosystems and communities. Plant roots absorb nutrients and prevent sediment from entering our local waterways, which reduces pollution and improves water quality.

Local native plants are adapted to local temperature and rainfall fluctuations. Once established, they require less watering and fertilizing, which saves natural resources, time, and money.

Spraying pesticides for insects or diseases is generally not necessary for native plants. Insects that feed on native plants rarely eat enough to weaken the plant, as the insects need to come back another time to feed again. One saves time and money not having to spray chemicals. Seeing butterflies, dragonflies, birds, and lightning bugs around your plants is much more rewarding than seeing no life at all.

Landscape Choices Inspired by Nature

Habitat Loss and Ecosystem Function

Wildlife needs our help more than ever. Over 884 species are currently listed in the Virginia Wildlife Action Plan as “Species of Greatest Conservation Need,” including species we’ve probably taken for granted as being very common, such as the gray catbird, woodland box turtle, brook trout, tiger salamander, carpenter frog, little brown bat and rusty-patched bumblebee.

Almost 70% of the species listed in the Action Plan are invertebrates, a group that includes mollusks, spiders and many insect families like ants, bees and butterflies. Populations of these species of greatest conservation need—and indeed of all other wildlife species that aren’t yet listed in the Action Plan—are increasingly being threatened by extensive habitat alteration and losses that can be directly linked to the everyday choices we make across the landscape.

The challenge is that too many of us seldom consider the ecological function of our own yards. An ecosystem is a functional system of continuous energy exchange, made up of diverse plant and animal communities, as well as the non-living elements in the environment, like soil, water and sunlight. Ecosystems provide us with all the “services” we need to survive, such as oxygen in the air we breathe, or food and water. Healthy ecosystems contain robust, interactive assemblages of plant and animal species that co-evolved together, called natural communities.



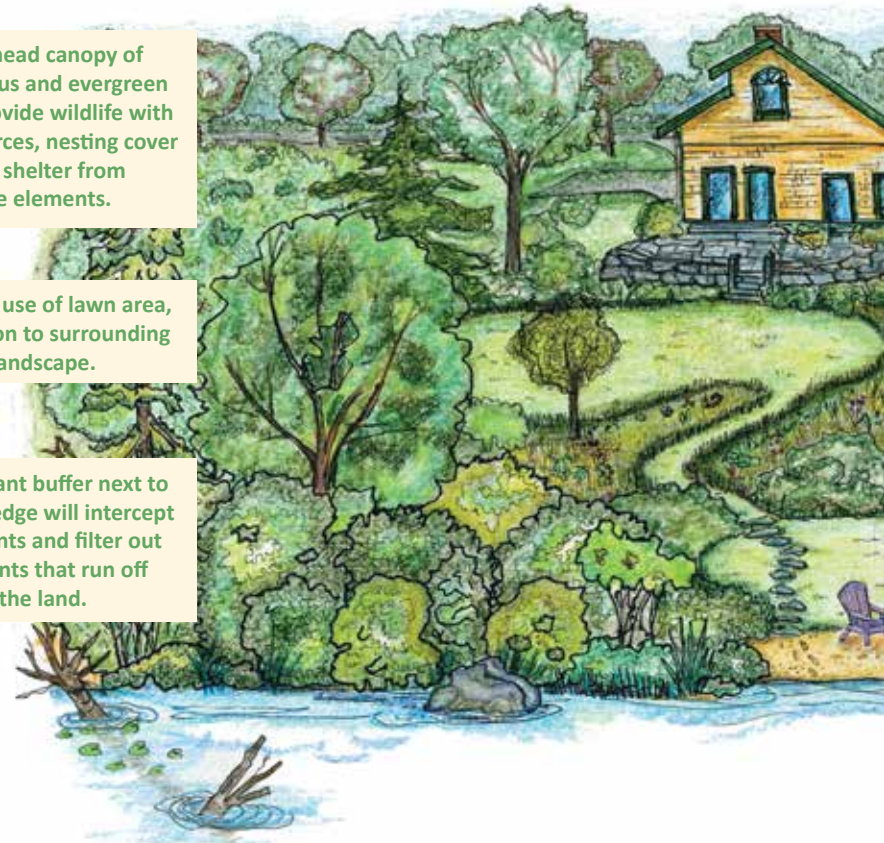
Unfortunately, today’s urban and suburban landscapes provide very limited support of natural communities. Instead, we’ve replaced the complexity of forest, grassland and wetland ecosystems with vast artificial constructs of mostly non-native plant communities made up of exotic species we affectionately call “ornamentals.” Non-native landscapes are one of the greatest factors contributing to habitat loss, because non-native plants have very little to no value for wildlife.



Overhead canopy of deciduous and evergreen trees provide wildlife with food sources, nesting cover and shelter from the elements.

Minimal use of lawn area, in relation to surrounding landscape.

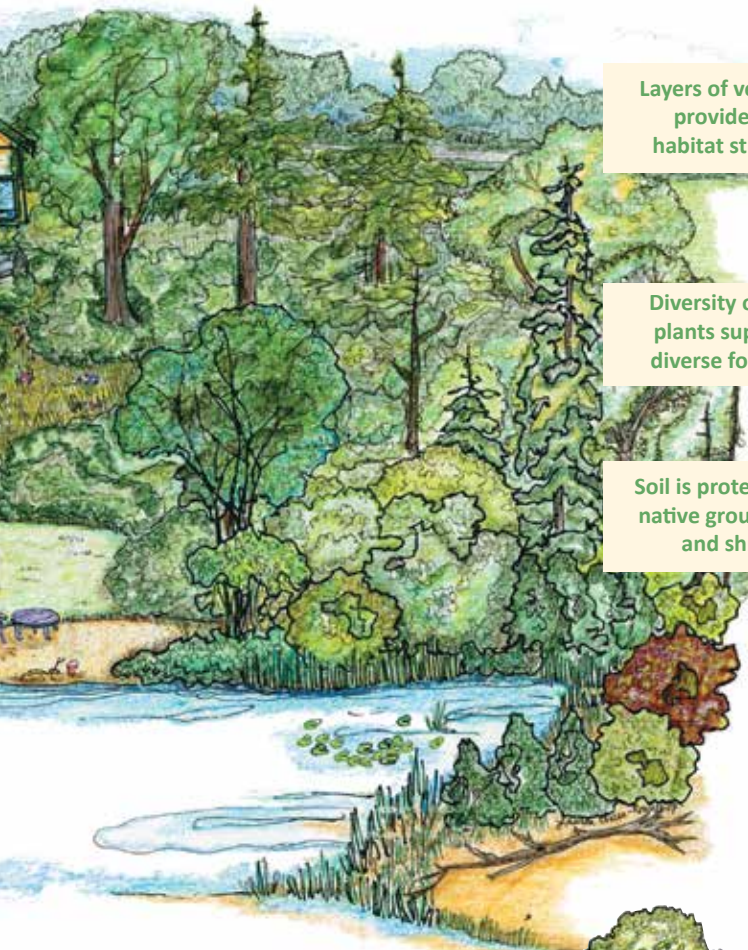
Wide plant buffer next to water’s edge will intercept sediments and filter out nutrients that run off the land.



The roots of trees, shrubs and other plants are crucial for holding soil in place and for soaking up rainwater before it can run off the land. Allow fallen leaves to remain on the ground, where they will recycle nutrients back into the soil and provide rich habitat for salamanders, box turtles, birds and other wildlife species.

Illustrations by Lauren Chase-Rowell, used with permission from *Landscaping at the Water’s Edge, an Ecological Approach*, c. 2007, University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension (<https://extension.unh.edu/resource/landscaping-waters-edge-book>).

Virginia Capital Region Native Plants



Layers of vegetation provide good habitat structure.

Diversity of native plants supports a diverse food web.

Soil is protected with native groundcovers and shrubs.

Group your landscape beds by placing shrubs adjacent to flowering perennials and by using groundcovers to fill all the spaces between the other plants. This creates a layered habitat for wildlife and also minimizes the amount of exposed mulch where weeds can invade.



Re-Thinking Landscape Choices

You can make a difference! There are so many places around our homes, neighborhoods and towns where we can make simple changes to improve habitat quality for a broad diversity of wildlife species. Here are just a few tips, to get you started:



- 1) **Control or remove invasive species** that are known to be problematic in the environment, such as English ivy, Japanese honeysuckle, periwinkle, privet, butterfly bush, nandina, barberry, tree-of-heaven, mimosa and Bradford pear.
- 2) **Replace other non-native trees, shrubs and groundcovers** in your landscape with some of the native plants shown in this guide.
- 3) **Recycle the leaves that trees give you for free in the fall! Leave the leaves!** Setting aside an area(s) in your landscape for leaf beds, leaving leaves around the base of your trees or using leaves as mulch, provides essential habitat for insects, like butterflies and moths, and builds up organic matter and support a greater diversity of soil organisms.
- 4) **Be strategic in reducing the size of your lawn;** transition your landscape by gradually adding native shrubs and groundcovers in patches, which will require much less maintenance in the long run, once established.

Adapted from Let's Grow Wild (Dept of Wildlife Resources) article by Carol Heiser, certified CBLP-1 and Master Naturalist (retired Department of Wildlife Resources Habitat Education Coordinator)



Plants across the landscape provide the best protection for water quality and aquatic wildlife. When we shrink the lawn by adding layers of vegetation, we reduce the likelihood that soil particles and nutrients will end up in ponds, streams and other waterways.

Protecting Water Quality in the Landscape

A **RAIN GARDEN** is a landscape feature for managing stormwater or runoff. Think of a rain garden as a temporary puddle with plants. It is a shallow depression, only 6-8" deep, that collects stormwater for a short period of time, which it only holds for about 48 hours.

Pollutants are filtered out of the water by the plants, soil, and soil microorganisms. The clean water then infiltrates downward to recharge the groundwater aquifer, evaporates, evapo-transpires through the plants back up into the atmosphere, or is absorbed and used by the plants.

A rain garden can be placed at any point along the runoff pathway in the landscape and in sun or shade. When considering plants for a rain garden, remember that there are three planting zones: low (wettest), middle, and high (driest upper edge area). Select plants based on the zone. Additionally, choose plants based on the size of the garden and the mature size of the plants. Trees and larger shrubs may not be appropriate for smaller gardens, so consider herbaceous perennials and small, woody plants. Learn more in the Virginia Department of Forestry's "Rain Garden Technical Guide": http://dof.virginia.gov/infopubs/Rain-Garden-Technical-Guide-2014-05_pub.pdf.

CONSERVATION LANDSCAPING involves modifying the visible features of turf grass areas or bare soils to an area of land that incorporates environmentally sensitive design. Because managed turf acts as an impervious surface due to disturbance, compaction, or excessive management, replacing lawn with native plants best adapted to the local soil and climate conditions will be more effective in minimizing runoff and beneficial to local water quality.

Because rain gardens and conservation landscaping affect water quality and quantity functions, they are termed conservation Best Management Practices (BMPs). Vegetated swales, rainwater harvesting (cisterns), infiltration trenches, and bioretention are examples of other BMPs that mitigate runoff and filter pollutants.

The Virginia Conservation Assistance Program (VCAP), a cost-share program for small BMP retrofits, provides funding to citizens for the installation of 12 different practices, including those mentioned above. The BMPs primarily address stormwater runoff from roof, driveway, and lawn. VCAP is administered through the Virginia Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts and the local Soil and Water offices in the Chesapeake Bay watershed. Citizens may contact vaswcd.org to locate the nearest Soil and Water Conservation District office.



Carol Heiser, DGIF

Planning to hire a landscaper?

The Chesapeake Bay Landscape Professional (CBLP) Certification is a voluntary credential system for professionals who design, install, and maintain sustainable landscapes.



Find out more about this certification program, and view a business directory of certified professionals at <https://cblpro.org/>.

CBLP is an initiative of the Chesapeake Conservation Landscaping Council: www.chesapeakelandscape.org.

The Right Plants in the Right Place

Native plants have adapted to the unique soils, climate, ecological relationships and interactions with other plants and animals in their region. They are distributed across the landscape based on a number of conditions, including temperature, rainfall, soil fertility, soil moisture, drainage, and amount of light. Although terms like *physiographic region* or *hardiness zone* can describe general conditions across a large area, the local conditions in your yard will determine what will grow best there. Not every native plant is suited for every location.

Street-side environments experience dry, harsh conditions and are exposed to pollutants, dust, spray, salt, and compacted soil. Soil pH can also be affected through leaching from concrete curbs and sidewalks. The best street trees also happen to be marsh species adapted to an environment with saturated soil and low oxygen. If you have soils that are periodically or frequently flooded or just slow to drain, there are natives that prefer to grow in those conditions. It is easier to work with plants suited to the conditions on your site than to try adjusting the site to fit plants' needs.

Native plant gardens can also be grown in small spaces such as an apartment or condo balcony, a narrow alley, a patio, or a deck. A diverse mix of potted forbs, vines, grasses, and ferns can provide pollinator habitat. Mixing spring, summer, and fall blooming plants in a planter or a group of planters can provide beauty and color throughout the growing season. As with any other situation, small-space gardening requires that you match the amount and type of space with the needs of the plants. Things to consider include: sun, shade, moisture, and wind. Don't forget to give roots room to grow too. Also consider pets, your views, and access for maintenance.

A great variety of native plants is essential to the health of our local natural ecosystem, which includes your property. There are, however, some native species that you should give special consideration if you plant them in your home landscape. For example, Sweetgum trees (*Liquidambar styraciflua*) offer beautiful fall foliage and ecological benefits. They provide high protein seeds for birds and sustenance for pollinator species, but they also produce "gum balls", so you may not want to place this tree where bare feet may trod. Many plants, native and non-native, use various toxins to defend themselves. Landscape plants should not be assumed to be edible for people, and some plants can irritate skin when handled. Gardeners are encouraged to consult the plant profiles for any specific cautions, and take common-sense precautions like wearing gloves.

Many other species native to the Virginia Capital Region, like Devil's Walking-stick (*Aralia spinosa*), Eastern Prickly-pear (*Opuntia humifusa*), Skunk Cabbage (*Symplocarpus foetidus*), or Bald-cypress (*Taxodium distichum*) have amazing ecological benefits but may not be suitable in your landscape scenario. But if you have the right place, and the interest in cultivating something unique, they are the right plants.

Check www.PlantVirginiaNatives.org for Right Plant, Right Place plant lists. Lists are being added for landscaping in small spaces, dry shade, street side places, wet places.



Planting to Attract Pollinators and Birds

Bring Life to Your Garden

Native plants attract a variety of birds, butterflies, pollinators, and other wildlife by providing diverse habitats and food sources. Native plants feed the insects that are the base of the food web, and insects that are especially important as food for young songbirds. Native plants also feed pollinators. We may not notice the hummingbirds, bats, bees, beetles, butterflies, and flies that carry pollen from one plant to another as they collect nectar, yet without them, wildlife would have fewer nutritious berries and seeds, and we would miss many fruits, vegetables, and nuts. By planting a diverse palette of native plants, we invite not only the plant-eating insects, but also their predators as well as pollinators, seed dispersers, and recyclers, which work together to make a garden function like a system. *Because our native plants and animals have evolved together, they support each other, and we enjoy the beauty and fruits of their labor.*

With a simple, but profound, observation that nothing was eating the Multiflora Rose he was clearing from his property, Dr. Douglas Tallamy launched a line of research that has become a cornerstone of the native plant movement. He has shown that not all plants are of equal value to wildlife and that native wildlife prefers native plants. For example, native oaks support 532 species of native caterpillars, while the non-native Butterfly Bush supports only one. Caterpillars are important because they are the primary food source for nestlings of 96 percent of all bird species. This insight led to a call embodied in the title of his book *Bringing Nature Home* to share our suburban landscape with wildlife by planting native plants.

One important aspect of landscaping for wildlife is a change in the status of turf grass. It is not that turf no longer has a place in your landscape, but it is high maintenance, high cost, and has low wildlife value. Each square foot of lawn should be examined and subjected to the question “Why?” Sometimes turf is the right cover, but that should be decided only after consideration of native plant alternatives like Pennsylvania Sedge, moss, or other materials such as mulch or stepping stones.

The use of native plants in landscaping should not and does not preclude designing a landscape that meets your needs. Landscaping for wildlife should be a mix of human and natural design concepts. The overall plan should satisfy your needs—a place for the kids and dog to play and a quiet place to sit and enjoy your yard—and should follow human design concepts. But, the execution of the plan should be informed by nature’s design concepts: using plants in layers; avoiding straight lines; and blending the edges of forest into field into wetland. Above all: use a diverse array of native plants!



Jan Newton/John Clayton Chapter, VNPS



Phillip Merritt/John Clayton Chapter, VNPS



Seig Kopinitz/John Clayton Chapter, VNPS



Lucile Kossodof/John Clayton Chapter, VNPS



Phillip Merritt/John Clayton Chapter, VNPS

Invasives of Particular Concern



Jan Newton, John Clayton Chapter, VNPS

Invasive, non-native plants do not provide the same ecosystem services as natives and have a harmful effect on our environment, not only in the suburban community but also in our forests, parks, and other natural areas.

The non-native species listed here are currently on the *Virginia Invasive Plant Species List* based on their threat to natural communities and native species.

(Left) Aggressive, invasive non-natives, such as this invasion of Asian Wisteria, Japanese Honeysuckle and Multi-flora Rose, can quickly spread, cover, and kill native vegetation

***Ailanthus altissima*, Tree of Heaven**

Virginia Capital Region Native Alternatives:
Cercis Canadensis, Eastern Redbud
Diospyros virginiana, Common Persimmon
Rhus copallinum, Winged or Shining Sumac

***Alliaria petiolata*, Garlic Mustard**

Virginia Capital Region Native Alternatives:
Aquilegia canadensis, Wild or Eastern Red Columbine
Asarum canadense, Wild Ginger
Phlox divaricata, Woodland Phlox
Tiarella cordifolia, Foamflower
Viola spp., Violets

***Ampelopsis brevipedunculata*, Porcelain-Berry**

Virginia Capital Region Native Alternatives:
Bignonia capreolata, Crossvine
Gelsemium sempervirens, Carolina or Yellow Jessamine
Lonicera sempervirens, Trumpet or Coral Honeysuckle

***Celastrus orbiculatus*, Oriental Bittersweet**

Virginia Capital Region Native Alternatives:
Euonymus americana, Strawberry Bush
Ilex verticillata, Winterberry
Lonicera sempervirens, Trumpet or Coral Honeysuckle
Parthenocissus quinquefolia, Virginia Creeper

***Eleagnus umbellata*, Autumn Olive**

Virginia Capital Region Native Alternatives:
Baccharis halimifolia, Groundsel Tree
Cephalanthus occidentalis, Buttonbush
Clethra alnifolia, Pepperbush
Itea virginica, Virginia Sweetspire
Sambucus Canadensis, Elderberry
Viburnum acerifolium, *nudum*, *dentatum* and *prunifolium*

***Ficaria verna*, Lesser Celandine**

Virginia Capital Region Native Alternatives:
Chrysogonum virginianum, Green and Gold
Packera aurea, Golden Ragwort

***Lespedeza cuneata*, Sericea Lespedeza**

Virginia Capital Region Native Alternatives:
Sorghastrum nutans, Indian Grass

***Lonicera japonica*, Japanese Honeysuckle**

Virginia Capital Region Native Alternatives:
Bignonia capreolata, Cross-vine
Campsis radicans, Trumpet-creeper
Gelsemium sempervirens, Carolina or Yellow Jessamine
Lonicera sempervirens, Trumpet or Coral Honeysuckle
Parthenocissus quinquefolia, Virginia-creeper
Passiflora incarnata, Purple Passionflower, Maypop

***Lonicera maackii*, Amur Honeysuckle**

Virginia Capital Region Native Alternatives:
Amelanchier arborea, Downy Serviceberry
Callicarpa Americana, American Beautyberry
Clethra alnifolia, Summersweet
Hamamelis virginiana, Witch-hazel
Lindera benzoin, Spicebush
Viburnum prunifolium, Black Haw

***Microstegium vimineum*, Japanese Stiltgrass**

Virginia Capital Region Native Alternatives:
Carex pennsylvanica, Pennsylvania Sedge
Schizachyrium scoparium, Little Bluestem
Sisyrinchium angustifolium, Narrowleaf Blue-eyed Grass

***Rosa multiflora*, Multiflora Rose**

Virginia Capital Region Native Alternatives:
Clethra alnifolia, Pepperbush
Rhododendron periclymenoides, Wild Azalea
Hydrangea arborescens, Wild Hydrangea

***Wisteria floribunda*, Japanese Wisteria and *Wisteria sinensis*, Chinese Wisteria**

Virginia Capital Region Native Alternatives:
Bignonia capreolata, Cross-vine
Campsis radicans, Trumpet-creeper
Gelsemium sempervirens, Yellow Jessamine
Lonicera sempervirens, Trumpet or Coral Honeysuckle
Parthenocissus quinquefolia, Virginia-creeper
Passiflora incarnata, Purple Passionflower, Maypop
Wisteria frutescens, American Wisteria

***Albizia julibrissin*, Mimosa, Silk Tree**

Virginia Capital Region Native Alternatives:
Amelanchier spp., Serviceberries
Betula nigra, River Birch
Cercis canadensis, Eastern Redbud
Chionanthus virginicus, White Fringetree

***Hedera helix*, English Ivy**

Virginia Capital Region Native Alternatives:
Asarum canadense, Wild Ginger
Bignonia capreolata, Crossvine
Mitchella repens, Partridge-berry
Parthenocissus quinquefolia, Virginia-creeper
Packera aurea, Golden or Heartleaf Ragwort

***Pyrus calleryana*, Bradford or Callery Pear**

Virginia Capital Region Native Alternatives:
Amelanchier spp., Serviceberries
Asimina triloba, Pawpaw, Common Pawpaw
Cercis canadensis, Redbud
Cornus florida, Dogwood
Diospyros virginiana, Common Persimmon
Prunus serotina, Black Cherry

***Euonymus fortunei*, Wintercreeper**

Virginia Capital Region Native Alternatives:
Asarum canadense, Wild Ginger
Bignonia capreolata, Crossvine
Gelsemium sempervirens, Carolina or Yellow Jessamine
Lonicera sempervirens, Trumpet or Coral Honeysuckle

***Miscanthus sinensis*, Chinese Silvergrass**

Virginia Capital Region Native Alternatives:
Muhlenbergia capillaris, Hair-awn Muhly
Panicum virgatum, Switchgrass

Learn More

Department of Conservation and Recreation, Division of Natural Heritage:
<http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/natural-heritage/invspinfo>

USDA National Invasive Species Information Center:
<http://www.invasivespeciesinfo.gov/plants/main.shtml>

Center for Invasive Species and Ecosystem Health:
<http://www.invasive.org/species/weeds.cfm>

Mistaken Identity—Invasive Plants and Their Native Look-Alikes (pub):
https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/nrcs144p2_024329.pdf

Plant Invaders of Mid-Atlantic Natural Areas (pub):
<http://www.invasive.org/eastern/midatlantic/>



Perennial plants (also known as forbs) live for two or more years and lack woody stems at or above the ground. Usually flowers produce seed each year, but some plants reproduce by means of bulbs, tubers, woody crowns, or rhizomes. Some perennials die back to ground level at the end of the growing season, remain dormant during the winter, and resume growth in the spring (herbaceous). Others remain semi-green or totally green in winter (evergreen). Perennials are common in a wide range of landscapes, including sunny, shady, dry, wet, windy, salty, formal, and natural. The position and composition of leaves, stems, roots, and other parts of perennial plants are specific to an individual plant's survival needs. They might have specialized stems or crowns that allow them to survive periods of dormancy over cold or dry seasons during the year. The many different colors of flowers, seeds, or leaves of perennials are the showy, decorative parts of a landscape. They stand out when surrounded by complementary or contrasting colors, or surrounded by groundcovers in a landscape. Perennial plants are usually better competitors than annual plants because they develop larger root systems that can access water and nutrients deeper in the soil and cause them to emerge earlier in the spring.

