



Gardening with Native Plants



Native landscapes are a colorful, diverse tapestry of flora and fauna. Weaving that tapestry into our human-centric landscapes evokes a particular “sense of place”, bringing conservation closer to home and strengthening our connection with the natural world. Native plants make excellent landscape plants because they are adapted to the local weather and soil conditions. They require little or no fertilizer and help conserve water and energy. Having a diversity of native plants in a garden and eliminating pesticide use work in tandem to provide crucial resources for pollinators and other beneficial insects, birds, reptiles, amphibians, and mammals whose populations are threatened by habitat loss. Native plant gardens can also create educational opportunities by increasing public awareness of the importance of native habitats as well as offering up-close views of life cycles, pollination, and seasonal changes.

Native Plants in the Home Landscape

You can create a beautiful garden with native plants wherever you live. General gardening principles that apply to any landscape also apply to native plant gardening. Most important among them is “right plant, right place”, or choosing plants that will tolerate the conditions available in your landscape. These include the amount of sun, available moisture, and soil type. Height, spread, and time of bloom are also important considerations when selecting native plants for the home landscape.

A large property is not required to garden with native plants. Small gardens or even container plantings can be havens for pollinators and other fauna. If working with an existing landscape, first identify and remove any invasive species. Then a few choice native plants can easily be added. More non-native plants can be removed and replaced with natives over time as desired.

Establishing Native Plants

Native plants available for sale will come in one of two forms: seed or container-grown plant.

Containerized plants (or plugs) are more expensive but can establish faster and grow larger in less time compared to the same plant grown from seed. Weed control tends to be easier in a bed of containerized plants because mulch can be applied and individual plants are easier to identify.

Starting native plants from seed requires more patience but can be rewarding. Seed is relatively inexpensive and can be used to establish large native gardens affordably. But seed may require vernalization (a cold period) for proper germination, and native plants in the seedling stage are small and harder to identify.

Regardless of the form-factor, native perennial plants will take several years to establish. They will put most of their energy in the first year or two

into establishing a root system rather than producing top growth or blooms.

Keep native plants well-watered during the first few months after planting. Longer, deeper soakings a few times a week during hot, dry periods are more beneficial than short, daily waterings. Supplemental waterings should only be necessary after the first year during periods of drought.

Maintaining Native Plants

Once established, long-lived native species adapted for the growing conditions of a particular site will not require frequent replacement or applications of pesticides, fertilizers, and water. But it is a common misconception that native plant gardens are inherently low maintenance. The amount of required maintenance will depend on the style of garden and plant selection. If reducing maintenance is a key requirement, choose a few species that will cover an area quickly to reduce weed competition or mass plant clumping species.

Once fully established, native plants should require supplemental watering only during periods of drought, and will not benefit from applications of fertilizer. Overly rich or moist soil can encourage weeds and excessive growth that is more prone to pest and disease issues.

Mulching with organic materials such as leaf mold, shredded wood, bark chips, or wood chips offers a number of benefits including suppressing weeds, regulating soil temperature, and reducing soil moisture loss. It is not right for every native

garden situation, including rock gardens or areas where self-seeding is desired, and mulch or compost should not be incorporated into the soil prior to planting.

Pruning is not strictly required for any plant to thrive, but it can be useful and necessary in certain situations. Woody shrubs that are overgrown can benefit from rejuvenation pruning. Removing suckers or pruning to shape can improve overall appearance. Dead or diseased branches and branches impeding a sidewalk or walkway should be removed.

Herbaceous plants can also benefit from pruning, particularly taller, late-summer or fall blooming species. This can help to control height and prevent lodging. Cutting back these plants by around half can be done from late April through mid-May.

Resources

Organizations and institutions with information on native plants and gardening with native plants in Missouri and Illinois:

- Missouri Department of Conservation
- Missouri Prairie Foundation: Grow Native!
- Missouri Botanical Garden: Shaw Nature Reserve
- St. Louis Audubon Society: Bring Conservation Home
- Illinois Department of Natural Resources
- University of Missouri Extension
- University of Illinois Extension
- Wild Ones



Plant Lists

The plant lists provided are organized by sun and soil moisture preference. All plants listed are native to Missouri and were chosen for visual appeal, suitability for home gardens, and benefits to wildlife.

Sunny, moist soil

Scientific name	Common name	Plant type	Shade tolerance
<i>Amsonia ciliata</i> var. <i>filifolia</i>	fringed blue star	Herbaceous perennial	Some light shade
<i>Amsonia illustris</i>	shining blue star	Herbaceous perennial	Some light shade
<i>Amsonia tabernaemontana</i>	eastern blue star	Herbaceous perennial	Some light shade
<i>Aronia melanocarpa</i>	black chokeberry	Deciduous shrub	Part shade
<i>Asclepias incarnata</i>	swamp milkweed	Herbaceous perennial	Best in full sun
<i>Asclepias viridis</i>	green milkweed	Herbaceous perennial	Best in full sun
<i>Baptisia bracteata</i>	cream false indigo	Herbaceous perennial	Some light shade
<i>Baptisia sphaerocarpa</i>	yellow wild indigo	Herbaceous perennial	Some light shade
<i>Callicarpa americana</i>	beautyberry	Deciduous shrub	Some light shade
<i>Camassia scilloides</i>	wild hyacinth	Bulb	Some light shade
<i>Campanula rotundifolia</i>	harebell	Herbaceous perennial	Part shade
<i>Carex cherokeensis</i>	Cherokee sedge	Sedge	Part shade
<i>Carex grayi</i>	Gray's sedge	Sedge	Some light shade
<i>Carex muskingumensis</i>	palm sedge	Sedge	Part shade
<i>Carex stricta</i>	tussock sedge	Sedge	Part shade
<i>Celastrus scandens</i>	American bitterweet	Vine	Best in full sun
<i>Cephalanthus occidentalis</i>	buttonbush	Deciduous shrub	Part shade
<i>Chasmanthium latifolium</i>	northern sea oats	Ornamental grass	Full shade
<i>Chelone obliqua</i>	turtlehead	Herbaceous perennial	Part shade
<i>Clematis crispa</i>	blue jasmine	Vine	Part shade
<i>Clematis pitcheri</i>	Pitcher's leather flower	Vine	Part shade
<i>Eurybia hemispherica</i>	southern prairie aster	Herbaceous perennial	Some light shade
<i>Filipendula rubra</i>	queen of the prairie	Herbaceous perennial	Part shade
<i>Fragaria virginiana</i>	wild strawberry	Herbaceous perennial	Part shade
<i>Frangula caroliniana</i>	Carolina buckthorn	Deciduous shrub	Part shade
<i>Hamamelis vernalis</i>	Ozark witch hazel	Deciduous shrub	Part shade
<i>Helenium autumnale</i>	sneezeweed	Herbaceous perennial	Part shade
<i>Heuchera villosa</i>	hairy alumroot	Herbaceous perennial	Part shade
<i>Hypericum prolificum</i>	shrubby St. John's wort	Deciduous shrub	Part shade
<i>Iris cristata</i>	dwarf crested iris	