Pictured - *Rhexia virginica*, Virginia Meadow Beauty by Gary Fleming, DCR-DNH.

Achillea millefolium ● Common Yarrow



Attracts pollinators, butterflies, hawk moths.



- 1–3 ft.
- Flat-topped clusters of small white flowers with a yellow flower in the center atop stems with fern-like leaves in June–August
- Sun to part shade
- Clay, loam, dry to moist soil
- Naturally found in fields, meadows, roadsides, clearings, and upland forests

Common Yarrow can be used in fresh or dried arrangements and has a pleasing fragrance.

Agalinis purpurea ● Purple False Foxglove



The caterpillars of the Common Buckeye butterfly, *Junonia coenia*, feed on the foliage.



- 1–3 ft.
- Purple five-lobed flowers early to late spring, with dark spots on the inside of the throat
- Part shade
- Wet to moist, mostly sandy soils
- Naturally found in floodplain forests, slopes and alluvial clearings

This annual plant is found in the southern Piedmont and inner Coastal Plain south of the James River. It has a tendency to sprawl in the absence of supportive vegetation. After the flowers wither away, rounded capsules develop, containing numerous tiny seeds. When the capsules split open at the top, gusts of wind can distribute the seeds a considerable distance.

Antennaria plantaginifolia • Plantain-leaf Pussytoes



Gary Fleming, DCR Natural Heritage Program



- 0–1 ft.
- White, fuzzy blooms in May–June
- Sun to part shade
- Tolerates drier, sandy, poor soils
- Naturally found in dry open woodlands, meadows, and rocky places

This low-growing evergreen perennial has green-striped, silver leaves. The crowded flower heads are thought to resemble a cat's paw, hence the common name. Deer forage in winter. Pussytoes is well adapted to dappled sunlit woodland habitat.

Attracts predatory insects that prey upon pest insects. Host plant for American Lady butterfly (*Vanessa virginiensis*).

Arisaema triphyllum • Common Jack-in-the-pulpit



Margaret Chatham/VNPS



- 1–3 ft.
- Large, cylindrical, hooded flower, green in color with brown stripes in April
- In late summer, a cluster of bright red berries appears
- Part shade to full shade
- Moist to wet soils
- Naturally found in humus-rich woods, bottomland forests

Jack-in-the-pulpit grows most vigorously in moist, shady, seasonally wet locations. The intriguing blossom of this woodland perennial occurs on a separate stalk at the same height as the leaves. This plant has calcium oxalate crystals, is harmful if ingested raw, and is irritating to the skin.

Excellent woods-garden plant. Birds and mammals eat the berries. Very easy to cultivate.

Aquilegia canadensis • Wild or Eastern Red Columbine



Jan Newton/John Clayton Chapter, VNPS



- 1–3 ft.
- Nodding, red and yellow bell-like flower with upward spurred petals in April–May, occasionally June
- Part shade
- Sandy, well-drained soils, moist loam, sandy loam
- Native to dry rocky woodlands to moist, well-drained forests

Although a short-lived perennial, Columbine readily self-sows. The backward-pointed tubes of the flower contain nectar that attracts insects and hummingbirds with long-tongues especially adapted for reaching the sweet secretion.

Stunning flower. Attracts hummingbirds, bees, butterflies, and hawk moths. Larval host to Columbine Duskywing (*Erynnis lucilius*).

Asarum canadense • Common Wild Ginger



Louise Menges/John Clayton Chapter, VNPS



- 4–8 in.
- Reddish to greenish brown flower at ground level beneath leaves in April–May
- Part shade to full shade
- Moist, rich soils, pH of 6 to 7 best
- Native to woodlands

Wild Ginger is a good, low groundcover for woodlands and shaded landscapes. Beautiful heart-shaped velvety green leaves. The fleshy rootstock can create a crowded network on the woodland floor, resulting in a dense groundcover. Seed dispersed by ants.

GENUS: *ASCLEPIAS* - Milkweeds

Asclepias incarnata • Swamp Milkweed



Jan Newton/John Clayton Chapter, VNPS

There are over 100 species of milkweed in North America. Highlighted are four that are native to the Virginia Capital region.

The *Asclepias* genus is a highly valuable nectar source for pollinators, and its leaves attract and feed a variety of insect species. Milkweed is a critical host plant for the larvae of the Monarch butterfly (*Danaus plexippus*). Landscape practices that “clean up” fields and ditches are contributing to a wide-scale scarcity of milkweed plants. Monarch populations are in decline as a result, because without milkweed, they cannot successfully reproduce. Help support these beautiful insects and many other wildlife species by allowing locally native milkweeds to grow in naturalized spaces and by planting milkweeds in your own garden. Milkweed seeds can be purchased year-round, and plants are available in spring and summer months. Avoid planting *Asclepias curassavica* (Tropical Milkweed). The Xerces Society cautions that growing *Asclepias curassavica* in areas where it is not native can be problematic for migrating populations (<https://xerces.org/blog/tropical-milkweed-a-no-grow>).

HEIGHT: Ranges from 1–2½ ft. for *A. tuberosa*; 2–3 ft. for *A. incarnata*; 1–4 ft. for *A. variegata*; and 3–5+ ft. for *A. syriaca*.

FLOWERS: *Asclepias*’ flowers are orange (*A. tuberosa*) or pink, white, or mauve. Bloom time for *A. variegata* is earliest, from May–July, while the other species usually bloom June–August.

LIGHT: Requirement for *A. variegata* is sun to part shade; the other species need full sun.

SOILS: Moist to wet for *A. incarnata*; dry to moist for the other species.

Asclepias syriaca • Common Milkweed



Janis Stone

Asclepias tuberosa • Butterfly-weed



Jan Newton/John Clayton Chapter, VNPS

Asclepias variegata • White Milkweed



Janis Stone

Perennials (Forbs)

Baptisia tinctoria • Yellow Wild Indigo



Jan Newton/John Clayton Chapter, VNPS

- 2–3 ft.
- Clusters of yellow pea-like flowers in May–July
- Full sun
- Dry, loam, sandy, acidic soils
- Naturally found in dry open woods and clearings

The genus name of Yellow Wild Indigo, from the Greek *baptizein* (to dye), refers to the fact that some species are used as an inferior substitute for true indigo dye.

A larval host for the rare Frosted Elfin (*Callophrys irus*) and Wild Indigo Duskywing (*Erynnis baptisiae*) butterflies.

Chamaecrista fasciculata (cassia) • Common Partridge-pea



Seig Kopinitz/John Clayton Chapter, VNPS

- 1–3 ft.
- Yellow, showy, and large (1 in.) flowers in June–September
- Full sun
- Dry to moist, well-drained soils; favors dry open areas and colonizes poor soils and disturbed areas; good for erosion control
- Naturally found in rocky open woods, upland slopes, ridges, grasslands, open thickets, and fields

This plant is a legume and fixes nitrogen in the soil. Its leaves will fold or droop in low-light conditions or when touched; hence the species is also known as “sensitive” pea. Seeds form within a flat pea pod.

Chelone glabra • White Turtlehead



Trista Imrich/Wild Works of Whimsy



- 3–6 ft.
- White, pink (often lavender-tinged) tubular flowers in July–September
- Full sun to shade
- Rich, wet to moist soils
- Naturally found in brushy marshes, stream banks, wet ditches, low meadows, woodlands

The two-lipped flowers resemble turtle heads, which gives White Turtlehead its distinctive common name. Its genus name is derived from the Greek chelone (tortoise). The related Chelone obliqua (often sold as C. lyonii) has pink inflorescences.

Nectar source for butterflies. Larval host of the Baltimore Checkerspot butterfly (*Euphydryas phaeton*).

Chimaphila maculata • Striped Wintergreen



Margaret Fisher/VNPS



- 3–6 in.
- Shade
- Fragrant, white to pinkish flowers appearing in summer
- Moist to drier soils
- Naturally found in forests and woodlands habitats

This perennial plant of the wintergreen family has beautiful dark green leaves with a dramatic white midvein. Appealing white or pink flowers contrast with the reddish-brown stems.

Chrysogonum virginianum • Green and Gold



Irvine Wilson/DCR, Natural Heritage Program



- 6 in.–1 ft.
- Part shade
- Yellow, daisy-like blooms, spring into summer
- Moderately moist, well-drained to drier soils
- Naturally found in upland forests and woodlands

A low-growing, low-maintenance member of the aster family, this plant makes a beautiful groundcover. Good choice for naturalized areas and woodland gardens. Clumps can be separated. Spreads by stolons and runners.

Beautiful groundcover for shady areas. Flowers for an incredibly long time. Lovely planted along the edge of a woodland path.

Chrysopsis mariana • Maryland Golden-aster



Jan Newton/John Clayton Chapter, VNPS



- 1–1½ ft.
- Yellow flowers in August–October
- Full sun
- Wet to moist soils
- Native to pine woods, sandy areas, open forests, old fields, roadsides

Maryland Golden-aster provides a low, sturdy rosette effect until late summer, when its flowering branches lift clusters of yellow, aster-like flowers 1 ft. off the ground. The foliage is woolly when young, becoming smoother with age.

Fruiting heads of this perennial are attractive.

Perennials (Forbs)

Claytonia virginica • Spring Beauty, Virginia Spring Beauty



Jan. Newton/John Clayton Chapter, VNPS



- 4–8 in.
- Pink or whitish flowers, striped with dark pink, in loose clusters in March–May
- Part shade to shade
- Rich, moist soils; prefers high humus
- Naturally found in rich woods, thickets, old fields, well-drained floodplains

Spring Beauty is a perennial and ephemeral. It disappears from above ground in the summer shortly after the seed capsules have ripened. It grows from an underground tuber.

Attractive spring perennial that is spectacular in large patches. Pollinators attracted to *Claytonia virginica* include various bees and flies. Occasionally, butterflies and skippers visit seeking nectar.

Eurybia divaricata • White Wood Aster



Sue Dingwell/VNPS



- 6 in.–3½ ft.
- August–October; small, white, daisy-like flowers with yellow centers that fade to red are borne atop dark green to black stems
- Part shade (dappled) to shade
- Moist, loamy, sandy, acidic soils; good drainage essential
- Naturally found in moist to dry woods

The delicate, airy clouds of White Wood Aster are a must-have for every fall garden. This lovely aster is among the first to bloom in late summer. Research by entomologist Doug Tallamy of the University of Delaware lists asters and goldenrods as the wildflowers that support the most species of butterflies and moths.

Attracts butterflies. Lovely in masses. A vigorous grower, it is a favorite for attracting wildlife.

Conoclinium coelestinum • Mistflower



Denise Greene/Sassafras Farm



- 1–3½ ft.
- Bright blue or violet flowers in July–November
- Sun to part shade
- Moist, usually sandy acidic soil or clay
- Naturally found in clearings and other disturbed open or shaded sites

The fluffy-edged flowers of Mistflower are a magnet for late-season butterflies. Disk flowers, almost ¼ in. long, form almost a flat top. This wildflower spreads easily. It is a colonizing groundcover.

Attracts native bees and butterflies.

Fragaria virginiana • Wild Strawberry



Helen Hamilton/John Clayton Chapter, VNPS



- Up to 1 ft.
- Hairy, 6 in.-long flower stalk gives rise to a loose cluster of small, five-petaled, white flowers in April–June, followed by wild strawberries
- Full sun to part shade
- Dry soil
- Naturally found in moist to dry upland forests, woodlands, and well-drained alluvial forests; more characteristic of old fields, meadows, pastures

Wild Strawberry is a ground-hugging plant rising from a fibrous, perennial root system. The cultivated strawberries are hybrids developed from this native species and the South American one.

Attracts butterflies and pollinators. It is the host plant of the Gray Hairstreak Butterfly (*Strymon melinus*).

GENUS: *COREOPSIS* - Coreopsises

Coreopsis is a very versatile plant for many landscape situations, especially if you have dry, open, well-drained areas. This genus is effective for naturalizing in the garden because it self-propagates by spreading rhizomes underground and by scattering multiple seeds. The seeds, which are eaten by songbirds and small mammals, are said to look like tiny bugs or “ticks”; hence, plants in the genus are commonly referred to as “tickseed” coreopsis. *Coreopsis* provides nectar and pollen for many insect species.

Coreopsis auriculata • Lobed Coreopsis



Gary Fleming, DCR Natural Heritage Program

- 1–1½ ft.
- Yellow flowers in May–June
- Full sun, part shade
- Moist to wet, well-drained soils, especially rich and acidic soils; not as drought tolerant as other *Coreopsis* species
- Naturally found in open woodlands, thickets, roadsides

This species has a dwarf, compact habit and forms colonies by spreading rhizomes. Its elliptical-shaped leaves are somewhat evergreen and have small side lobes, which accounts for the nickname “mouse-ear.”

The basal leaves of Larkspur persist over winter and form an effective groundcover.

Coreopsis verticillata • Whorled or Threadleaf Coreopsis



Sue Dingwell, VNPS

- Yellow, daisy-like, showy and large (1–2 in.) flowers in June–September, most prolific in July
- Full sun to part shade
- Dry to moist, well-drained soils; tolerant of drought and poor or shallow soils, including rocky or sandy soils
- Naturally found in open fields, open pinelands, rocky dry woods or wood margins, upland slopes

Tolerant of heat and humidity; grows in bushy clumps.

GENUS: *EUPATORIUM* - Hyssop-leaf, Boneset

Eupatorium hyssopifolium • Hyssopleaf Thoroughwort



Dot Field, DCR/NH

Plants in the genus *Eupatorium* bear flat-topped or rounded flower heads full of fringe-like, tubular flowers in white, pink, or purple. These plants add a beautiful soft color and texture to the summer and fall garden and are grown for their ease of care and usefulness in mixed borders, wild gardens, and other naturalized areas. Some species are tender, evergreen and shrub-like, flowering in early to late spring. *Eupatorium* flowers attract birds, butterflies and native bees. The plants are prolific seeders and deer “resistant.”

Eupatorium perfoliatum • Boneset



Denise Greene/Sassaparilla Farm

HEIGHT: Ranges from 2–3 ft. for *E. hyssopifolium*; 4–5 ft. for *E. sessilifolium*; and up to 6 ft. for *E. perfoliatum*.

FLOWERS: July–September. The vase-shaped Hyssop-leaf has flowers resembling Babies’ Breath that add interest through the winter. The tiny, white fragrant flowers of Boneset are arranged in fuzzy clusters at the tops of the stems.

LIGHT: Full sun to part shade.

SOILS: Hyssop-leaf grows in dry to moist soils and requires good drainage; **Boneset** requires constant moisture, preferring moist to wet soils, and does well in both sandy or clay soils; **Upland Boneset** prefers dry to moist soils and requires moderately to strongly base-rich soils.

Boneset was traditionally used as a folk remedy for the analgesic treatment of pain and fevers, colds, or flu.

Eupatorium sessilifolium • Upland Boneset



Gary Fleming, DCR Natural Heritage Program

GENUS: *EUTROCHIUM* - Joe-pye-weeds

Eutrochium dubium • Three-nerved Joe-pye-weed



Eutrochium fistulosum • Hollow Joe-pye-weed



Eutrochium purpureum • Sweet-scented or Purple Joe-pye-weed



Joe-pye-weed was considered a *Eupatorium* until it was reclassified in 2004 into the *Eutrochium* genus. Five *Eutrochium* species occur in Virginia, and three are highlighted here.

They have a variety of common names, including Joe-pye-weed, Sweet-scented Joe-pye, Hollow-stemmed Joe-pye, Spotted Joe-pye, and Queen of the Meadow. Don't let the common names fool you: this plant looks far from weedy, and could turn out to be the star of your garden.

Joe-pye is an important source of nectar for pollinators, with special value to native bees; use this plant as a native replacement for Butterfly Bush. Their growth habit is clump-forming, and the plants are deer "resistant."

Eutrochium flowers are magnets for butterflies, especially Swallowtails and Monarchs. The flower heads of Joe-pye do not re-bloom, so leave the spent flowers on the plant and let them go to seed. The seed-heads will persist into winter, and their fluff will be used as nesting material by birds the following spring.

HEIGHT: 3–5 ft. for *E. dubium*; 4–7 ft. for *E. fistulosum*; 5–7 ft. for *E. purpureum*

FLOWERS: July–September; range in color from dusky rose to mauve pink; fragrant; Sweet Joe-pye-weed has a vanilla fragrance

LIGHT: Full sun to part shade

SOILS: Moist to wet, humus-rich soils which do not dry out

Three-nerved Joe-pye-weed, sometimes called Coastal Joe-pye-weed, has distinctive purple stems or green stems with purple spots. Hollow Joe-pye-weed has hollow stems without spots. Legend says that Joe Pye was a Native American herbalist who practiced healing in western Massachusetts.

Perennials (Forbs)

Geranium carolinianum • Carolina Geranium

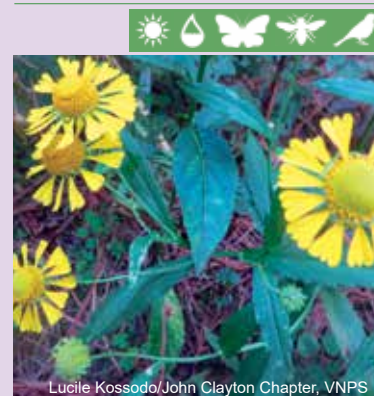


- 1–3 ft.
- White or pink flowers, blooming March–July
- Part shade
- Prefers dry soils, sandy to clay textures
- Naturally found along roadsides, in dry fields, rocky woods

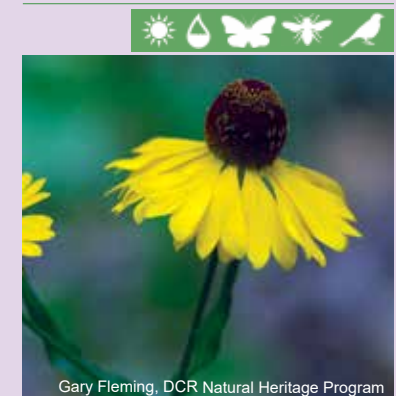
An annual, this prolific wild geranium will propagate by seed. It has five-part lobed leaves and loose flowerheads.

GENUS: *HELENIUM* - Sneezeweed

Helenium autumnale • Common Sneezeweed



Helenium flexuosum • Southern Sneezeweed



Helenium is a beautiful attraction to your landscape with many elongate leaves and numerous flower heads that attract butterflies and bees. The common name is based on the former use of its dried leaves in making snuff. The leaves, flowers, and seeds are poisonous to humans, and toxic if eaten in large quantities.

Perennials (Forbs)

Heliopsis helianthoides • Oxeye, Smooth Oxeye



Irvine Wilson/DCR, Natural Heritage Program



- 3–5 ft.
- Yellow flowers with raised centers, blooms June–September
- Full sun to part shade
- Moist, semi-moist, sandy soils, poor to average nutrients
- Naturally found in clearings, meadows, open forests, woodlands

Draws bees, birds, and butterflies. Good choice for a wildflower garden. This member of the sunflower family is attractive to grazing and browsing animals.

Hepatica americana • Round-lobed Hepatica, Liverleaf



Gary Fleming/DCR Natural Heritage Program



- 4–6 in.
- Usually lavender flowers in March–April; color can range from white to pink to pale blue to lavender
- Part shade to full shade
- Dry to moist, well-drained, humus-rich soils; high drought tolerance
- Naturally found in upland forests, rocky woodlands, and well-drained floodplain forests

The common name of Liverleaf refers to the supposed liver-like leaf shape and perhaps also to the liver-like color of the overwintering brown leaves. The genus, Hepatica, also called Liverleaf, was once believed to have therapeutic value in the treatment of liver diseases.

A striking plant with beautiful, dainty flowers, *Hepatica* is one of the earliest spring wildflowers. Attracts bees.

GENUS: *HELIANTHUS* - Sunflowers

Helianthus angustifolius • Narrow-leaved Sunflower



Ken Lawless

Helianthus is a genus of 62 sunflower species in the Aster family. The species shown here will add bright yellow flowers to your garden summer through fall, depending on which are used. Their flowers have special value to birds and pollinators. Many native bees and butterflies are attracted to the nectar, and the resulting seed heads attract numerous birds. These plants are the larval host and food source for some butterfly species, such as the Painted Lady (*Vanessa cardui*) and Silvery Checkerspot (*Chlosyne nycteis*). Note that *Helianthus* tend to spread rapidly by rhizomes and can be aggressive in a garden; they are great for naturalizing a large patch.

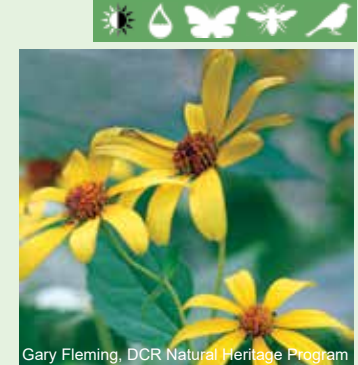
HEIGHT: Most species grow 3–6 ft.; some are shorter at 1–3 ft.

FLOWERS: July–October; yellow, prolific, showy, and large (2–3 in.)

LIGHT: Full sun for *H. angustifolius*; part shade for *H. divaricatus* and *H. decapetalus*

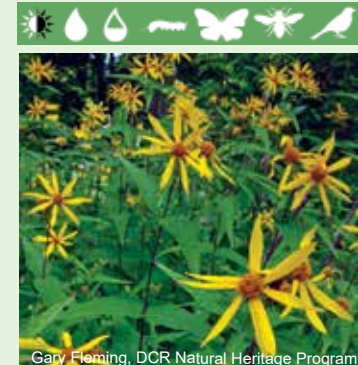
SOILS: Moist, well-drained soil; can handle a variety of conditions.

Helianthus decapetalus • Thin-leaved Sunflower



Gary Fleming, DCR Natural Heritage Program

Helianthus divaricatus • Woodland Sunflower



Gary Fleming, DCR Natural Heritage Program

Perennials (Forbs)

Heuchera americana • American Alumroot



Laura Beaty/VNPS



- Leaves up to 6 in.; flowering stems 1–2 ft.
- Leafless, hairy, sticky flower stalk rises 18–36 in. and surrounds its upper third with loosely grouped, minute, greenish, cup-shaped flowers in April–June
- Part shade to full shade
- Dry to moist soils
- Naturally found in rocky woodlands and outcrops of various geologic formations; tolerant of a range of rock types and chemistries

Attracts small bees.

This species has interesting foliage. It is a good rock garden plant and a good groundcover in shady gardens. It also grows well in pots. Deer resistant.

Hexastylis virginica • Virginia Heartleaf



Irvine Wilson/DCR Natural Heritage Program



- 6 in.
- Purple, brown jug-like flowers beneath leaf litter
- Part-shade to shade
- Rich moist soils with leaf cover
- Naturally found in upland woods, swamps, and bogs

Leaves are leathery, lustrous, heartshaped and evergreen. Plants can spread to form a groundcover for very low to no traffic areas.

Attracts pollinators.

Hibiscus moscheutos • Swamp or Eastern Rose-mallow



Dot Field/DCR Natural Heritage Program



- 3–8 ft.
- Creamy-white flowers with a red center in July–October
- Sun to part shade
- Wet or moist soils
- Naturally found in edges of salt marshes but is more common in upper-valley wetlands

Strikingly showy species with large, heart-shaped leaves. It is a nectar source for hummingbirds.

Clumps of Swamp Rose-mallow start to grow late in the season and flower over a long period in late summer. Rose mallow is easily grown from seed. Seeds are ready to collect when they are dark-brown.

Houstonia caerulea • Common Bluets



Nancy Vehrs/VNPS



- 0–1 ft.
- Delicate blue flowers, later spring to mid-summer
- Part shade
- Moist soils
- Naturally found along roadbanks, in clearings, lawns, woodlands

This attractive perennial can be an aesthetically pleasing addition to a rock garden.

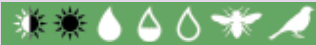
GENUS: *HYPERICUM* - St. John's-wort

Hypericum mutilum • Dwarf St. John's-wort



Gary Fleming, DCR Natural Heritage Program

Hypericum prolificum • Shrubby St. John's-wort



Gary Fleming, DCR Natural Heritage Program

Hypericum punctatum • Spotted St. John's-wort



Irvine Wilson/DCR, Natural Heritage Program

Hypericum, known as **St. John's-wort**, is a small, rounded shrub that is widely valued in the cut flower industry for its colorful berries. Plants have a dense, compact form and bear clusters of bright yellow flowers. They combine well with *Rudbeckia* and ornamental grasses in mixed borders. The plants can form small vegetative colonies by spreading rhizomes.

HEIGHT: *H. mutilum*, a dwarf species, is 6 in.–1.5 ft.; *H. prolificum*, 1–5 ft.; *H. punctatum*, up to 2.5 ft.

FLOWERS: June–August; yellow; range from ¼ in. in *H. mutilum* to ½ in. in *H. punctatum* and 1 in. in *H. prolificum*.

LIGHT: Full sun to part shade.

SOILS: Dry to moist, well-drained, evenly moist and moderately rich soil, also dry, rocky or sandy soils; *H. mutilum* prefers moist to wet, acidic soil.

The flowers of **St. John's-wort** produce no nectar but instead offer abundant pollen, providing an important food source to many pollinating insects. Long-tongued and short-tongued native bees, such as bumblebees and sweat bees, are attracted to the flowers. Native bees collect the pollen, and some beetle and fly species feed on the pollen, too. The leaves are a food source for a variety of leaf beetles and some moth and butterfly larvae, such as the gray half-spot moth (*Nedra ramosula*). Other insects feed on the seed capsules, such as the larvae of the gray hairstreak butterfly (*Strymon melinus*).

Some species in the *Hypericum* genus were used in early traditions to treat wounds and inflammation. The *St. John's-wort* species typically used today in the floral industry (*H. androsaemum*) and the herbal supplement industry (*H. perforatum*) are not native to Virginia.

Virginia Capital Region Native Plants

GENUS: *IRIS* - Irises

Iris cristata • Dwarf Crested Iris



Nancy Vehrs

Iris prismatica • Slender Blue Flag



Margaret Fisher

Iris verna • Coastal Plain Dwarf Violet Iris



Darl Fletcher, Virginia Living Museum

Iris virginica • Virginia Blue Flag



Jan Newton/John Clayton Chapter, VNPS

These eye-catching ornamental natives appear in springtime and are valued for their showy flowers and colors. *Iris* is the Greek name for rainbow. This perennial plant attracts birds and relies on hummingbirds, which feed on the nectar. It is highly deer resistant.

Iris is naturally found in wet meadows, swamps, and other wetland habitats, so it grows well in a variety of well-drained soil types and is an ideal plant for edges of ponds, lily pools, and drainage ditches. Native irises are best grown from seed as they are extremely difficult to transplant.

The earliest blooms occur in February or March. Some species have petals that stand upright, and some smaller species have six lobes pointing straight outwards. The flower's base styles divide toward the apex into petaloid branches, which is significant in pollination. *Iris* need full sun to thrive.

Capital Virginia region Iris species (pictured):

Iris cristata Solander, Dwarf Crested Iris

Iris prismatica, Slender Blue Iris or Flag

Iris verna L., Dwarf Iris

Iris virginica L., Virginia or Southern Blue Flag

Perennials (Forbs)

Impatiens capensis • Orange or Spotted Jewelweed



Margaret Fisher/VNPS



- 3–5 ft.
- Orange to orange-yellow blossoms, blooming July–October
- Full sun to part shade
- Moist soils of various quality
- Naturally found in swamps, marshes, ditches, ponds, and floodplain forests

Often grows in masses. Berries can be toxic to humans. Stem juice can relieve itching from poison ivy exposure. Scientifically verified fungicidal qualities.

Attracts bees, butterflies, and birds, especially hummingbirds.

Liatriis pilosa • Grass-leaf or Gayfeather Blazing Star



Denise Creehe/Sassafras Farm



- 1½ ft.
- Lavender flowers in July–November
- Full sun
- Dry, sandy, or rocky soil with good drainage and tolerates heat and drought
- Naturally found in dry woodlands, shale barrens, clearings, and roadsides

Blazing Star belies the notion that straight native plants can't compete with cultivars or non-natives for show. Great for use in bouquets, and it makes a stunning accent in the garden.

Important nectar plant for native bees, hummingbirds, and butterflies. It hosts four species of native caterpillars.

Lilium superbum • Turk's-cap Lily



Gary Fleming, DCR Natural Heritage Program



- 4–8 ft.
- Red, orange, yellow in July–September
- Full sun
- Moist, loam, sand, acidic soils; good drainage essential
- Naturally found in meadows, swamps, wood's edge

The recurved sepals and petals of Turk's-cap Lily, which presumably resemble a type of cap worn by early Turks, and the showy extruded stamens are distinctive features.

Largest and most spectacular of the native lilies of our region; up to 40 flowers have been recorded on a single plant.

Lobelia cardinalis • Cardinal Flower



Alli Baird



- 1–6 ft.
- Red flowers in July–October
- Sun to full shade
- Moist to wet, humus-rich, sandy and clay soils
- Naturally found in low areas, woodland edges, streambanks, roadsides, meadows

Cardinal Flower is a short-lived perennial that self sows. The common name of this flower alludes to the bright red robes worn by Roman Catholic cardinals. All parts of this plant are toxic. This species is not drought tolerant.

Valued for its ornamental blooms and color. Attracts birds. Depends on hummingbirds, which feed on the nectar, for pollination.

Perennials (Forbs)

visit www.PlantVirginiaNatives.org

Lupinus perennis • Sundial Lupine



Jan Newton/John Clayton Chapter, VNPS



- 1–2 ft.
- Showy, elongate clusters of purple or blue, pea-like flowers on an erect, tall stem in April–July; showy, palm-like compound leaves divided into 7–11 leaflets
- Sun to part shade
- Dry, sandy soils; requires good drainage but is very adaptable
- Naturally found in open forests, woodlands, clearings, and roadsides

Sundial Lupine was once thought to deplete the mineral content of soil; hence the genus name derived from the Latin lupus (wolf). Actually the plant enhances soil fertility by fixing atmospheric nitrogen in a useful form.

Larval host for the Frosted Elfin (*Callophrys irus*) butterfly. Birds and small mammals eat the seeds.

Mitchella repens • Partridge-berry



Jan Newton/John Clayton Chapter, VNPS



- No taller than 2 in.; evergreen herb
- Pinkish-white, fragrant, tubular flowers in pairs; flowers in May–October, followed by scarlet berries
- Part shade to shade
- Dry or moist, acidic; it is sensitive to drought unless the soil is very rich
- Naturally found in dry to moist forests, woodlands, and on hummocks of bottomland forests and swamps

An attractive, dainty, very slow-growing woodland creeper, Partridge-berry can be used as a groundcover under acid-loving shrubs.

Fruit is consumed by a variety of birds and mammals.

GENUS: *MONARDA* - Beebalm

Monarda fistulosa • Wild Bergamot



Seig Kopinitz/John Clayton Chapter, VNPS

Monarda punctata • Horsemint, Spotted Beebalm



Phillip Merritt/John Clayton Chapter, VNPS

Fragrant *Monardas* make a stunning addition to flowering borders. True to the mint family, they can spread prolifically by seeds and rhizomes; fortunately, they are easily divided for control or propagation, and can also be cultivated from cuttings. *M. punctata* blooms June–July, *M. fistulosa* July–September; the bloom period can be extended with deadheading. The flowers attract native bees, birds, and butterflies. These plants are moderately deer resistant due to their pungency.

GENUS: *OENOTHERA* - Sundrops

Oenothera biennis • Common Evening-primrose



Gary Fleming, DCR Natural Heritage Program

Oenothera fruticosa • Narrow-leaf Sundrops, Southern Sundrops



Phillip Merritt/John Clayton Chapter, VNPS

Narrow-leaf Sundrops spread rapidly under favorable conditions, but do not usually become aggressive. They attract birds and hummingbirds and are of special value to native bees. Grows 18–24 in.; needs full sun and moist, acidic soil. **Common Evening-primrose**'s lemon scented, bright yellow flower clusters appear in the second year of growth, and they bloom June–September, opening at night and closing before noon. Grows 2–6 ft.; best in full sun, but tolerates partial shade. Seeds are important to birds.

Perennials (Forbs)

Opuntia humifusa • Eastern Prickly-pear



Dot Field/DCR Natural Heritage Program



- 1–2½ ft., evergreen with 1–3 levels of flattened pads (fleshy leaves), each up to 10 in. long, 7 in. across, and 1½ in. thick
- Yellow buds, one or more, can form on top of a pad; each bud produces a single, satiny-yellow flower about 3–4 in. across, followed by a pear-like fruit in late spring to midsummer
- Sun
- Dry, sandy soil
- Naturally found on rock outcrops

Attracts pollinating bees. A striking plant with beautiful, showy flowers.

The blooming period of Eastern Prickly-pear occurs from late spring to mid-summer and lasts about a month for a colony of plants, although each flower lasts only a single day. It is faster and easier to start new plants using pads rather than seeds.

Parthenium integrifolium • Common Wild Quinine



Helen Hamilton/John Clayton Chapter, VNPS



- 1½–3 ft., long-stalked, rough perennial with large, toothed basal leaves that become smaller upwards
- Clumps of white, button-like flowers in June–August; flowers only appear on top of the plant
- Sun to part shade
- Dry, acidic to moderately basic soils
- Naturally found in moist to dry, open forests, woodlands, barrens, and clearings

Long blooming. Attracts butterflies and other pollinators.

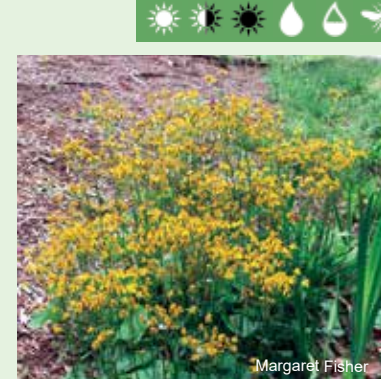
Clump-forming; good in a garden border. Has fragrant leaves.

GENUS: *PACKERA* - Ragworts

Packera anonyma • Small's Ragwort *Packera aurea* • Golden or Heartleaf Ragwort



Gary Fleming, DCR Natural Heritage Program



Margaret Fisher



Small's Ragwort: 18 in. or taller; clusters of ½ in., golden, daisy like flowers in April–June; full sun, but tolerates some shade. **Golden Ragwort:** 1–3 ft.; March–August; sun to shade; moist, acidic soils. This spring-blooming aster is extremely adaptable to many growing conditions. Many pollinators—small bees, bumblebees, butterflies—seek nectar and pollen from the flowers, despite the foliage being toxic to most herbivores.

Peltandra virginica • Arrow-arum, Tuckahoe



Irvine Wilson/DCR Natural Heritage Program



- Aquatic perennial (wetland habitats)
- Showy, greenish-white to greenish-yellow flowers on long (3–6 ft.) spadices bloom in late spring; mature fruit is dispersed by water; arrowhead-shaped green leaves form on long stalks, creating thick clumps over time
- Sun to part shade; tolerates heavy shade
- Naturally found in and along shallow waters

The flowers are pollinated by a Chloropid fly, *Elachiptera formosa*. The berries of Arrow-arum attract wood ducks and king rails.

Arrow-arum spreads readily by rhizomes. It is commonly confused with Saggittaria, an arrowhead that aggressively creates thick colonies. Arrow-arum naturalizes in wet soils in fresh water and is suitable for rain gardens.

Penstemon laevigatus • Smooth Beard-tongue



Darl Fletcher, Virginia Living Museum



- Tubular white flowers bloom in May–July in open-clusters on erect, 2–3 ft. tall, smooth-stemmed stalks with opposite leaves
- Sun to part shade
- Dry soil; develops root rot in moist to wet soils
- Naturally found in meadows, fields, and disturbed areas

Often confused with Penstemon digitalis, which is likely introduced from the midwestern United States.

Attracts many pollinators, particularly hummingbirds, bumblebees, and other native bees.

Podophyllum peltatum • Mayapple



Phillip Merritt/John Clayton Chapter, VNPS



- 8 in.–1½ ft.
- Solitary, nodding, white to rose-colored flower; 6–9 waxy white petals in March–May; followed by large, fleshy, lemon-shaped berry
- Part shade to full shade
- Moist to dry, humus-rich soils
- Naturally found in deciduous woods, shaded banks, and various moist, disturbed habitats

Mayapple spreads by roots. This species is ephemeral, which means that its foliage dies back in summer. All parts contain toxins, some of which have medicinal applications.

Cross-pollinated by bees. New colonies started by box turtles, which consume the yellow fruit and thereby spread the seed.

Virginia Capital Region Native Plants

Phlox divaricata • Wild Blue Phlox, Woodland Phlox



Gary Fleming, DCR Natural Heritage Program



- 5–18 in.
- Fragrant, lavender or pink flowers in April–May
- Filtered sunlight to light shade
- Rich, sandy or rocky, well-drained soils
- Naturally found in floodplain forests to open woods

Often fragrant. Not rabbit or deer resistant. Divaricata refers to its sprawling habit.

Attracts hummingbirds, long tongued bees, and butterflies.

Polygonatum biflorum • Solomon's-seal



Phillip Merritt/John Clayton Chapter, VNPS



- 2–3 ft.
- Whitish-green, bell-shaped flowers along an arching stem in April–June, followed by blue berries
- Part shade to full shade
- Moist to dry, acidic soils; does best in rich woodland soil but quite versatile and will do well at the base of trees
- Naturally found in rich, dry to moist woods; thickets; calcareous hammocks

The root stalk of Solomons-seal is jointed; when the leaf stalk breaks away, it leaves a distinctive scar said to resemble the official seal of King Solomon.

Birds consume the berries of this plant, but they are poisonous to humans. Solomon's-seal is an excellent woodland plant.

Perennials (Forbs)

Pontederia cordata • Pickerelweed



Jan Newton/John Clayton Chapter, VNPS



- 3–3½ ft.
- Deep blue flowers in June–November
- Shallow, quiet water; freshwater marshes, up to 1 ft. under water
- Sun to part shade
- Naturally found in wet or moist, sandy, loam or clay soils

Pickerelweed produces one spike covered with small flowers that bloom in succession from the bottom up. Good for wetland gardens and marshy habitats.

Provides nectar for bees and butterflies. Seeds eaten by waterfowl. Attracts dragonflies.

Ruellia caroliniensis • Carolina Wild-petunia



Margaret Fisher, VNPS



- Perennial
- Height 1–2 ft.
- Lavender to medium bluish-purple, June–Sep
- Full sun to partial shade
- Moist clay, loam, or sandy soils
- Naturally found in open woods, fields, and thickets

Blossoms last a day or two, but new flowers form in succession. Self-seeding and easily transplanted.

Provides nectar for bees and butterflies. Serves as a host plant for Buckeye butterfly caterpillars (*Junonia coeia*).

GENUS: *PYCNANTHEMUM* - Mountain Mints

Pycnanthemum incanum • Hoary Mountain-mint



Gary Fleming, DCR Natural Heritage Program

Pycnanthemum muticum • Clustered Mountain-mint



Gary Fleming, DCR Natural Heritage Program

Pycnanthemum tenuifolium • Narrow-leaf Mountain-mint



Rochelle Bartolomei/VNPS

Mountain mints in bloom are covered with a spectacular variety of butterflies, bees, wasps, and moths. The genus name, *Pycnanthemum*, means densely flowered. Like other members of the mint family, these species have clusters of flowers that bloom progressively over a long period of time. They spread generously by rhizomes, making this plant a wonderful mass of blooms in summer. *Pycnanthemum* has a minty aroma when the leaves are crushed. Mountain mints are great garden plants. They have no serious insect or disease problems. They are an adaptable, hardy, and interesting plant in the border, meadow, herb garden, or naturalized areas such as areas near streams. They are also an alternative to invasive, non-native Oxeye Daisy (*Leucanthemum vulgare*) which is an aggressively spreading plant that decreases native plant diversity where it takes hold.

HEIGHT: *P. incanum*, 3–6 ft.; *P. muticum*, 2–3 ft.; *P. tenuifolium*, 2–3 ft.

FLOWERS: July–September

LIGHT: Full sun to part shade (blooms best in full sun)

SOILS: *P. incanum*, average dry to moist, well-drained soils; *P. muticum*, fertile, moist, well-drained soils; *P. tenuifolium*, average, dry to moist, well-drained soil

Genus name comes from Greek *pyknos*, meaning dense, and *anthos*, meaning flower, for its densely packed flowers. Mountain mints are attractive, easy to grow, and they are deer resistant!

GENUS: *RHEXIA* - Meadow Beauties

Rhexia mariana ● Maryland or Pale Meadow Beauty



Jan Newton/John Clayton Chapter, VNPS

Rhexia virginica ● Virginia Meadow Beauty



Gary Fleming, DCR Natural Heritage Program

Meadow Beauty requires consistently wet, acidic soils. It is one of the showier wildflowers, with deep pink petals surrounding long, slender, bright yellow anthers, which are curved like a sickle. The well-attached pollen in each anther is released through a small pore at one end by “buzz pollination.” Solitary bumblebees must grab the flower and buzz to vibrate the anthers. Honeybees cannot buzz-pollinate, so this is accomplished in the greenhouse trade by electric vibrators, or the application of transported bumblebee colonies.

HEIGHT: *R. mariana*, 1–2½ ft.; *R. virginica*, 2–8 ft.

FLOWERS: *R. mariana* in June–August; *R. virginica* in June–September

LIGHT: *R. mariana*, part shade to shade; *R. virginica* in full sun

SOILS: Moist to wet; *R. mariana* prefers acidic soil; *R. virginica* prefers loam soil

Maryland or Pale Meadow Beauty has a conspicuous flower, which is lovely in a water garden, a bog, or a pond area. The fruit turns from green to copper, and when they are dry and brittle, the seeds are mature. Host plant to Large Lace Border moths (*Scopula limboundata*).

Virginia Meadow Beauty has a distinctive urn-shaped fruit that Thoreau once compared to a tiny cream pitcher.

GENUS: *RUDBECKIA* - Coneflowers

Rudbeckia fulgida ● Orange Coneflower



Gary Fleming, DCR Natural Heritage Program

Rudbeckia hirta ● Black-eyed Susan



Dot Field/DCR Natural Heritage Program

Rudbeckia laciniata ● Cut-leaf Sunflower, Green-headed Coneflower



Phillip Merritt/John Clayton Chapter, VNPS

Rudbeckia species native to the Virginia Capital Region, including Black-eyed Susan, Orange Coneflower, and Green-headed Coneflower, are easy to grow and maintain, and tolerant of most soils. Some are shorter lived, but all re-seed and establish clumps. Cheerful blossoms live up bouquets. Birds, especially goldfinches and chickadees, enjoy the ripe seeds. Nectar attracts bees, butterflies.

HEIGHT: *R. fulgida*, 2–3 ft.; *R. hirta*, 1–3½ ft.; *R. laciniata*, 2–8 ft.

FLOWERS: *R. fulgida* in July–October; *R. hirta* in June–October; *R. laciniata* in June–August

LIGHT: *R. fulgida* and *R. laciniata*, full sun to part shade; *R. hirta*, full sun

SOILS: Dry to moist, well-drained, acidic; *R. laciniata* prefers moist; *R. hirta* is drought tolerant

A member of the daisy family, **Orange Coneflower** makes a good cut flower, while deadheading can prolong bloom.

Black-eyed Susan forms mature seed cones about three to four weeks after flowering. (Check by breaking a cone open; if the seeds are dark, they are mature.) This plant is easy to grow and tolerant of most soils. It self-seeds and establishes clumps.

The center cones of **Cut-Leaf Sunflower** elongate and become brownish as the seeds ripen. Because it spreads rampantly by underground stems, Cut-leaf Coneflower is only appropriate for large sites. May need staking in garden situations, but otherwise very hardy.

Perennials (Forbs)

Sagittaria latifolia • Broad-leaved Arrowhead, Duck Potato



Gary Fleming, DCR Natural Heritage Program



- A wetlands species, it grows 3–4 ft. above the water line with arrowhead-shaped leaves with a milky sap
- Showy flowers, arranged in a whorl around a stalk taller than the leaves with 3 white to pink petals and green sepals during July–September
- Full sun
- Naturally found in swamps, muddy banks, or wet sand

The common name “duck potato” refers to this plant’s edible, starchy tubers, which were used extensively by Native Americans as a food source.

Seeds and tubers are highly valued by wildlife, including muskrats, snapping turtles, and many waterfowl such as swans, geese, and over a dozen duck species.

Sanguinaria canadensis • Bloodroot



Phillip Brindley/John Clayton Chapter, VNPS



- 6–14 in.
- Clear white, many-petaled flower with orange center in March–April; single, large, round leaf and flower each on a separate stem; at first leaf completely enwraps flower bud, opening in full sun and closing at night
- Sun to part shade
- Moist, well-drained, humus-rich soils
- Naturally found in moist to dry upland forests, dry woodlands, well-drained floodplain forests

Bloodroot may spread to form a colony. The red juice from the underground stem was used by Indians as a dye for baskets, clothing, and war paint, as well as for insect repellent. Root is poisonous.

Salvia lyrata • Lyre-leaf Sage



Jan Newton/John Clayton Chapter, VNPS



- 1–2½ ft.
- Light blue, violet flowers in April–June; basal leaves are semi-evergreen, often with a purplish tint in winter
- Sun to shade
- Adaptable; well drained, acid or calcareous soils
- Naturally found in fields, clearings, moist to dry forests and woodlands, well-drained floodplain forests, limestone and dolomite barren

Flowers attract native bees, bumblebees, butterflies, and hummingbirds. Hosts five species of native caterpillars.

Lyre-leaf Sage tolerates drought, temporary flooding, and overwatering. It is an excellent groundcover native alternative to Ajuga.

Saururus cernuus • Lizard’s Tail, Water-dragon



Gary Fleming/DCR Natural Heritage Program



- 1½–4 ft.
- White; May–September
- Part shade, shade
- Wet, moist, muddy soils (aquatic - up to 4 in. inundation)
- Naturally found in still water; wet lowland, stream edges

The common name and the genus name, from the Greek sauros (lizard) and oura (tail), depict the shape of the drooping flower cluster. Crushed foliage has a pleasant, sassafras aroma.

Great spreading groundcover for moist soils, shallow water, and containers. Good for wetland gardens and habitat. Colonizes large areas. Attracts birds.

Scutellaria integrifolia • Hyssop Scullcap



Seig Kopinitz/John Clayton Chapter, VNPS



- 1–2 ft.
- Bluish-lavender showy two-lipped flowers (arched upper lip and flaring lower lip) grow clusters in May–July; separate flowers are attached by short stalks at equal distances along a central stem
- Full sun
- Wet to moist soils
- Naturally grows in moist to dry forests, floodplain forests and alluvial swamps, seepage swamps, depression swamps and ponds, wet flatwoods, wet meadows, and other low, disturbed habitats

Many Skullcaps are recognized by the tiny projection, or hump, on the top of the calyx surrounding the base of the flower.

Sericocarpus asteroides • Toothed White-top Aster



Gary Fleming, DCR Natural Heritage Program



- Grows 2 ft. tall and 1–3 ft. wide
- Loosely spaced 5 petaled white flowers with a light pink center in thin clusters bloom atop sturdy stems in June, July, and August
- Full sun to partial shade, blooming best in full sun
- Naturally grows in grasslands, woodlands and disturbed areas such as road edges

The basal leaves persist through flowering. The genus name Sericocarpus comes from the Greek words sericos, meaning silky, and carpos, meaning fruit. This name refers to the hairy fruits (cypsela) of plants in this genus.

Attracts pollinators.

Senna marilandica (Cassia) • Maryland or Southern Wild Senna



Margaret Fisher/VNPS



- 3–6 ft. tall, 2–3 ft. wide
- Clusters of yellow showy, pea-like flowers bloom in July and August
- Thrives in full sun in heat and humidity
- Tolerates clay soil, moist soils, and well-drained soils

Pea-like seed pods turn black in the fall; the leaves are feathery and compound like black locust tree leaves.

Attracts birds and is of special value to bumblebees. Host plant for Cloudless Sulphur Butterfly larvae (*Phoebis sennae*).

Silene caroliniana • Wild Pink, Northern Wild Pink



Jan Newton/John Clayton Chapter, VNPS



- 1 ft.
- Pink flowers in April–June
- Full sun to part shade
- Moist, well-drained, rocky or sandy soils
- Naturally grows in dry rocky or sandy forests, woodlands, barrens, and outcrops; tolerant of a range of soils and rock chemistries

A single wild pink plant can produce 50–100 showy, rose-pink, tubular flowers. These dense clusters of flowers are just even with the tips of the narrow, basal leaves. The plant is slender stemmed and forms a 3–8 in. compact mound.

Perennials (Forbs)

Sisyrinchium angustifolium • Narrow-leaved Blue-eyed Grass



Denise Greene/Sassafras Farm

Benefits native bees and other pollinators. Clump-forming and can be grown in small patches as a groundcover.

- 1–3 ft.
- Light-blue, star-shaped flowers bloom a few inches above the leaves in March–June
- Full sun to part shade
- Moist, wet, poor to average soils; does not tolerate droughts or flooding
- Naturally found in moist to dry upland forests, woodlands, fields, meadows, and floodplain forests

Although Narrowleaf Blue-eyed Grass is small and has grass-like leaves, it is a miniature member of the Iris family. Native Americans used the plant and the root medicinally. Like iris, they should be divided every two years.

Symplocarpus foetidus • Skunk Cabbage



Janis Stone

Numerous small yellow flowers attract flies and beetles for pollination. Attracts birds.

- 1–3 ft. tall
- 4–6 in. long green-yellow spadix appears enclosed by a reddish-brown spathe (bract) that opens to one side; as flowers on the spadix wilt, green leaves unfold; outer surface of the spathe has stripes, streaks, or spots of purple and green
- Medium- to dark-green leaves oval leaves wilt away by the end of summer
- Sun, partial shade to shade
- Naturally found in wet meadows, woods

Bruised leaves have a foul odor that gives the skunk cabbage its name. Otherwise the plant has no odor. One of the earliest plants to bloom. It generates its own heat, pushing a spadix even through melting snow.

GENUS: *SOLIDAGO* - Goldenrods



Solidago is a genus of 90 to 110 species. The species listed below are native to the Virginia Capital Region and will add eye-catching splashes of yellow and gold to home gardens and other cultivated landscapes in the late summer–early fall. Goldenrods average 1–4 feet, but the taller species can reach 8 ft. They grow in a broad range of soils, light and moisture. They attract bees, native bees, and butterflies. Goldenrods support the greatest number of caterpillars of any of the wildflowers—112 caterpillar species, an important staple in a bird's diet!



Phillip Merritt/John Clayton Chapter, VNPS

Goldenrod is often mistakenly believed to cause hayfever. The real offender is ragweed, which blooms at the same time. The heavy pollen of goldenrods can only be transported by insects, while the tiny molecules of ragweed pollen are transported by wind and aggravate allergies.

Capital Virginia region species that grow in a range of part shade/part sun:

- *Solidago caesia* • Blue-stemmed Goldenrod, Wreath Goldenrod
- *Solidago nemoralis* • Gray Goldenrod
- *Solidago odora* • Sweet Goldenrod
- *Solidago rugosa* • Rough-stemmed or Wrinkleleaf Goldenrod

Capital Virginia region species that prefer full sun:

- *Euthamia graminifolia* • Grass-leaved Goldenrod
- *Solidago juncea* • Early Goldenrod
- *Solidago pinetorum* • Small's Goldenrod, Pineywoods Goldenrod
- *Solidago puberula* • Downy Goldenrod
- *Solidago rugosa* • Rough-stemmed Goldenrod, Wrinkle-leaf Goldenrod

GENUS: *SYMPHYOTRICHUM* - Asters



Darl Fletcher

Symphyotrichum cordifolium, Heart-leaved Aster, Blue Wood Aster



A genus of about 90 species of herbaceous annual and perennial plants in the composite family (*Asteraceae*) that were formerly treated within the genus *Aster*. The majority are native to North America. The *Symphyotrichum* species native to the Virginia Capital Region are listed below. This genus attracts a high number of native bees, bumblebees, and honeybees, as well as butterflies. New York Aster is a larval host for the Pearl Crescent butterfly (*Phyciodes tharos*).

Symphyotrichum concolor ● Eastern Silvery Aster

Symphyotrichum cordifolium ● Heart-leaved Aster, Blue Wood Aster

Symphyotrichum grandiflorum ● Large-flowered Aster

Symphyotrichum novae-angliae ● New England Aster

Symphyotrichum novi-belgii ● New York Aster

Symphyotrichum cordifolium blooms best in full sun, and tolerates shade. It does not tolerate wet soils. It is easily grown from seed, so cut to the ground after blooms fail.

Symphyotrichum concolor thrives in full sun, and tolerates partial shade.

Symphyotrichum laeve var. *laeve* tolerates dry soil and drought conditions. It easily self-seeds.

Symphyotrichum novae-angliae thrives in moist, rich soils. Said to be deer resistant.



Margaret Fisher

Symphyotrichum novae-angliae, New England Aster

Tiarella cordifolia ● Foamflower



Gary Fleming, DCR Natural Heritage Program



- 6–12 in.
- Tiny, white flowers with very long stamens appear in airy racemes in April–June; leaves turn a nice reddish bronze in fall
- Part shade to full shade
- Organically rich, moisture-retentive soils
- Naturally found in cool, moist, deciduous woods; stream banks

Foamflower can be used as a groundcover as it spreads by underground rhizomes. Genus name comes from the Greek tiara meaning a small crown, in reference to the form of the fruit.

A showy, clump-forming perennial.

Tradescantia virginiana ● Virginia Spiderwort



Margaret Fisher/VNPS



- 1½–3' tall
- Blue to purple 1½ in. diameter three-petaled flowers with yellow stamens open for just 1 morning, plants bloom in clusters May–July; clump-forming plant with long, narrow, dark-green leaves grow up to 1 ft. long; mid-summer foliage declines
- Part shade to full shade
- Acidic soil in dry loamy, clay, or well drained sites

Flowers pollinated by bumblebees, other bees, flies, and butterflies.

Black Walnut tolerant. *Virginia Native Plant Society's 2008 Wildflower of the Year.*

GENUS: *VIOLA* - Violets



1



2



3



4

- 1 - Confederate Violet - Jan Newton/VNPS
- 2 - Primrose-leaved Violet - Phillip Merritt/VNPS
- 3 - Bird's-foot Violet - Jan Newton/VNPS
- 4 - Common Blue Violet, Confederate Violet - Phillip Merritt/VNPS

BLOOM TIME: March–June

HEIGHT: 3-12 in.

- Viola affinis* • Sand Violet, LeConte's Violet
- Viola cucullata* • Marsh Blue Violet
- Viola pedata* • Bird's-foot Violet
- Viola primulifolia* • Primrose-leaved Violet



A genus of over 500 species worldwide, the easy-care, attractive *Viola* species listed below are native to the Virginia Capital Region. Violets are small plants that come in a variety of flower colors, leaf shapes, and forms. They can be used as fillers among taller plants and will add color to spring and early summer gardens. *V. sororia* and *V. bicolor* may be used in low-maintenance settings such as meadows and naturalized lawns.

Viola are considered one of the first signs of spring. Violets thrive in shady parts of the yard and can double as a groundcover. Some *Viola* species maintain a winter presence, which will give them year-round interest in your landscape. Species vary in their preference to moisture and drainage, which presents a better opportunity to get the right violet for your space.

Violets are a host for 27 species of native caterpillar species, including the Greater and Lesser Fritillary butterflies. Flowers attract native bees, bumblebees, butterflies, and other pollinators, and the seeds attract gamebirds. Violets will seed freely in your yard but are easily pulled up if you want to tame their numbers.

- Viola pubescens* • Downy Yellow Violet
- Viola sagittata* • Arrow-leaved Violet
- Viola sororia* • Common Blue Violet
- Viola striata* • Striped Violet, Cream Violet

Perennials (Forbs)

Verbena hastata • Blue Vervain



Gary Fleming, DCR Natural Heritage Program



- 3–5 ft.
- Spikes of purple-blue flowers in June–October
- Sun to part shade
- Moist to dry soils
- Naturally found in wet meadows

Small flowers open on spikes from bottom to top for a long bloom period. Plants grow in clumps and form colonies by slow-growing rhizomes and are self-seeding.

Spent flower spikes add ornamental interest. Host plant for Common Buckeye butterfly larvae (*Junonia coenia*).

Vernonia noveboracensis • New York Ironweed



Teta Kain



- 3–6 ft.
- Red-purple flowers in July–September
- Full sun to part shade
- Found in moist soils in the wild; tolerates clay and neutral to acidic conditions
- Naturally found in floodplain forests, riverbanks, meadows, roadsides

As a tall, narrow plant, New York Ironweed is suited for the back of the border or tight spaces. Towering over many other wildflower species of late summer and early fall, the tall dead stalks remain standing well throughout the winter months, giving migrant bird species a place to perch in early Spring.

Flowers attract butterflies, and seed heads attract birds. Special value to native bees.

Insect Plant Coevolution

The Story of the Yucca and the Yucca Moth

Yucca filamentosa • Common Yucca, Adam's Needle



Trista Imrich/Wild Works of Whimsy



www.bobklips.com

- 6 ft. flowering stalk rises above 2–3 ft. clumps of erect, dagger-like, blue-green leaves
- White, nodding, bell-shaped flowers in April–August
- Dry, sandy soil
- Sun

Flowers attract hummingbirds.

Native plants form the primary structure of the living landscape and provide food and shelter for native animal species. Native plants co-evolved with native animals and have formed complex and interdependent relationships. One of the most extraordinary partnerships between an insect and a plant is that of the Yucca and the Yucca Moth (*Tegeticula maculata*). They are so interdependent that one cannot live without the other.

Yucca filamentosa - Common Yucca, Adam's Needle depends upon the Yucca Moth as its agent of pollination. The moth depends on the Yucca for food. At flowering time, the female moth gathers a mass of pollen from the anthers of the Yucca and then flies to another Yucca flower, where she deposits a number of eggs into the ovary among the ovules (immature seeds). Next, she places the pollen mass on the stigma of the flower, thus ensuring pollination and subsequent development of the ovules into seeds. As the seeds enlarge, they become the food source for the moth larvae. Many of the seeds remain uninjured and are eventually dispersed, potentially producing new plants. At maturity, the larvae leave the seed capsule, drop to the ground, and pupate. The adult moth emerges next season as the Yucca begins to flower.



Zizia aurea • Golden-alexanders, Common Golden-alexanders



Nancy Vehrs/VNPS

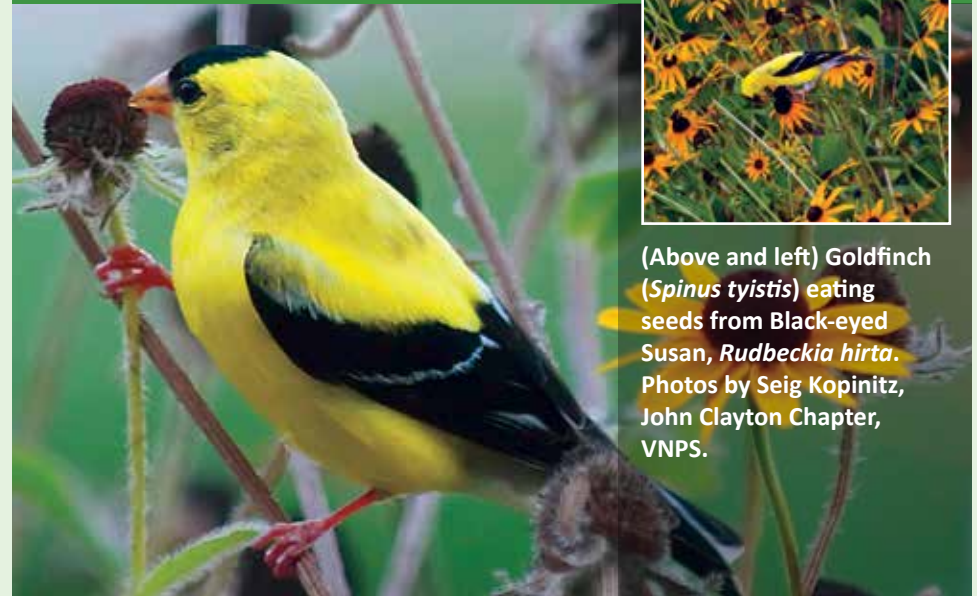


- 1–2 ft.
- Flat-topped clusters of tiny, yellow flowers in April–May
- Full sun to full shade
- Moist to wet soils
- Naturally found in floodplain forests, marshes, clearings

Supports Conservation Biological Control, a sustainable approach to pest management, which means it is a species that attracts predatory or parasitoid insects that prey upon pest insects.

Attracts butterflies. Larval host to Black Swallowtail (*Papilio polyxenes*). Special value to native bees.

Plant Natives for Habitat



(Above and left) Goldfinch (*Spinus tyristis*) eating seeds from Black-eyed Susan, *Rudbeckia hirta*. Photos by Seig Kopinitz, John Clayton Chapter, VNPS.



There are thousands of species of ferns in the world. Ferns have many parts somewhat similar to flowering plants. The frond, which can vary greatly in size, is the part of the fern that we notice as the leaf. These fronds arise from rhizomes, which are comparable to “stems” in flowering plants. Then below are the roots. Modern ferns have no flowers or seeds; this is what distinguishes them from other plants. They reproduce by means of miniature sacks or capsules containing dust-like spores. A fern may drop millions of spores, but few find the appropriate conditions to grow into a fern. A fern can die back to the ground in fall and regrow in spring or be evergreen throughout the year. Ferns can grow in a variety of landscapes, climates, and growing conditions. For gardens with some or much shade, they can offer varied texture, shapes, and many shades of green and plant forms. They have also been used to remediate contaminated soils and have been the subject of research for their ability to filter some chemical pollutants from the air. Ferns continue to play a role in mythology, medicine, and art.

Adiantum pedatum • Northern Maidenhair Fern



Provides shelter for toads and lizards. Brings grace and beauty to the shady garden. Can be used in flower arrangements, but do not pick in the wild.



- 1–2½ ft.
- Reproduces by spores in June–August
- Stems are wiry, dark red to black
- Full shade to part sun
- Moist, humus-rich, well-drained base soils; does not tolerate clay; not drought tolerant
- Naturally found in woodlands

Best used as a groundcover in the woodland or rock garden, or as an edge or border in the shaded garden. A very popular native North American fern that spreads by shallow rhizomes. Propagate by dividing rhizomes in the spring. Bright light will reduce the size of the fronds. Doesn't do very well in full sun.

Asplenium platyneuron • Ebony Spleenwort



Plant juice is eaten by small insects, and fronds are utilized by small mammals.



- 6–18 in.; dainty evergreen upright fern that can range from individual fronds to small asymmetrical clumps
- Full sun to full shade
- Gravelly, sandy, loamy, well-drained soils; grows well in acid or alkaline soils; does not grow well in clay or tolerate flooding
- Naturally found in forests, old fields, clearings, woodlands, outcrops

Ebony Spleenwort is one of the most drought-tolerant ferns. It takes more sun than many, provided it is kept moist enough. The word ebony refers to the fact that the stalk turns a shining black with age. With its interesting foliage, this fern is good for light, airy cover.

Athyrium asplenoides • Southern Lady Fern



Helen Hamilton/John Clayton Chapter, VNPS



- 2–3 ft.; slow-growing clumps; small colonies of plants are often produced from rhizomes
- Stems are greenish-yellow to red
- Full sun to full shade
- Loam, rich, loose, well-drained, acid-moderate soils
- Naturally found in upland forests, well-drained floodplain forests, swamp forest hummocks

Southern Lady fern has beautiful upright feathery fronds which give the illusion of a dainty fern. It can be used as a groundcover plant on the northeast side of buildings. Protect it from wind. Can handle sun, dry soils better than most ferns.

Hosts three species of native caterpillars.

Dennstaedtia punctilobula • Hay-scented Fern



Jan Newton, John Clayton Chapter, VNPS



- 1–3 ft.
- Forms colonies from the rhizomes, creating a carpet-like mat
- Sun to full shade
- Adaptable; rocky, acid-moderate soils
- Naturally found in forests, woodlands, rock outcrops, road banks

Hay scented fern can be aggressive in the right conditions. Leaves are attractive but in fall become more ragged in appearance. The soft, hairy surface of its fronds is distinctive. Common name comes from the hay-like scent of the drying leaves during late summer or autumn or if the frond is crushed.

Foliage grown en masse provides cover for wildlife. Hosts 3 species of native caterpillars.

GENUS: DRYOPTERIS - Wood Ferns

Dryopteris cristata • Crested Wood Fern



Gary Fleming, DCR Natural Heritage Program

Dryopteris intermedia • Evergreen Wood Fern



Gary Fleming, DCR Natural Heritage Program

Dryopteris marginalis • Marginal Wood Fern



Janis Stone

Crested Wood Fern, 1 ½–2 ½ ft., is nearly evergreen. It produces small rosette-shaped fronds that fall over during the winter. Sterile fronds remain evergreen. This fern is typically found in moist or wet conditions including wetlands and marshes. They originate from an underground rhizome.

Evergreen Wood Fern is a good choice for deep shade.

Marginal Wood Fern is a perennial evergreen fern with lacy 1–3 foot foliage that can be found in moist woodlands and other shaded areas and once established may tolerate dryer conditions than some other ferns. During snowy winters, it can be seen protruding from the snow. It is not aggressive and does not colonize large areas. Toads and lizards use this plant as cover in wooded areas.

Ferns

Onoclea sensibilis • Sensitive Fern



Helen Hamilton/John Clayton Chapter, VNPS



- 1–3 ft., sometimes higher
- Produces spores in pod-like structures
- Stems are greenish-yellow to red
- Part shade to full shade
- Moist, well-drained, loose soils; needs consistent moisture but will spread freely by rhizomes in moist, loose soils
- Naturally found in woodlands

Best used as a groundcover in the shaded or woodland garden. Does not do well with drought. Named the sensitive fern because the fronds turn yellow and die down with the first frost. But don't worry, the rhizomes will produce new leaves in the spring.

Deer and rabbit resistant. Attracts birds. Shelters salamanders and frogs.

Osmundastrum cinnamomeum • Cinnamon Fern



Ken Lawless



- 2–6 ft.; frequently forms large clumps and spreads by rhizomes
- Thick, spore-bearing spikes, or fronds, that turn from green to chocolate brown appear April–May
- Full sun to full shade
- Muddy, sandy, clay or loam, acidic soils
- Naturally found in upland forests, swamps, wet flatwoods, bogs, fens, pocosins, floodplain forests, alluvial and tidal swamps

Occurs in groups, rising from a shallow, black rootstock. Fertile fronds appear first as silvery, furry fiddleheads, and become stiff and erect, creating a dramatic feature in the landscape with the infertile fronds bending outwards in a vase-shaped circle enclosing the fertile fronds.

Fuzz covering young fiddleheads is a favorite bird nesting material. Hosts three species of native caterpillars, including the Osmunda Borer moth (*Papaipema speciosissima*).

Osmunda spectabilis • Royal Fern



Jan Newton/John Clayton Chapter, VNPS



- 2–5 ft.; forms a symmetric clump 18 in. wide
- Grows slowly from rhizome stem
- Part shade, shade; tolerates full sun in very moist conditions, but not in hot areas
- Wet, sandy, clay or loam, acidic soils, tolerates year-round, standing but not moving, shallow water
- Naturally found in freshwater wetlands, bogs, fens, floodplain forests and along streambanks

One of the most widespread of all living species; it is found on every continent except Australia.

Hosts six species of native caterpillars, including the Osmunda Borer moth.

GENUS: *THELYPTERIS* - New York Fern, Marsh Fern

Thelypteris noveboracensis • New York Fern



Seig Kopinitz/John Clayton Chapter, VNPS

New York Fern is an evergreen perennial fern that typically grows 12–18 in. tall but can grow as large as 2 ft. in the right conditions. It thrives in part to full shade in moist, acidic soils. The creeping roots produce fronds that can develop into a dense groundcover. It will quickly crowd out other plants but is well suited for woodland gardens. Eastern Marsh Fern grows 18–24 in. in partial sun in wet soils, but not in standing water.

Thelypteris palustris • Marsh Fern



Gary Fleming, DCR Natural Heritage Program

Polystichum acrostichoides • Christmas Fern



Irvine Wilson/DCR Natural Heritage Program



- Fronds 1–1 ½ ft., taller when fertile; reproduces by spores
- Part shade to full shade
- Does not spread but clumps increase in size each year
- Rich or poor soil; tolerates drought but prefers moist, not wet, soils; does not tolerate standing water
- Naturally found in woodlands, stream banks, and ravines

Still green at Christmas. Consider massing on slopes, including dry rocky ones, to combat erosion. Deer and rabbit resistant, and good border or adaptable accent plant.

Attracts butterflies and birds. Evergreen, even in severe winters.

Pteridium aquilinum • Southern Bracken Fern



Gary Fleming, DCR Natural Heritage Program



- 1–6 ft.
- Full sun to full shade
- Dry/moist/wet soil
- Naturally found in dry woodlands, wet swamps, and marshes

A perennial fern that is suited for dry shaded areas. The roots will take over areas aggressively and grow deep in search of moisture. Will tolerate moisture but does not tolerate flooding. Though drought tolerant, it will begin to die if the drought lasts longer than 3 months. Toxic to livestock.

Provides shelter to small animals in woodland environments.

GENUS: *WOODWARDIA* - Chain Ferns

Woodwardia areolata • Netted Chain Fern



Seig Kopinitz/John Clayton Chapter, VNPS

Woodwardia virginica • Virginia Chain Fern



Gary Fleming, DCR Natural Heritage Program

Netted Chain Fern is a compact, perennial fern that colonizes areas over time and typically stands 1–2 ft. It spreads with underground rhizomes. It needs part shade to shade and moist to wet soils. Virginia Chain Fern a spreading native that reaches 2–4 ft., thriving in moisture and even in mud. This deciduous species can thrive in sunny exposures as well as the traditional shaded location.

Virginia Capital Region Native Plants

Plant Natives for Habitat



As its common name suggests, Butterfly Weed attracts butterflies and is a larval host and nectar source for the monarch butterfly (*Danaus plexippus*). Photo left by Lucile Kossodo, and above by Jan Newton, John Clayton Chapter, VNPS.



Grasses, sedges, and rushes are herbaceous plants; that is, they are non-woody plants. Their leaves and stems are generally narrow, but there is a wide variety in their height and spread. Few people realize that historic records and grass species distribution show that prairie grasslands once occupied a significant portion of the Piedmont region. The Richmond area is located on the Fall Line where native soil encompasses both the bedrock of the Piedmont and the sandy sediment of the Coastal Plain. This soil diversity and flat landscape support grasslands as well as forests. When planning a landscape, it is important to take a cue from the vegetation that would naturally occur in an area, which is the best way to support pollinators and wildlife. Take the time to understand the conditions of a site, including light, moisture, drainage, and soil chemistry. Then make plant selections that that imitate what would naturally occur in given site conditions. Humans, grazing animals, small mammals, birds, butterflies, and pollinators find benefits in grasses, from aesthetic to life-sustaining. Grasses, sedges, and rushes are valuable for horticultural, conservation and ecological purposes.

Pictured - *Andropogon ternarius*, Splitbeard Bluestem by Gary Fleming, DCR Natural Heritage Program

GENUS: *ANDROPOGON* - Bluestems, Broomsedge

Andropogon glomeratus • Bushy Bluestem



Dot Field, DCR Natural Heritage Program

Andropogon ternarius • Splitbeard Bluestem



Helen Hamilton/John Clayton Chapter, VNPS

Andropogon virginicus • Broomsedge, Broomstraw



Dot Field, DCR Natural Heritage Program

Andropogon are clump-forming, warm-season grasses in the *Poaceae* family. Close cousins of *Schizachyrium*, they offer clear choices for sustainable landscapes.

Use these *Andropogon* species for erosion control, in massed plantings, at the back of mixed borders, as screening, and in meadow plantings.

Bushy Bluestem: 2–6 ft.; white fluffy flower heads in August–November; sun to light shade; wet or moist, relatively sterile, sandy, clay or loam soils; tolerates salinity. Foliage is blue-green in summer and coppery in winter. Perhaps best for large-scale gardens and landscapes as it seeds out heavily and may fall over as it reaches maximum height. Provides seed and nesting material for birds. Ideal for wetland gardens. Larval host for Satyrs and Skippers.

Splitbeard Bluestem: 1–4 ft.; silvery-white tufts at the end of stems in September–October; full sun to part shade; well-drained sand or sandy loam. A stunning grass that grows in clumps, and is a very decorative garden accent. In the summer the narrow, ribbon-like stems are bluish-green turning copper and red in the fall. Songbirds eat the seeds. Host plant for the Wood Nymph butterfly (*Cercyonis pegala*). Birds use it in nesting. It also benefits native bees.

Broomsedge: 2–5 ft.; September–November; part shade; dry, sandy soils. Seeds are striking in fall and winter when the fine hairs of the expanded racemes catch the sunlight. The attractive, clump-forming, perennial grass is described by sources as turning tawny brown, reddish-tan, reddish-purple, or orange-brown in fall. Helps control erosion on disturbed lands and provides cover, nesting material and seed food for birds. Beneficial to native bees and butterflies. Larval host of Zabulon Skipper (*Poanes zabulon*).

Virginia Capital Region Native Plants

GENUS: CAREX - Sedges

A wider range of native *Carex* species is becoming available in the nursery trade. They make splendid, sturdy groundcovers once established, offering wildlife value in both sunny and shady locations. Sedges serve as good, easy care alternatives to non-native Liriope. Sedges, like grasses, offer contrasts in texture to ferns and other perennials in mixed borders. Many sedges host larvae for skipper butterflies and other pollinators.

- **Eastern Woodland Sedge** is a slow growing, cold-tolerant sedge can thrive in acidic soils. It has a green inconspicuous flower. Height up to 24 in.
- **Bottlebrush Sedge** is a good rain garden plant. It is salt tolerant, very decorative, and offers contrast and stands out in the landscape. It attracts pollinators. Height up to 4 ft.
- **Long-fringed Sedge** has the male flower in one elongated spike and the female elongated and drooping flowers in another spike. This sedge can form an intermediate step between mud and dry land by spreading rhizomes and act as a landfill for other vegetation to grow. It has interesting spikes that provide an attractive contrast in the garden, and it attracts birds. Good choice for rain gardens. Height 1–4 ft.
- **Creeping Sedge** is a low-maintenance and low-growing sedge, and is deer resistant. Because it tolerates wet soils, it is a good choice for rain gardens. Up to 2 ft.
- **Hop Sedge's** interesting spikes make an ornamental and attractive statement in the garden. Height up to 4 ft.
- **Pennsylvania Sedge** enriches soil and makes an excellent groundcover for dry shade. Spreads by rhizomes. Height 6–12 in.
- **Tussock Sedge** is an excellent nesting habitat for rails and snipes. Larval host of the Black Dash Butterfly (*Euphyes conspicua*). Height 2–4 ft.
- **Blunt Broom Sedge** thrives in disturbed (wet) soils. Its seeds provide food for songbirds and game birds, and it is a host for some butterfly and moth species. Height up to 3 ft.

Carex blanda ●
Eastern Woodland Sedge



Gary Fleming, DCR Natural Heritage Program

Carex comosa ●
Bottlebrush or Bristly Sedge



Phillip Merritt/John Clayton Chapter, VNPS

Carex crinita ●
Long-fringed Sedge



Jan Newton/John Clayton Chapter VNPS

Carex laxiculmis ●
Creeping Sedge



Gary Fleming, DCR Natural Heritage Program

Carex lupulina ●
Hop Sedge



Lucile Kossodo/John Clayton Chapter, VNPS

Carex pennsylvanica ●
Pennsylvania Sedge



DCR Natural Heritage Program

Carex stricta ●
Tussock or Upright Sedge



Irvine Wilson, DCR Natural Heritage Program

Carex tribuloides ●
Blunt Broom Sedge



Gary Fleming, DCR Natural Heritage Program

Grasses, Sedges and Rushes

Danthonia spicata • Curly Dan, Poverty Oatgrass



Helen Hamilton/John Clayton Chapter, VNPS



- 4 in. to 2 ft., possibly 3 ft.
- Straw in May–July
- Sun, part shade, shade
- Sand, rocky, shallow, compacted, poor soil, well-drained, acid-moderate soils
- Native to rocky, shallow, or compacted moist to dry soils in open forests, woodlands, barrens, outcrops, clearings, old fields, pastures, roadsides

Poverty Oatgrass' tufts of curly leaves provide winter interest. It is being evaluated as an alternative turf, and is valuable for stabilization of disturbed soil. It is named for French botanist Etienne Danthoine.

Native Oatgrasses host various native caterpillars, including the Indian Skipper butterflies (*Hesperia sassacus*).

Dichanthelium clandestinum • Deer-tongue Grass



Gary Fleming, DCR Natural Heritage Program



- 2–3 ft.
- Early summer bloom, spring-summer growth period
- Sun to shade
- Moist to wet soils of various porosity
- Naturally found in clearings, roadsides, disturbed soils, floodplain forests

Common throughout Virginia, Deer-Tongue Grass is very tolerant of all soil types and growing conditions.

High seed production from Deer-Tongue Grass affords forage opportunities for browsing wildlife.

Eragrostis spectabilis • Purple Love Grass, Tumblegrass



Phillip Merritt/John Clayton Chapter, VNPS



- 8–18 in.
- Purplish red panicles in August–October
- Sun
- Dry to moist, sandy soil
- Naturally found in woodlands, fields, dune grasslands, river shores and bars, interdune swales, riverside prairies,

When grown en masse this delicate grass creates a lovely purple cloud-like haze in late summer. In the late fall the stems of the flowers fall and blow in the wind, like a tumble grass.

Birds and other wildlife eat seeds.

Erianthus giganteus (*Saccharum giganteum*) • Giant Plumegrass



Irvine Wilson/DCR Natural Heritage Program



- 9 ft.
- Summer active growth; silver-peach panicle blooms in September and October
- Sun
- Moist soils
- Naturally found in bogs, wet clearings, ditches, roadsides, old fields

Common in the Coastal Plain, and less in the Piedmont. A rapid grower, Giant Plumegrass has dramatic late-summer flowering, and is deer resistant.

Giant Plumegrass is beautiful as a native ornamental alternative to Pampas Grass.

Glyceria striata • Fowl Mannagrass



Gary Fleming, DCR Natural Heritage Program



- 4 ft.
- Spring growth, summer bloom
- Sun to part shade
- Wet soils, medium to fine porosity
- Naturally found in wetlands, bogs, swamps, floodplain forests, freshwater tidal marshes

This rhizotomous, moderately fast grower has a semi-erect aspect and reddish seeds. Moderate nutrient value for browsing wildlife and grazing animals. Blades nearly perpendicular to stem.

Muhlenbergia capillaris • Hair-awn Muhly, Pink Muhlygrass



Gary Fleming/DCR Natural Heritage Program



- 2–3 ft.
- August–October
- Sun to part sun
- Average to dry soil; needs very good drainage, especially in winter
- Naturally found in dry rocky, open woodlands, clearings, outcrops, roadsides

The spikelets of this grass are purple. In fall the plant takes on a stunning feathery, deep pink to lavender hue. Germinates well and grows easily. Collect seed in November when they start to lose the pink color. Use a comb so as to not damage the appearance of plants.

Hair-awn Muhly functions well in meadow gardens and as a general garden plant.

GENUS: *JUNCUS* - Rushes

Juncus canadensis • Canadian Rush



Gary Fleming/DCR Natural Heritage Program

Juncus effusus • Common Rush, Soft Rush



Phillip Merritt/John Clayton Chapter, VNPS

Juncus provides the same design effect as other ornamental grasses, but with a lot more substance and definition because the blades are tubular rather than flat. Their blue-green foliage makes a striking contrast combined with bright flowering plants. *Juncus* can ride out intermittent dry spells and they're useful for rain gardens and bioretention. It thrives in constantly wet areas where most plants would fail, so it is perfect for all kinds of containers, damp garden areas, or waterside plantings. Both Canadian and Common Rush grow up to 4 ft.

Panicum virgatum • Switchgrass



Helen Hamilton/John Clayton Chapter, VNPS



- 3–6 ft.
- Red-purple seed head in June–October
- Sun
- Dry to moist, sandy, clay or loam soils; poor drainage is OK
- Naturally found in open areas and along streambanks

Switchgrass is a clump-forming, warm-season grass with bright green leaves up and down the stem, turning bright yellow in fall. Grows in large clumps, with many persistent, curly leaves. It is pollinated by wind. It has become of major interest as a source of biofuels and to revegetate surfaces such as mined land.

Attracts birds and butterflies. Host plant for the Delaware Skipper (*Anatrytone logan*) and the Dotted Skipper (*Hespera attalus*). Can also provide garden accent.

Grasses, Sedges and Rushes

Schizachyrium scoparium • Little Bluestem



Helen Hamilton/John Clayton Chapter, VNPS



- 1–4 ft., very dense mounds
- White cotton tufted seedhead in August–October
- Sun to light shade
- Adaptable, well-drained, poor, moderate acid soil
- Naturally found in open forests, woodlands, barrens, outcrops, riverside prairies, dry clearings, meadows, roadsides

Wonderful planted en masse, Little Bluestem provides a changing visual dynamic that ranges from blue-green stems in late summer to radiant mahogany-red, white-tufted seed heads in fall. A reddish-tan color persists during winter. It is an excellent plant in inhospitable conditions.

In winter, fuzzy white seeds of particular value to small birds. Provides nesting material. Of value to native bees. Host to six species of native caterpillars.

Schoenoplectus tabernaemontani • Soft-stem Bulrush



Irvine Wilson/DCR Natural Heritage Program



- 4–10 ft.
- Stalked, reddish-brown spikelets in May–June
- Full sun
- Moist or wet, usually poorly-drained soil, tolerates a wide range of salinity
- Naturally found in deep or shallow water, or in muddy or marshy ground around lakes, ponds, streams, and wooded wetlands

Provides erosion control from wind and wave action.

Provides food and cover for fish, muskrats, otters, ducks, shorebirds and marsh birds.

Scirpus cyperinus • Woolgrass



Karen Duhring/VIMS



- 4–6 ft.
- Brown to yellow-brown flower clusters 6–12 in. in July–September
- Sun
- Moist to wet clay, loam or sandy soils
- Naturally found in freshwater and tidal marshes, tidal swamps, alluvial swamps, maritime swamps, interdune swales and ponds, depression swamps and ponds, bogs, fens, seeps, impoundments, ditches, wet meadows

Woolgrass is a densely-tufted, clump-forming perennial, 4–6 ft. high, with an erect stem that is leafy up to the flower cluster, which is composed of fuzzy spikelets that become woolly with fruit, offering winter interest.

One of the most important species of wetland plants that provide food and cover for waterfowl and other wildlife. It is the host plant for the Dion Skipper (*Euphyes dion*).

Sorghastrum nutans • Indian Grass



Margaret Chatham/VNPS



- 1½–8½ ft.
- Blue-green foliage turns brilliant yellow-orange to purple in fall
- Beautiful golden and purple floral panicles darken to autumn seed heads, providing winter interest.
- Full sun
- Dry to moist; tolerates range of soil chemistries
- Naturally found in prairies, slopes, borders of woods

Food source for Pepper-and-Salt Skipper and nesting material for bees.

Tridens flavus • Purpletop, Tall Redtop



Margaret Fisher/VNPS



- 2–5 ft.
- Summer active growth; spikes of purple-brown flowers appear July–October
- Full sun to part sun
- Drier to lightly moist soils
- Naturally found in fields, pastures, clearings

Found throughout Virginia, Purpletop is a very durable, beautiful, drought-tolerant grass.

Purpletop provides high nutrient value for wildlife.

Tripsacum dactyloides • Eastern Gammagrass



Gary Fleming, DCR Natural Heritage Program



- 3–6 ft.
- Spring-summer active growth; early summer bloom
- Sun to part sun
- Moist to wet soils of varying porosity
- Naturally found in fields, pastures, roadsides, clearings, river shores

Found in the Coastal Plain and Piedmont, Eastern Gammagrass grows rapidly and tolerates of a variety of soils.

Eastern Gammagrass has high nutrient value for browsing wildlife.

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Shrubs often form the backbone of our landscapes. They are the transitional zone between lower growing perennials and groundcover and the taller tree canopy. They provide significant habitat for resident and migratory bird populations, especially along the edges of fragmented forests, and also in places that may not be appropriate for larger trees. As woody plants, shrubs can provide overwintering locations for insects and shelter for birds. Evergreen shrubs in particular can function as living screens in a hedgerow or provide birds respite from harsh winter winds and low temperatures. Many shrubs also offer flowers for pollinators and berries for birds, mammals, and people. It is important to introduce biodiversity into your shrub selections to provide multi-season habitat, as well as multi-season visual interest. For example, some shrubs, like Spicebush (*Lindera benzoin*), may begin flowering very early in spring, providing early color in the landscape and a source of pollen for pollinators when they emerge on warmer days. Summer brings a plethora of blooms, but birds and mammals need the shade offered by shrubs to escape from the heat on warm, sunny days. Fall starts to bring berries and seeds, many of which persist into winter, like the beautiful native Winterberry (*Ilex verticillata*), which provides food for resident mammals and birds and fuel for migrating species.

Pictured - *Vaccinium stamineum*, Deerberry by Irvine Wilson/DCR Natural Heritage Program.

Alnus serrulata • Smooth or Hazel Alder



Irvine Wilson/DCR Natural Heritage Program



- 10–20 ft., multiple-trunked, deciduous shrub or small tree; foliage becomes yellow, tinged with red, in fall
- Flowers are purple catkins; males in drooping clusters, females in upright clusters (March–April); fruit resembles a small, woody cone that persists
- Sun to part shade
- Wet or moist, fine sandy loams; clay and flood tolerant
- Naturally found in boggy ground near water; best for streambanks, pond margins

Use to improve wildlife habitat (space 5–10 ft. apart to allow for crown development and to optimize seed production). Birds feed on the seed.

Smooth Alder is the only alder native to the southeastern United States. Its flexible stems and fibrous root system make it very suitable for streambank stabilization.

Aronia arbutifolia • Red Chokeberry



Phillip Merritt/John Clayton Chapter, VNPS



- 6–10 ft., deciduous, multi-stemmed shrub grows in vase-shaped form
- Many clusters of small, white to light pink flowers in April followed by bright red berries that persist into the winter
- Average, moist, well-drained soil; tolerant of clay soil
- Sun to part shade
- Naturally found in wet and dry thickets; good for naturalized areas where it can sucker

Nectar source for pollinators. Berries persist through much of the winter, and are occasionally eaten by songbirds.

Red Chokeberry is one of the best shrubs for brilliant fall color—intense, shiny, raspberry to crimson, with purplish highlights. Can also have some orange mixed in, especially in shady sites.

Virginia Capital Region Native Plants

Baccharis halimifolia • High-tide Bush, Groundsel Tree



Dot Field/DCR Natural Heritage Program



- 6–12 ft. deciduous shrub; gray-green oval leaves; numerous branches from short trunks covered densely with branchlets
- White to green flowers in August–September in small, dense, terminal clusters; silvery, plume-like achenes appear in fall on female plants
- Sun to part shade
- Wet to dry, sandy, loam soils; tolerates salt water inundation
- Naturally found in salt marshes, shores, wet places

Marsh wrens and other small birds frequently nest in the openly branched, brittle stems. Flowers attract pollinators.

Baccharis named for is the ancient Greek god *Bacchus*. It is a plant with fragrant roots. One of the few eastern shrubs suitable for planting near salt water.

Ceanothus americanus • New Jersey Tea



Denise Greene/Sassafras Farm



- 3–4 ft.
- White flowers in May–June
- Sun to part shade
- Average, dry to moist, well-drained soil; tolerates drought, dry soil, shallow-rocky soil
- Naturally found on dry rocky slopes, banks

Attracts hummingbirds, butterflies.

Callicarpa americana • American Beauty-berry



Dot Field/DCR Natural Heritage Program



- 3–6 ft. deciduous understory shrub; loose, graceful arching form
- Small, pink-purple flowers (June–August) in dense clusters at the bases of leaves. Branches are laden with magenta-purple berry clusters (September–March) that remain after leaves drop through winter
- Full sun to part shade
- Moist, rich, sandy and clay, acidic soils (cold and heat tolerant)
- Naturally found in woodlands and forest floors

Seeds and berries are important foods for many species of birds. Valuable for edge landscapes, or as a screen in wet or wooded locations or under shade trees in a garden setting.

Genus name comes from Greek word meaning beautiful fruit. Requires little maintenance but tolerates periodic aggressive pruning.

Cephalanthus occidentalis • Buttonbush, Button Willow



Trista Imrich/Wild Works of Whimsy



- 5–12 ft. spreading, multibranched shrub or sometimes small tree
- Balls of long-lasting white or pale-pink flowers resembling pincushions in June–September, button-like balls of fruit; rounded masses of nutlets that persist through the winter
- Sun to part shade
- Prefers wet soil, including flooded areas and standing fresh water
- Naturally found in wet open areas, low woods, river/stream/pond margins

Ducks and other water-birds and shorebirds consume the seeds, and its nectar attracts bees and butterflies.

Pruning Buttonbush is usually not necessary, but may be done in early spring to shape.

Shrubs

Clethra alnifolia • Sweet Pepperbush



Phillip Merritt/John Clayton Chapter, VNPS



- Narrow, 3–8 ft., deciduous shrub, which often spreads into mounded clumps
- Spike-like, upright clusters of fragrant white flowers in July–August. The shrub's leaves turn yellow to golden brown in fall
- Sun, part shade
- Average, moist to wet soils; tolerates clay and salt-spray tolerant
- Naturally found in swampy woodlands, wet marshes, stream banks and seashores, often in sandy soils

Coastal White-alder forms sizable patches. Promptly remove root suckers unless naturalized look is desired. Propagate by cuttings and prune if needed in late winter. Its dry fruiting capsules remain long after flowering and help identify this plant in winter.

Versatile, carefree shrub that is remarkably free of any disease, insect, or physiological problems. Flowers attract butterflies and bees.

Cornus amomum • Silky Dogwood



Lucile Kossodo/John Clayton Chapter, VNPS



- 6–12 ft., deciduous shrub
- Yellowish white flowers in May–June
- Blueberry-like drupes in August
- Sun to part shade; tolerates close to full shade
- Average, moist to wet, well-drained soils
- Naturally found in moist lowland areas, swamp borders, floodplains, shrub wetlands, and along streams and ponds

Birds are attracted to the fruit.

Corylus americana • American Hazelnut



Phillip Merritt/John Clayton Chapter, VNPS



- 10–16 ft.
- Brown (male), Red (female); March–April; variable, vibrant fall color
- Sun to part shade
- Average, moist, well-drained soils; tolerant of clay
- Naturally found in moist thickets, woodlands and wood margins, valleys, uplands and prairies

Squirrels and birds eat nuts.

Euonymus americanus • Strawberry-bush, Heart's-a-bustin'



Jan Newton/John Clayton Chapter, VNPS



- 6–10 ft. narrow, deciduous green-stemmed shrub, which often spreads into mounded clumps
- Small white flowers in July–August develop into colorful, decorative seed pods
- Sun to full shade
- Moist to dry acidic soils
- Naturally found in forests and thickets

The leaves of Strawberry-bush turn dull yellow to orange in autumn. Dry fruiting capsules remain long after flowering and help identify this plant in winter. Deer love it.

Versatile, carefree shrub that is remarkably free of any disease, insect, or physiological problems.

Hamamelis virginiana • Witch Hazel



Jan Newton, John Clayton Chapter, VNPS



- 10–15 ft. (sometimes up to 30 ft.) multi-trunked shrub with large, crooked, spreading branches forming an irregular, open crown
- Yellow, fragrant flowers with straplike, crumpled petals appear in the fall, persist into late fall and winter; lettuce-green, deciduous leaves maintain a rich consistency into fall when they turn brilliant gold
- Sun to full shade
- Moist, sandy, clay, acidic or calcareous soils
- Naturally found in moist woods, thickets, bottomlands

Birds eat the fruits (small brown capsules). Has brilliant fall color and flowering.

Witch Hazel is the source of the astringent extract.

Hydrangea arborescens • Wild Hydrangea



Yolima Carr



- 3–8 ft. mound-shaped, slender-branched, deciduous shrub
- Small, white flowers in May–June in 4-inch spires that droop with arching branches; flowers open from base to tip so that plant appears to bloom for a long time; leaves turn red to purple in fall and persist well into winter
- Full sun, part shade; blooms best/better fall color with full sun part of the day
- Moist, sandy, loam, clay, acid soils
- Naturally found on wooded stream banks

Larval host of the *Hydrangea sphinx* moth (*Darapsa versicolor*). Can grow in areas of poor drainage, and is very effective in massed plantings.

Wild hydrangea suckers freely, creeping over large areas. Fast-growing and short-lived, it is often treated as an perennial and cut to the ground every winter.

GENUS: *ILEX*

Ilex decidua • Deciduous Holly, Possum-haw



Gary Fleming/DCR Natural Heritage Program



- 7–15 ft. tall, 5–12 ft. spread, multi-branched and multi-stemmed
- White, inconspicuous flowers in May on both male and female plants; orange-red berries in September can persist through winter until March
- Full sun to part shade (shaded plants thinner/produce fewer berries)
- Average, moist soil; prefers moist acidic soil with some organic matter; can handle heavy clay
- Naturally found along streams, in wet woods, and floodplain forests

Retains its colorful berries in winter on attractive, pale gray stems, and is a source of food for birds and other wildlife.

Although slow-growing, Possum-haw roots will sucker to form a colony, which makes it an effective hedge when planted in groupings or rows.

Ilex verticillata • Winterberry



Helen Hamilton/John Clayton Chapter, VNPS



- 3–12 ft., slow-growing deciduous shrub with upright, rounded habit
- Greenish-white flowers in May–June; red berries (female) late summer to winter
- Sun to part shade
- Average, acidic, dry, moist, to wet soils; tolerates clay
- Naturally found in swamps, damp thickets, low woods, and along ponds and streams

Attracts birds and butterflies and other nectar consuming insects. Extremely showy in late fall and early winter when covered by bright red fruit.

The leaves of Winterberry are not shaped with sharp teeth like other hollies. It is either male or female--a trait typical of the holly family.

Shrubs

Itea virginica • Virginia Sweetspire



- 3–4 ft. mound-shaped, slender-branched, deciduous shrub; leaves turn red to purple in fall and persist well into the winter
- White flowers in May–June
- Sun to part shade; blooms best and has better fall color if grown in an area that receives full sun at least part of the day
- Average, moist to wet soils
- Naturally found in pine barrens, swamps, streambanks, and other moist habitats

Attracts birds, butterflies and other nectar consuming insects. Provides a long period of fall color often into early winter.

Versatile shrub for sunny to shady areas and tolerates a wide range of soil conditions. Can grow in swamps and other areas of poor drainage.

Lindera benzoin • Northern Spicebush, Spicebush



- 6–12 ft. single- or few-stemmed, fast-growing, deciduous shrub
- Dense clusters of tiny, pale yellow flowers bloom in March–April; glossy red fruit in September–October
- Full sun to full shade
- Moist, sandy, well-drained soils (better form, more berries with sun)
- Naturally found in open woods, glades, fields, and roadsides

Fast-growing shrub for moist, shady places. Fruit and foliage are aromatic. Leaves turn a golden-yellow in fall. This species has separate male and female plants, and both are needed for female to produce fruit. Deer avoid this shrub.

Larval host for the Eastern Tiger Swallowtail (*Papilio glaucus*) and Spicebush Swallowtail (*Papilio troilus*) butterflies. Fruits are a special favorite of wood thrushes.

Kalmia latifolia • Mountain Laurel



- 12–20 ft. thicket-forming evergreen shrub, sometimes a small tree with crooked trunk and spreading branches
- Bell-shaped, white to pink flowers with deep rose spots in large flat-topped clusters in May–July; glossy leaves change from light green to dark green to purple throughout year
- Sun to part shade
- Cool, moist, rich acidic, humusy, well-drained soil; does not do well in clay
- Naturally found in rocky or sandy woods, slopes

Stamens of its flowers have a springlike mechanism which spreads pollen when tripped by a bee. Birds and small mammals eat fruit.

One of the most beautiful native flowering shrubs. Needs afternoon shade to thrive. Prune lightly after bloom to promote a bushier habit. All parts of the plant are toxic if ingested.

Morella cerifera • Wax Myrtle



- 7–10 ft.
- Whitish/green flower in April–June followed by pale blue fruits between August and October
- Sun to shade
- Dry to wet soil
- Naturally found in dry or moist woods or bogs

Perennial evergreen shrub with waxy leaves. Adapted to a range of soil moisture and shade conditions.

Shrubs

Rhododendron periclymenoides • Wild Azalea, Pinxter Azalea



Jan Newton, /John Clayton Chapter, VNPS



- 3–6 ft. shrub with picturesque, horizontal branching
- Funnel-shaped, pink or white flowers with protruding stamens occur in large fragrant clusters, appearing before or with the leaves in April–May
- Sun to part shade
- Acidic, humusy, organically rich, moist, well-drained soil; tolerant of dry sites
- Naturally found in moist to dry woods, swamp margins, open areas

Especially showy flowers. Nectar source for butterflies and hummingbirds. Seeds attract birds.

The old species name, nudiflorum, Latin for “naked-flowered,” refers to the fact that the flowers often appear before its leaves are fully expanded.

Rubus occidentalis • Black Raspberry



Gary Fleming/DCR Natural Heritage Program



- 4–6 ft. deciduous shrub, between 6–12 ft. wide, with multiple, erect-arching stems in a loose, round habit
- White, flat-topped flower clusters in May–June are followed by dark blue drupes; dark-green foliage turns yellow to wine-red in fall
- Sun to full shade
- Dry to moist, acidic soils and sands
- Naturally found in woods and thickets

Berries are of very high value for songbirds. Attract Eastern Bluebird, Northern Flicker, Gray Catbird, and American Robin. Larval host for Spring Azure butterfly (*Celastrina ladon*).

Flood, insect, and disease tolerant. Commonly forms broad colonies.

Virginia Capital Region Native Plants

GENUS: *RHUS* - Sumacs

Rhus copallinum • Winged or Shining Sumac



Jan Newton, /John Clayton Chapter, VNPS

Rhus glabra • Smooth Sumac



Gary Fleming/DCR Natural Heritage Program

Plants in the genus *Rhus* offer distinctly textured leaves, which also provide brilliant autumn color. The inconspicuous flowers occur in large panicles and are followed by spherical fruits that persist through winter, providing food for wildlife. Use in meadows, dry sites, woodland transitions; along water or roads; on hillsides. They are fast growing, generally pest and disease-free, and drought-tolerant.

Beneficial to honey and native bees. Provides food for songbirds, gamebirds and mammals.

HEIGHT: *R. copallinum*, 20–35 ft.; *R. glabra*, 2–20 ft. with 2–25 ft. spread

FLOWERS: *R. copallinum* in July–August; *R. glabra* yellow/greenish in June–July; red berries

LIGHT: *R. copallinum*, sun to part shade; *R. glabra*, full sun (for best fall color)

SOILS: Dry to moist; *R. glabra* is very drought resistant

Winged or Shining Sumac is a very ornamental sumac; not suited to small areas because of its large, spreading habit.

Smooth Sumac colonies can be rejuvenated every few years by cutting them to the ground in mid-winter.

Shrubs

Sambucus canadensis • Common Elderberry



Jan Newton/John Clayton Chapter, VNPS



- 6–12 ft. loose and graceful, deciduous shrub with both woody and herbaceous branches
- White flowers in May–July in broad, flat clusters up to 10 in. or more in diameter; berrylike fruit is dark purple when ripe in July–September
- Part shade
- Tolerates a wide variety of wet to dry soils but prefers rich, moist, low acid soil
- Native to bogs, ditches, fields

Birds are attracted to the purple-black fruit and spread the seeds. Provides a nesting structure for bees. Provides effective erosion control on moist sites.

Prune heavily in winter to maintain thick form. Individual plants are very short-lived however, root masses produce new shoots. The genus name comes from Greek sambuce, an ancient musical instrument.

GENUS: *VACCINIUM* - Blueberry, Deerberry

Vaccinium pallidum • Early Lowbush Blueberry



Janis Stone

Blueberry has much to offer beyond its fruit. In spring they burst with dainty blooms, whose nectar draws many native bee species. They have a dense branching habit that makes them well suited for use as hedges, and the autumn foliage is an attractive red hue. Deerberry flowers are also beautiful, and its fruit tends to be very sour to people but relished by wildlife. *Vaccinium* are deciduous and grow best in acidic, moist, well-drained soils in full sun to part shade. Height 1½–12 ft, depending on species.

Vaccinium stamineum • Deerberry



Irvine Wilson/DCR Natural Heritage Program

GENUS: *VIBURNUM*

Viburnum prunifolium • Black Haw



Jan Newton/John Clayton Chapter, VNPS

Native *Viburnums* have appealing foliage and growth habits, offering lovely— sometimes even fragrant—flowers, and boasting beautiful purplish-pink leaves and blue fruits in late summer and fall.

These shrubs are powerhouses for wildlife. They're a host plant for the larvae of the Spring Azure butterfly (*Celastrina ladon*); their flowers support numerous native bee species, and the berries feed several songbirds, including the Eastern Bluebird, Northern Flicker, Gray Catbird, and American Robin.

HEIGHT: *V. acerifolium* 4–6 ft. (or taller); *V. dentatum* 6–10 ft.; *V. prunifolium* 12–15 ft.; *V. nudum* 12–20 ft. *V. acerifolium* suckers profusely and can form large colonies.

FLOWERS: White flowers in April–August for *V. acerifolium*; May–June for *V. prunifolium* and *V. dentatum*; June–July for *V. nudum*. Only flowers of *V. nudum* are aromatic.

LIGHT: Full sun to part shade; for best flowers and fruit, *Viburnums* need at least half-day of sunlight

SOILS: Ranges from dry to moist well-drained for *V. prunifolium* and *V. dentatum*; moist acidic for *V. acerifolium*; and wet, mucky, acidic soils for *V. nudum*. (*V. dentatum* is the most soil-adaptable.)

Viburnums are very durable and overall are flood, pest, and disease tolerant.

Viburnum dentatum • Arrow-wood



Jan Newton/John Clayton Chapter, VNPS

Viburnum nudum • Possum-haw



Lucile Kossodo/John Clayton Chapter, VNPS

Viburnum acerifolium • Maple-leaf Viburnum



Wasowski/Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center



Vines are often rapidly growing climbing or twining plants that can offer many benefits to the homeowner. The plants can be trained over walls, pergolas, arches, fences, brick and stones. They can be used for screening and for energy conservation through passive solar heating and cooling in the landscape. Vines can grow by various means to attach themselves to supporting structures. Some, like Clematis, use petioles or twisted stems. Some like Virginia Creeper use both petioles and adhesive pads that attach themselves to the support. Still others like Maypop use tendrils to attach themselves. Vines give shelter to many birds and provide birds with protected areas in which to build their nests.

Apios americana ● Groundnut



Irvine Wilson/DCR, Natural Heritage Program



- 0–1 ft.
- Red, pink, or purple flowers July–September, followed by brown fruit
- Part shade
- Moist to wet soil
- Naturally found in moist, low sites and thickets

The tubers of this perennial climbing vine were commonly gathered by Native Americans for food and also used by colonists who referred to them as wild potato or Indian potato.

The beautifully fragrant pink or purple flowers are cultivated for their beauty and scent. The flowers attract butterflies and other pollinators.

Bignonia capreolata ● Cross-vine



Phillip Merritt/John Clayton Chapter, VNPS



- 36–50 ft.
- All red, or red and orange, 2 in., trumpet-shaped flowers in March–May
- Sun to part shade (blooms best in sun)
- Moist, acidic, calcareous, sandy or clay soils
- Tolerates cold
- Naturally found in floodplain forests, swamps, dry upland forests, and rocky woodlands

Flowers are a nectar source for hummingbirds and butterflies.

An evergreen perennial, Cross-vine has claws at the end of its tendrils allowing it to cling to stone, brick, pergolas, and fences without support. In fall the green leaves become purple until spring.

***Campsis radicans* • Trumpet-creeper**



Jan Newton/John Clayton Chapter, VNPS



- Up to 35 ft.
- Red, orange, yellow showy, 3–5 in., flower in June–September
- Sun to part shade; best in sun
- Well-drained, sandy, loam, or clay soils; high drought tolerance
- Native to moist woods or along fence rows in old fields

A high-climbing, aggressively colonizing woody vine, scrambling over everything in its path by aerial rootlets. It is a good soil stabilizer. Cut back branches to two buds in the winter to encourage bushier growth and more blooms.

Nectar source of hummingbirds and long-tongued bees. Host of Plebeian Sphinx moth (*Paratraea plebeja*).

***Clematis virginiana* • Virgin's-bower**



Phillip Merritt/John Clayton Chapter, VNPS



- 12–15 ft.
- Clusters of creamy white flowers turn into showy sprays of silky seeds that glisten with backlighting in July–September
- Sun to full shade
- Moist to dry, rich soils
- Native to woods, thickets, stream banks

Lacking tendrils, Virgin's-bower, a deciduous vine, supports itself by means of twisted stems, or petioles, that wrap around other plants. These fast-growing stems can grow 20 ft. in one year. They may be pruned at any time during the growing season.

Attracts hummingbirds and butterflies.

This plant is poisonous and can cause skin irritation if touched. If burned, the smoke is toxic.

***Gelsemium sempervirens* • Yellow or Carolina Jessamine**



Phillip Merritt/John Clayton Chapter, VNPS



- 12–36 ft.
- Yellow tubular flowers (1–1½ inches) in March–May, September–November
- Sun to part shade; best in sun
- Moist, well-drained, humus-rich, sandy or clay soils; pH adaptable
- Native to thickets, woods, fence rows, hammocks

An adaptable and tenacious evergreen that will climb trees, scramble over fences and structures, or develop a mound of tangled stems if left to its own devices. It has no serious disease or insect problems. All parts of this plant are toxic.

Aromatic, showy evergreen vine. Flowers attract hummingbirds and swallowtail butterflies. Heat and cold tolerant. Highly deer resistant.

***Lonicera sempervirens* • Trumpet or Coral Honeysuckle**



Jan Newton/John Clayton Chapter, VNPS



- 3–20 ft.
- Red outer, sometimes yellow inner, tubular flowers with heaviest bloom in March–July, followed by bright red berries
- Full sun (best for blooming) to part shade
- Adaptable to many soil conditions; tolerates poor drainage for short periods
- Native to a wide range of natural habitats

*Great for arbors and valued for its evergreen habit. Deer resistant. The yellow-blooming *Lonicera sempervirens*, John Clayton, was discovered in Gloucester County by Sylvia Sterling, a member of the John Clayton Chapter, VNPS.*

Flowers frequently visited by hummingbirds and butterflies; fruit attracts birds. Host to 33 spring caterpillars, including Spring Azure butterflies, Hummingbird Clearwing moths.

Vines

Parthenocissus quinquefolia ● Virginia-creeper



Dot Field/DCR Natural Heritage Program



- 3–40 ft.; structure it climbs is the limiting factor to its height
- Yellowish-green flowers in May–June, followed by berries that turn from red to mauve to black
- Sun to part shade
- Adaptable to soils with a range of pH levels
- Naturally found in forested to open habitats, streams, riverbanks

Has brilliant fall color. It tolerates pollution and can be pruned to control its growth. A vigorous grower, it adheres to walls, arbors, etc., via adhesive discs and may even be used as a groundcover for erosion control.

Berries eaten by songbirds but toxic to humans. Foliage provides cover for birds. Hosts 32 species of native caterpillars, including Virginia Creeper moth (*Darapsa myron*).

Wisteria frutescens ● American Wisteria, Atlantic Wisteria



Sue Dingwell/VNPS



- 25–30 ft., deciduous
- Lilac or bluish purple in April–May
- Sun to full shade
- Moist, rich, sandy, loam or clay, neutral to slightly acid soils; prefers a good loamy soil in a sunny south or southwest-facing position
- Naturally found in moist or wet woods, river banks, upland thickets

Large, fragrant, drooping clusters of flowers—6–9 in. long—appear only on new wood and after the plant has leafed out, a difference from the popular Asian species. Less aggressive than the similar Asian wisteria species.

Attracts butterflies. Larval host to several skipper species. It is deer resistant.

GENUS: PASSIFLORA - Passion Vines

Passiflora incarnata ● Purple Passion-flower, Maypop



Phillip Merritt/John Clayton Chapter, VNPS



- 6–30 ft.
- Lavender, 3 in., flowers in April–September
- Sun (best) to part shade
- Moist, rich clay and sandy, non-saline soils
- Native to roadsides, fields, forest borders

The fruit of Maypop is a large greenish-yellow berry with edible pulp. This vine is excellent for use on arbors, fences, walls, and columns. The name Maypop comes from the hollow, yellow fruits that pop loudly when crushed. Maypop spreads easily by root suckers that can be contained by removing suckers or mowing.

Flowers attract native bees and the plant hosts 5 species of caterpillars, including Gulf Fritillary (*Agraulis vanillae*) and Variegated Fritillary (*Euptoieta claudia*).

Passiflora lutea ● Yellow Passion-flower



Trista Knrich/Wild Works of Whimsy



- 12–36 ft. in length
- Yellow-green flowers in May–September and blackish berries
- Part shade
- Moist to wet soil
- Native to low, rocky, moist woods and thickets

This perennial climbing vine can grow in excess of 15 ft. in length. Deer resistance is one of the major benefits of this vine.

Many species of butterfly larvae use this plant as a food source. Also attractive to many species of pollinators. Birds eat fruit.



The value of trees can't be overstated. There are many reasons to plant trees in your yard and community. Healthy, mature trees add to a property's attractiveness and value. Trees properly placed around buildings can reduce air-conditioning needs and can save energy used for heating. According to the Center for Urban Forest Research, if you plant a tree today on the west side of your home, in 5 years your energy bills should be 3% less. In 15 years, the savings will be nearly 12%. Research at Texas A&M University showed that visual exposure to settings with trees produced significant recovery from stress within 5 minutes. Planting trees improves water quality and quantity. Trees reduce runoff and erosion, and they help recharge groundwater supply. One acre of forest also absorbs 6 tons of carbon dioxide and puts out 4 tons of oxygen. This is enough to meet the annual needs of 18 people, states the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Acer negundo ● **Eastern Boxelder**



Gary Fleming, DCR Natural Heritage Program

Birds and small mammals eat the seeds, which are available in winter.



- Grows 30–60 ft. tall and 1–2½ ft. in diameter; often multi-stemmed with sprouts
- Flower/Berry: yellow-green flowers droop in clusters in spring
- Clustered V-shaped, 2-winged fruit spin like helicopter propellers as they fall
- Prefers bright sunlight
- Tolerates wide range of soils
- Naturally found in river bottoms, flood plains, and other disturbed areas such as riparian habitats

This fast-growing species of maple is fairly shortlived, drought tolerant and often planted for erosion control and windbreaks.

Acer rubrum ● **Red Maple**



Dot Field/DCR Natural Heritage Program

Host plant for Rosy Maplemoth (*Dryocampa rubicunda*). Of value to native bees, inchworms, and birds.



- 40–100 ft., narrow or rounded, compact crown with 30–75 ft. spread; red, orange, yellow leaves in autumn
- Small red flowers in March–April, red-brown or yellow winged fruit (seeds) in April–June
- Sun to part shade
- Moist to wet clay, loamy or sandy soils, prefers acid soil; can tolerate dry soils
- Naturally found on rocky hillsides, wetlands, floodplains, and upland forests

A dominant understory tree. Colonists made cinnamon, brown dyes, and ink from the bark.

Virginia Capital Region Native Plants

Asimina triloba • Pawpaw, Common Pawpaw



Phillip Merritt/John Clayton Chapter, VNPS



- 10–40 ft. tree or multi-stemmed shrub
- Purple, six-petaled flowers bloom singly in leaf axils in April–May before leaf emergence; large, cylindrical, dark-green or yellow fruit follows; yellow fall foliage
- Sun to shade
- Rich, moist, slightly acid soils
- Naturally found in ditches, ravines, depressions, flood plains, bottomland

An aromatic tree with no serious disease or insect problems. First recorded by the DeSoto expedition in the lower Mississippi Valley in 1541. The name Pawpaw is from the Arawakan name of Papaya, an unrelated tropical American fruit. It takes two or more Pawpaws to cross-pollinate and form fruit.

Not eaten by deer, but relished by small mammals and birds. Larval host for Zebra Swallowtail butterfly (*Eurytides marcellus*) and Pawpaw Sphinx moth (*Dolba hyloeus*).

Betula nigra • River Birch



Helen Hamilton/John Clayton Chapter, VNPS



- 40–70 ft., gracefully branched, can reach 90 ft. with an irregular, 40–60 ft. spreading crown; satiny silver bark peels to reveal a cinnamon-brown trunk
- Red male catkins and light green female catkins in March–June; nutlet in May–June; fall foliage is yellow
- Sun to part shade
- Sandy or clay, moist, acidic soils
- Naturally found in flood plains, bottomland, ditches, ravines, depressions, swamps, stream and river banks to mid-slope

Nutlets attract songbirds and game birds. A host plant for 400 species of butterflies, including the Morning Cloak butterfly (*Nymphalis antiopa*).

May grow multiple trunks, adding interest in the garden. Fast-growing, long-lived, useful for erosion control.

GENUS: AMELANCHIER - Serviceberries

Amelanchier canadensis • Canadian Serviceberry, Juneberry



Phillip Merritt/John Clayton Chapter, VNPS

Amelanchier arborea • Downy Serviceberry



Jan Newton/John Clayton Chapter, VNPS



Serviceberry is good for multi-season interest and smaller gardens. At least 40 bird species eat the fruit of Amelanchier species, including Cardinals, Cedar Waxwings, and Towhees. It is beneficial to native bees.

- 25–30 ft., spread of 15 – 20 ft., with multiple, upright stems, forming a dense shrub with a narrow crown and many small-diameter branches or, if properly pruned, a small tree
- White flowers in March–May followed by red to purple fruit in June–August; brilliant fall color display ranging from yellow and orange to red
- Sun to part shade
- Moist, well-drained acidic soils
- Naturally found in wood borders, upland woods; occasionally found in alluvial forests, wetlands, and swamps

Carpinus caroliniana • American Hornbeam, Ironwood



Julie Makin/Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center



- 35–50 ft., with 20–35 ft. crown, uniformly oval or very irregular
- Graceful, drooping branches and slender pale gray trunk, smooth and sinewy with twisting, muscle-like bulges; shiny, bluish-green, deciduous leaves become scarlet-orange in the fall
- White and green fruit hangs from a papery bract in March–April
- Part shade to full shade
- Moist, well-drained soils
- Naturally found in upland and floodplain forests, alluvial swamps, stream banks

Larval host to Eastern Tiger Swallowtail (*Papilio glaucus*), Striped Hairstreak (*Satyrium liparops*), and Red-spotted Purple (*Limenitis arthemis*) butterflies. Birds and mammals feed on fruit.

The term hornbeam means “tough tree,” referring to American Hornbeam’s tough, very hard wood.

Castanea pumila • Allegheny Chinquapin



Gary Fleming, DCR Natural Heritage Program



- 12–20 ft. in height and spread
- Long pencil-like, pale yellow spike-shaped flowers in June
- Dark brown nuts enclosed in a prickly, bur-like husk in September–October
- Leaves turn yellowish or purple in fall
- Sun, part shade
- Dry, loamy or sandy soil
- Naturally found in dry, open woods and old fields

Flowers attract butterflies. The nuts are an important food source in the fall and winter for wildlife.

Captain John Smith mentioned this nut in 1612: “They [Native Americans] have a small fruit growing on little trees, husked like a Chestnut, but the fruit most like a very small acorne. This they call Checkinquamins, which they esteem a great daintie.”

Carya tomentosa (*alba*) • Mockernut Hickory



John R. Seiler/Virginia Tech



- 50–60 ft.; dark bark is rough, thin with shallow furrows; narrow ridges form a net-like pattern; fragrant leaves turn bright, golden yellow; small, rounded nuts in a large, thick shell (after about 25 years old)
- Yellowish-green bloom in April–May
- Sun to part-shade
- Best grown in humusy, rich, moist, well-drained soils
- Naturally found on hillsides and ridges in somewhat dry soils

Attracts birds and provides colorful fall appeal. It is a great tall shade tree for large properties and parks.

Needs a large space to grow and has a long taproot. The Latin tomentosa means densely covered with soft hairs, and describes the undersurfaces of leaflets.

Celtis occidentalis • Common Hackberry



Gary Fleming/DCR Natural Heritage Program



- 40–60 ft. tall, with a rounded, spreading crown; may have numerous bushy growths on branches
- Very small, light green, 4- or 5-lobed flowers produced on stalks from new leaf axils
- Round, thin-fleshed, dry but edible fruit, turning orange-red to dark purple in fall when ripe
- Part shade to full sun
- Prefers rich, moist soils but will grow on gravelly or rocky hillsides
- Naturally found in bottomlands and stream sides

Berries provide a food source for small mammals and birds during fall and winter.

***Cercis canadensis* • Eastern Redbud**



Phillip Merritt/John Clayton Chapter, VNPS



- 15–35 ft. deciduous tree with one to several picturesque, maroon-purple trunks and a wide, 15–35 ft., umbrella-like crown; smooth, heart-shaped, deciduous foliage is golden yellow in autumn
- Deep pink flowers in April–May in tight clusters along the stems and branches before new leaves appear; showy spring display
- Part shade to shade
- Loose, moist, sandy fertile and well-drained soils; tolerates clay soil
- Naturally found in shaded woods, streams, river banks, woodland edges, open woodlands

A fast-growing, attractive, understory tree.

Attracts native bees, and tolerates deer browsing.

***Cornus florida* • Flowering Dogwood**



Phillip Merritt/John Clayton Chapter, VNPS



- 15–20 ft., single or multiple trunk with a 15–30 ft. spreading crown
- Long lasting, aromatic, white or pink flowers in March–May before leaves come out; followed by brilliant red fruit
- Sun to shade
- Rich, well-drained, acid soil
- Naturally found in upland forests, borders, clearings, old fields, and well-drained floodplains

*More resistant to dogwood anthracnose fungus (*Discula destructiva*) if planted in open areas. If planted in full sun, it will need to be watered during extended dry spells. Native Americans used the roots and the bark to make a red dye.*

Attract pollinators and songbirds. Larval host to 115 native caterpillar species, including Spring Azure (*Celastrina ladon*) and Summer Azure (*Celastrina neglecta*).

Virginia Capital Region Native Plants

***Chionanthus virginicus* • Fringetree, Old Man's Beard**



Helen Hamilton/John Clayton Chapter, VNPS



- 15–30 ft., with short trunk, narrow, oblong crown; dark-green, glossy foliage; pale-gray trunk with bands of white
- Drooping clusters of delicate, fragrant, white blossoms from 6 in. stalks in May–June; dark-blue, grape-like clusters of fruits; male tree has showier flowers, female trees need males to form fruit
- Sun to part shade
- Loose, moist, sandy soils
- Native to forests, swamps, wetlands

Hosts 8 species of native caterpillars and attracts honeybees, native bees, bumblebees, and butterflies. It tolerates pollution.

One of the last trees to bear new leaves in spring. It is a slow grower. The genus name Chionanthus, meaning snow and flower, describes the blossoms.

***Diospyros virginiana* • Common Persimmon**



Dot Field/DCR Natural Heritage Program



- 15–100 ft., with a spreading, 25–35 ft. crown and pendulous branches; large, oval, mature leaves usually become yellow-green in fall
- Bell-shaped, yellow flowers in April–June; large, sweet, orange fruit in autumn
- Part shade
- Adaptable to varying pH; moist, rich, soils
- Naturally found in old fields, wet forests, dune woodlands and scrub, rocky woodlands, upland forests

Attracts wildlife and is larval host to the Luna moth (*Actias luna*). This tree can be used for erosion control. Usually free of disease or insect problems.

The word Persimmon is of Algonquian origin. Two trees are needed to produce fruit, which is not edible until exposed to frost or consistent low temperatures.

Fagus grandifolia • American Beech



Gary Fleming, DCR Natural Heritage Program

Pollinated flowers form edible nuts (“beech nuts,” “beech mast”), which are eaten by many mammals and birds.



- 50–80 ft. (less frequently to 120 ft.) large, deciduous tree with a dense, upright-oval to rounded-spreading crown
- Yellowish-green flowers bloom in April–May, followed by edible beech nuts in September–October
- Full sun to part shade
- Deep, rich, moist but well-drained soils
- Naturally found in upland forests, floodplain terraces, and bluffs

Beech nuts are produced in great abundance every 2 or 3 years. Due to its thin bark and shallow root system, American Beech is very susceptible to damage from forest fires, but due to fire exclusion, it is abundant in the understory of dry-mesic and dry oak forests.

Juglans nigra • Black Walnut



Gary Fleming, DCR Natural Heritage Program

Nuts eaten by squirrels and birds. The bark of young trees is eaten by mice and rabbits and deer eat buds.



- 50–90 ft. tall, 2–3 ft. diameter
- Yellow-green catkins
- Round fruit with a thick, green, non-splitting husk and a hard, furrowed nut inside, matures in late summer or fall
- Sun, part shade
- Deep, well-drained, moist to wet soils
- Naturally found in rich bottomlands, moist coves, and stream sides on lower north- or east- facing slopes

Desired for the distinctive taste. Secretes a toxic chemical called juglone to prevent other species from growing close by and can harm garden plants and grasses.

Ilex opaca • American Holly



Dot Field/DCR Natural Heritage Program

In late winter, many kinds of songbirds eat the bitter berries of this slow-growing but long-lived tree.



- 25–60 ft. evergreen with stout, stiff branches that form a pyramidal shape and bear dark-green, leathery, spine-tipped leaves; new growth pushes off the old leaves in spring
- Bright red berries on female plants
- Full sun to full shade
- Moist, well-drained, sandy, acidic soils
- Naturally found as an understory woodland tree

A popular Christmas decoration, the wood also is especially suited for carvings and inlays in cabinetwork, and can be dyed. Shorter, multitrunked form may grow in heavy shade.

Juniperus virginiana • Eastern Redcedar



Phillip Merritt/John Clayton Chapter, VNPS

Juicy berries consumed by wildlife, including the Cedar Waxwing (*Bombycilla cedrorum*), named for this tree.



- 30–40 ft. (sometimes 90 ft.) evergreen, aromatic tree with trunk often angled and buttressed at base; pyramidal when young, mature form variable; fragrant, scale-like foliage, coarse or fine-cut, varying from gray-, blue-, to dark-green; all colors tend to brown in winter
- Pale blue fruits occur on female plants
- Sun to shade
- Moist, well-drained to dry soils
- Naturally found on tidal shorelines, forests, old fields, rocky woodlands

Resistant to extremes of drought, heat, and cold. The heartwood was once almost exclusively the source of wood for pencils.

Liriodendron tulipifera • Tulip-tree, Tulip-poplar



Jan Newton/John Clayton Chapter, VNPS



- 70–150 ft., straight trunk with narrow crown that broadens as it ages, 30–50 ft.; distinctive, waxy, star-shaped foliage turns bright gold in fall; cone-shaped seedheads remain after leaves have fallen
- Large, showy, yellow-orange flowers, resembling tulips or lilies in April–June high up on tree
- Sun, part sun to part shade
- Rich, moist, well-drained loam or sandy soils, acidic
- Naturally found in low, rich woods; stream banks; bottomland; and upland forests

Insect- and disease-free. Favorite nesting tree, flowers attract hummingbirds and larval host to the Eastern tiger swallowtail (*Papilio glaucus*). One of the most beautiful hardwood forest trees.

Pioneers hollowed out a single log of the Tuliptree to make a long, lightweight canoe. Member of the magnolia family.

Morus rubra • Red Mulberry



Gary Fleming, DCR Natural Heritage Program



- 30–60 ft. tall, 1–2 ft. in diameter with a short trunk with broad, rounded crown
- Tiny, pale-green, clustered hanging catkins
- Fleshy fruit clusters resemble blackberries, red when immature, and deep purple and edible in mid-summer
- Sun, part shade, shade
- Moist to dry soils
- Naturally found in floodplains and low, moist slopes

Squirrels, opossums, raccoons, turkeys, and songbirds enjoy the berries.

Wood is dark brown, light and soft and durable. Fruits may stain sidewalks or driveways (consider when siting).

Magnolia virginiana • Sweetbay, Sweetbay Magnolia



Phillip Merrit/John Clayton Chapter, VNPS



- 12–30 ft. (occasionally to 50 ft.), evergreen, spreading 10–35 ft., with multiple, slender, upright trunks bearing horizontal branches
- Aromatic, spicy foliage
- Solitary, velvety-white, fragrant flowers in May–July close at night, followed by dark red fruits exposing bright red seeds in September–October
- Part shade
- Moist, rich, well-drained, acidic soils
- Naturally found in wet, low-lying woods

Attractive, aromatic, showy ornamental. Seeds are a good source of food for birds in fall. It is the larval host of the Sweetbay Silkmoth (*Callosamia securifera*).

Introduced into European gardens as early as 1688. Called “Beavertree” by colonists who caught beavers in traps baited with the fleshy roots.

Nyssa sylvatica • Black Gum, Sour Gum



Gary Fleming/DCR Natural Heritage Program



- 40–60 ft., deciduous, with horizontally spreading branches; dense, conical or sometimes flat-topped, 20–30 ft. crown
 - Smooth, waxy, dark-green summer foliage changes to yellow, orange, scarlet, and purple in fall
 - Greenish-white flowers in April followed by small, purplish-blue, berry-like fruit in September–October
 - Sun to full shade
 - Adaptable to various, well drained, acidic, even gravelly, soils
 - Naturally found in forests, woodlands, floodplain forests, ponds
- One of the first plants to color in fall, and is a handsome shade tree.*

Nectar used by bees to make highly-prized tupelo honey. Juicy fruit is consumed by many birds and mammals. Hosts 25 species of native caterpillars.

Oxydendrum arboreum • Sourwood, Sorrel Tree



Darl Fletcher/Virginia Living Museum

Beneficial to honeybees. Generally disease-free.



- 30–70 ft. with conical or rounded 10–25 ft. crown of spreading branches; leaves turn brilliant, deep red in autumn
- White, Lily-of-the-Valley-like flower clusters in July; pale yellow seeds persist in the fall
- Sun to part shade
- Well-drained, acidic soil
- Naturally found in well-drained to dry woodlands, cliffs, clearings, and ravines

Open-grown Sourwood is pyramidal and branched to the ground. Honey made from its flowers is prized. It is sensitive to root disturbance, so it is not a good tree for urban sites.

Platanus occidentalis • Sycamore, American Sycamore



Gary Fleming, DCR Natural Heritage Program

Attracts birds and is resistant to deer.

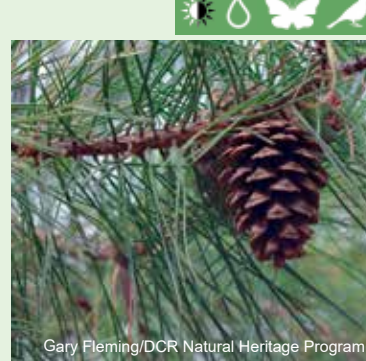


- 75–100 ft.
- Yellow-green flower in April–June
- Full sun to part shade
- Moist, sandy loams or silty clay soils
- Naturally found along river bottoms and lake shores

This massive tree has large, attractive leaves and interesting fruit clusters that remain on the tree into winter. The long, stout trunk has beautiful, exfoliating bark. The remarkable white, green, and cream bark flakes off in patches and exposes the inner bark, making this a beautiful tree throughout the year.

GENUS: *PINUS* - Pines

Pinus echinata • Shortleaf Pine

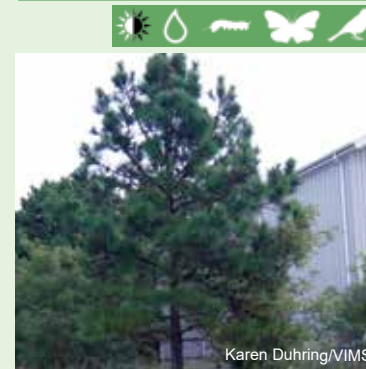


Gary Fleming/DCR Natural Heritage Program

Shortleaf pine is the hardiest and most adaptable of the southern pines. It is very drought-tolerant. It attracts butterflies and is a larval host for the Elfin butterfly (*Microtia elva*).

Loblolly pine is among the fastest-growing southern pines, and will respond well to extra moisture and richer soils. It is a pioneer species along river bottoms. It provides cover and nesting sites and seeds for small mammals and birds. It attracts butterflies and is a larval host for the Elfin butterfly (*Microtia elva*).

Pinus taeda • Loblolly Pine



Karen Duhring/VIMS

Virginia Pine is valuable as cover for dry, barren sites. It dislikes shallow, chalky soils and is not tolerant of over-topping by other trees. Seeds are an important wildlife food. Larval host to the Eastern Pine Elfin butterfly (*Callophrys niphon*).

HEIGHT: *P. echinata*, 50–100 ft.; *P. taeda*, 60 ft. but can reach 110 ft.; *P. virginiana*, 15–40 ft.

Pinus virginiana • Virginia Pine



Gary Fleming/DCR Natural Heritage Program

LIGHT: *P. echinata* and *P. taeda* need part shade; *P. virginiana* needs full sun

SOILS: dry for *P. echinata*; *P. taeda* is adaptable, but prefers moist, sandy soils; *P. virginiana* grows in poor, well-drained soils

Populus deltoides • Eastern Cottonwood



Gary Fleming/DCR Natural Heritage Program



- 100 ft. with large, papery, toothed, triangular medium-green leaves turning yellow in fall
- Pendulous clusters of flowers without petals; seeds on cottony hairs
- Full sun, part shade, shade
- Dry to wet soils
- Naturally found in stream banks and rich bottomlands, tolerant of any soil

A fast-growing shade tree. Its wood is weak, which may lead to ice and wind problems, so consider this in placement of the tree on your property.

Beneficial to butterflies, attracts birds for seed and nesting material, and attracts butterflies.

Sassafras albidum • Sassafras



Ruth Myers



- 20–40 ft., with horizontal branching in cloud-like tiers; mahogany-brown bark, deeply ridged and furrowed; bright-green, mitten-shaped, oval or three-lobed leaves
- Bunches of yellow-green flower balls in March–May scattered profusely over female trees, more sparsely on male, followed by dark-blue fruits on scarlet stalks on female trees in late summer
- Full sun to part shade
- Moist, well-drained, rich, sandy, acidic soils
- Naturally found in dry to moist forests, woodlands

Although Sassafras grows most quickly in fertile soil, it is an appropriate tree to introduce into disturbed sites.

Flowers attract native bees and fruit attracts songbirds. Hosts 36 species of caterpillars, including Spicebush Swallowtail (*Papilio Troilus*) and Promethea Silkmoth (*Callosamia promethean*).

THE IMPORTANCE OF TREES FOR BUTTERFLIES AND MOTHS

Commonly Called	Genus Name	# of Butterfly and Moth Species Supported by the Genus
Oak	<i>Quercus</i>	534
Black cherry	<i>Prunus</i>	456
Willow	<i>Salix</i>	455
Birch	<i>Betula</i>	413
Crabapple	<i>Malus</i>	311
Maple	<i>Acer</i>	285
Elm	<i>Ulmus</i>	213
Pine	<i>Pinus</i>	203
Hickory	<i>Carya</i>	200
Hawthorn	<i>Crataegus</i>	159
Alder	<i>Alnus</i>	156
Basswood	<i>Tilia</i>	150
Ash	<i>Fraxinus</i>	150
Walnut	<i>Juglans</i>	130
Beech	<i>Fagus</i>	126
Chestnut	<i>Castanea</i>	125

Butterflies and moths rely largely on trees as host plants for their caterpillars.

Many tree species in these genera (groups) are native to the Virginia Capital Region. We highlight some of the species in this guide. Learn more about which moths and butterflies are attracted to these species at <https://www.nwf.org/NativePlantFinder/>. This tool is being provided in collaboration Dr. Doug Tallamy, renowned Entomologist and author - www.bringingnaturehome.net

GENUS: *PRUNUS* - Cherries

Prunus angustifolia • Chickasaw Plum



Gary Fleming/DCR Natural Heritage Program

Prunus serotina • Black Cherry



Dot Field/DCR Natural Heritage Program

Prunus angustifolia and *Prunus serotina* have fragrant white flowers and colorful fruit relished by birds and other wildlife. *Prunus angustifolia*'s yellow fruit ripens to red in August or September. In full sun, it will be more dense and full and will colonize more thickly. *Prunus serotina* is the largest, most important native cherry, known for its beauty. It is easy to grow. When crushed, its leaves and bark have a cherry-like odor. It is a larval host to many moths and butterflies, including the Eastern Tiger Swallowtail (*Papilio glaucus*).

America's National Tree: The Majestic Oak

Quercus alba • White Oak



Phillip Merritt/John Clayton Chapter, VNPS



- 72–100 ft. with 50–80 ft., rounded crown; trunk irregularly divided into spreading, often horizontal, stout branches; round-lobed leaves turn burgundy in fall, and dried leaves remain into winter
 - Brown catkins appear just before or with the appearance of new leaves from March–April; acorns mature in autumn
 - Full sun
 - Moist to dry soils
 - Naturally found in upland forests and woodlands, well-drained bottomlands, wet low-lying woods, natural ponds, and swamps
- Slow-growing and lives up to 600 years. Colonists used it to build ships.*

Quercus coccinea • Scarlet Oak



Phillip Merritt/John Clayton Chapter, VNPS



- 80–115 ft., with a rounded, open crown of glossy foliage; spreads 40–50 ft.
- Yellow-green catkins in March–May; reddish-brown acorns in September–October; brilliant scarlet autumn color
- Full sun
- Adaptable to poor, rocky, acidic soil
- Naturally found in dry to occasionally moist upland forests and woodlands; most characteristic of dry, acidic, nutrient-poor soils

Grows rapidly and makes a handsome shade and street tree. It is a long-lived tree. Acorns provide food for birds such as bluejays and redheaded woodpeckers. Benefits native bees.

Quercus falcata • Southern Red Oak, Spanish Oak



Phillip Merritt/John Clayton Chapter, VNPS



- 60–80 ft., straight-trunked and, in time, develops long, spreading branches, giving the top an even, well-formed appearance; spreads 40–50 ft.; smooth gray bark becomes dark and furrowed, eventually black
- Yellow flowers appear in April–May; papery leaves turn reddish-brown in fall; acorns appear biennially
- Part shade
- Variable, dry, sandy, loamy or clay acid-based soils

Grows relatively quickly and it is long-lived. It is often called Spanish Oak, possibly because it commonly occurs in areas of the early Spanish colonies, yet it is unlike any oaks native to Spain.

Quercus marilandica • Blackjack Oak



Gary Fleming/DCR Natural Heritage Program



- 30–50 ft. small to medium-sized oak, with short, nearly black trunk that divides into many dense, contorted limbs; bark dark, furrowed; spreads 20–40 ft.; bristle-lobed leaves are shiny on top and rusty-yellow, hairy beneath
 - White, red, green inconspicuous flowers in March–May; red-brown autumn color
 - Full sun; does not tolerate shade
 - Acidic, dry to moist, well-drained soils; grows in poor soils
 - Naturally found in dry upland forests, woodlands, areas with alternating wet and droughty clays, deep sands
- Native Americans used Blackjack Oak bark in medicine.*

Virginia Capital Region Native Plants

America's National Tree: The Majestic Oak

Quercus michauxii • Swamp Chestnut Oak



Gary Fleming, DCR Natural Heritage Program



- 60–100 ft., with a dense and rounded canopy
- Annual acorns
- Full sun to partial shade
- Moist soil
- Naturally found in well-drained alluvial floodplains, streambanks, rivers, swamps

Tolerates compaction better than most oaks. It is ideal for wet areas with poor drainage. Its wood is woven into baskets and its acorns are a main food source for deer and squirrels.

Quercus montana • Chestnut Oak



Gary Fleming, DCR Natural Heritage Program



- 65–145 ft. tree with broad open and irregular crown, chestnut-like foliage and dark reddish-brown to dark-gray bark. Deep v-shaped furrows in mature bark, producing broad ridges
- Light brown to reddish-brown ovoid bud
- 1–2 acorns on peduncle, cup has gray scales with red tips
- Part shade
- Shallow, dry, sandy soils
- Naturally found in rocky upland forests, well-drained lowland sites

Acorns are a food source for turkey, rough grouse, songbirds, deer, and small mammals.

Quercus nigra • Water Oak



Dot Field/DCR Natural Heritage Program



- 50–100 ft., semi-evergreen with slender trunk, rounded crown and shiny, dark-green, wedge-shaped leaves
- Yellow blooms
- Nearly round, 1–2 acorns with shallow cups and pubescent outer and inner surface, covering up to ¼ of nut
- Part shade
- Deep, moist, poorly drained soils
- Naturally found in wet lowland to moist upland soils

A shade tree with height increases of more than 24" per year. It is adaptable and can tolerate heavy, compacted soil. It attracts butterflies, mammals and birds, and is source of food and nesting/cover.

Quercus palustris • Pin oak



Gary Fleming, DCR Natural Heritage Program



- 50–70 ft. large, deciduous tree with a broad, pyramidal crown
- Insignificant yellowish-green flowers in separate male and female catkins appear in March–April, with acorns following in October–November (of the 2nd year)
- Full sun
- Moist to wet, acidic loamy soils. Tolerates poorly drained soils, some flooding
- Naturally found in floodplain forests, alluvial swamps, upland depression swamps, wet flatwoods, depression swamps and ponds, mesic upland forests

Pin oak acorns are an important food for white-tailed deer, squirrels, wild turkeys, woodpeckers, blue jays, and waterfowl, and especially important for wood ducks and mallards during fall migration.

One of the most popular commercial oaks of eastern North America, having been widely planted as both a street and a landscape tree. Leaves turn a deep red in the fall.

America's National Tree: The Majestic Oak

Quercus phellos • Willow Oak



Phillip Merritt/John Clayton Chapter, VNPS



- 60–80 ft., straight-trunked; spreads to 25–50 ft.; cone-shaped crown which becomes round at maturity; long, fine-textured, narrow leaves resemble the foliage of willows and turn yellow or russet in fall
- Acorns in August–November
- Part shade
- Variable, dry to moist, soils
- Naturally found in forests, swamps and ponds, moist upland forests, old fields

Tolerates floodplains (although it prefers well-drained soil), grows quickly and is easily transplanted when young. Popular shade tree and is handsome in fall.

Quercus rubra • Northern Red Oak



Gary Fleming, DCR Natural Heritage Program



- 75–100 ft., can reach up to 120 ft.
- Rounded crown with large branches; very strong, hard, coarse-grained wood with light reddish-brown heartwood and thin, light-colored sapwood
- Yellow-green, slender catkins; $\frac{3}{4}$ –1 in. acorn
- Full sun, part shade
- Well-drained, loamy sands
- Naturally found in deep, well-drained, loamy soils and fertile coves, reaches best growth on north and east slopes

A shade- and pollution-tolerant species desired for its fall color and symmetrical shape. Its acorns are a wildlife food source.

Quercus stellata • Post Oak



Gary Fleming, DCR Natural Heritage Program



- 40–50 ft., with dense, rounded crown and gray to reddish-brown trunk with shallow fissures and ridges
- Yellow-green hanging catkins; $\frac{1}{2}$ – $\frac{2}{3}$ in. acorn, $\frac{1}{3}$ – $\frac{1}{2}$ covered by saucer-shaped, scaly cap
- Part shade
- Dry to moist, rocky or sandy soils
- Naturally found in rocky or sandy ridges and dry woodlands

Post Oak acorns provide a food source for a variety of wildlife. The tree is drought tolerant and is often used in urban landscaping to stabilize poor, erodible soils. This oak is a larval host to several butterfly species.

Quercus velutina • Black Oak



Gary Fleming, DCR Natural Heritage Program



- 50–110 ft. with limby trunk and open, irregular crown. Hard, heavy, strong and coarse-grained, red-brown wood with yellow-orange inner bark; pointed-lobed leaves are glossy and thick and turn red or orange in the fall
- Yellow-green or reddish green catkins; $\frac{1}{2}$ – $\frac{3}{4}$ in. oval acorn half enclosed in scaly, bowl-shaped cup
- Full sun, part shade
- Dry soils
- Naturally found in dry, sandy, upland woods

Black Oak attracts birds, butterflies and hummingbirds, and its acorns are a wildlife food source.

Additional Resources

About Native Plants

Plant Virginia Natives – www.PlantVirginiaNatives.org

Flora of Virginia Mobile App – contains everything from the print *Flora of Virginia*, with photos, more illustrations, range maps, and easy-to-use Graphic Key (September 2017; updated in 2023)

Digital Atlas of the Virginia Flora – <http://vaplantatlas.org/>

Native Plants for Conservation, Restoration and Landscaping, VA Dept. of Conservation and Recreation, Natural Heritage (Native Plant Finder) – www.dcr.virginia.gov/natural_heritage/nativeplants.shtml

Field Guide to Virginia Salt and Brackish Marsh Plants, William & Mary Virginia Institute of Marine Science – www.ccrm.vims.edu/wetlands/wetland_plants/8x11brochureannotated2rh.pdf

Virginia Native Plant Society – www.vnps.org/

National Wildlife Foundation “Native Plant Finder” (search by zip code to find plants that host the highest numbers of butterflies and moths to feed birds and other wildlife where you live, based on Doug Tallamy’s research) – <http://www.nwf.org/NativePlantFinder/>

Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center, Univ. of Texas at Austin – www.wildflower.org/

Native Plant Center: Chesapeake Bay Watershed Native Plants for Wildlife and Habitat Conservation (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service) – <http://nativeplantcenter.net/>

Common Native Trees of Virginia and **Common Native Shrubs and Woody Vines of Virginia**, Virginia Department of Forestry – www.dof.virginia.gov

Which Tree Should I Plant? A Guide for Selecting Riparian Trees and Shrubs in Virginia, <https://rb.gy/uy6mdx>

Flora of Virginia, Alan S. Weakley, J. Christopher Ludwig & John E. Townsend, 2012

The American Woodland Garden, Rick Darke, 2002

Ferns and Mosses of Virginia’s Coastal Plain, Helen Hamilton, 2016

Wildflowers and Grasses of Virginia’s Coastal Plain, Helen Hamilton and Gustavus Hall, 2013

About Landscaping with Natives

Online:

Better Backyard: A Citizen’s Resource Guide to Beneficial Landscaping and Habitat Restoration in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed, Chesapeake Bay Program (61-page downloadable booklet) – www.chesapeakebay.net/content/publications/cbp_12259.pdf

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Conservation Landscaping Guidelines: The Eight Essential Elements, Chesapeake Conservation Landscaping Council (33-pg downloadable booklet) – www.chesapeakelandscape.org

Habitat at Home (basic overview), Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources – <https://dwr.virginia.gov/wildlife/>

Habitat Gardening for Wildlife, Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources – <https://dwr.virginia.gov/wp-content/uploads/habitat-gardening.pdf>

How to Naturescape, www.plantnative.org/how_intro.htm

Native Gardening with Wildflowers, U.S. Forest Service – www.fs.fed.us/wildflowers/Native_Plant_Materials/Native_Gardening/index.shtml

Pollinators, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service – www.fws.gov/pollinators/Index.html

Print:

Bee Basics: An introduction to Our Native Bees, Beatriz Moisset and Stephen Buchmann, A USDA Forest Service and Pollinator Partnership Publication, 2011

Bringing Nature Home: How You Can Sustain Wildlife with Native Plants, Douglas W. Tallamy, 2009 – and **Nature’s Best Hope: A new approach to conservation that starts in your yard**, 2020 – <http://bringingnaturehome.net>

Chesapeake Gardening & Landscaping: The Essential Green Guide, Barbara W. Ellis, University of North Carolina Press, 2015

National Wildlife Federation: Attracting Birds, Butterflies & Other Backyard Wildlife, 2004, David Mizejewski

Native Trees, Shrubs, & Vines: A Guide to Using, Growing, and Propagating North American Woody Plants, William Cullina, New England Wild Flower Society, Houghton Mifflin, 2002

Planting in a Post-Wild World: Designing Plant Communities for Resilient Landscapes, Thomas Rainer & Claudia West

Pollinators of Native Plants, Heather Holm, Pollination Press LLC, 2014

The Xerces Society Guide to Attracting Native Pollinators, Eric Mader, et al., 2011

The Living Landscape: Designing for Beauty and Biodiversity in the Home Garden, Rick Darke and Doug Tallamy, 2014



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Helianthus divaricatus
Heliopsis helianthoides
Hepatica americana
Heuchera americana
Hexastylis virginica
Hibiscus moscheutos
Houstonia caerulea
Houstonia purpurea
Hypericum mutilum
Hypericum prolificum
Hypericum punctatum
Impatiens capensis
Iris cristata
Iris prismatica
Iris verna
Iris virginica
Justicia americana
Liatris pilosa
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Mimulus alatus
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Monarda punctata
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Polygonatum biflorum

Pontederia cordata

Pycnanthemum incanum

Pycnanthemum muticum

Pycnanthemum tenuifolium

Rhexia mariana

Rhexia virginica

Rudbeckia fulgida

Rudbeckia hirta

Rudbeckia laciniata

Ruellia caroliniensis

Sabatia angularis

Sagittaria latifolia

Salvia lyrata

Sanguinaria canadensis

Saururus cernuus

Scutellaria elliptica

Scutellaria integrifolia

Senna marilandica

Sericocarpus asteroides

Silene caroliniana

Silene stellata

Sisyrinchium angustifolium

Solidago caesia var. *caesia*

Solidago gigantea

Solidago graminifolia

Solidago juncea

Solidago nemoralis

Solidago odora

Solidago pinetorum

Solidago puberula

Solidago rugosa

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Tradescantia virginiana

Typha latifolia

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Uvularia sessilifolia

Verbena hastata

Vernonia noveboracensis

Viola affinis

Viola cucullata

Viola pedata

Viola primulifolia

Viola pubescens

Viola sagittata

Viola sororia

Viola striata

Yucca filamentosa

Zizia aurea

Ferns

Adiantum pedatum

Anchistea virginica

Asplenium platyneuron

Athyrium asplenioides

Botrypus virginianus

Dennstaedtia punctilobula

Dryopteris cristata

Dryopteris intermedia

Dryopteris marginalis

Onoclea sensibilis

Osmunda spectabilis

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Campsis radicans
Clematis virginiana
Gelsemium sempervirens
Lonicera sempervirens
Mikania scandens
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Passiflora lutea
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Start Planning Your Native Garden

Sketch Ideas!

Sketch ideas for a basic native garden bed, perhaps 10' x 5', using the grid on the next page. For multiple ideas, use tracing paper or photocopies, or download the page (along with a *Native Plant Garden Planning Worksheet* and *Native Plant Wish List*) from www.plantvirginiannatives.org. The website offers more information and provides links to additional resources that can help you take a deeper dive as you consider design choices.

To use the planning grid:

1. **Circle the icons as shorthand reminders of the basic conditions where you will plant (sun, moisture, primary soil type) and the blooming seasons desired.**

Your goal is to select plants that naturally thrive in these conditions and offer blooms or other value across the seasons. (Don't forget "WI" for plants that offer winter fruits, shelter, or beauty!)

2. **Consult the plant profiles in this guide to select a combination of plants that match the site conditions and meet your specified requirements.**

Use the downloadable Planning Worksheet (or any sheet of paper) to list your candidate plants, along with important details like mature plant height and width, bloom time, and bloom color.

Design Tip:

Planting in drifts (multiple plants of the same type) helps pollinators find food and helps provide a less-cluttered design for people. Even in a small garden with limited space, it is best to incorporate at least 3–5 plants of each selected species rather than plant one specimen each of many species.

Design Tip:

Arrange smaller plants at the front or sides, and group taller plants at the center or back. This produces a neater appearance, allows all plants to thrive without shading each other out, and allows all flowers to be easily seen and appreciated.

3. **Doublecheck your list against the site conditions noted on the planning grid.**

The plants selected should have similar needs for sun, soil, and moisture, and should fit the conditions of your location.

4. **Start drawing!** Draw circles to show where each plant will go. The size of each circle can (roughly) represent the plant at its full size. Colored markers, pens, or pencils can suggest bloom colors. Add notes on the grid about plant heights and bloom times. Play with it! The art does not have to be exact or fancy. Bring your plan with you when you meet with a designer or go shopping for native plants.



When you **Pledge to Plant Natives** on PlantVirginiaNatives.org, you also will receive Please Carry Cards to use when you are shopping for native plants. Help us to convey the growing demand for Virginia natives!

Visit PlantVirginiaNatives.org to pledge and for an updated list of regional native plant providers.

Be Aware: Many plants, native and non-native, use various toxins to protect themselves. We note in plant descriptions where toxicity is known. Since some plants or parts of plants may irritate skin when handled, it is a good practise to wear gloves when gardening. Landscape plants should not be assumed to be edible.

Plant RVA Natives

A
CAPITAL
IDEA!

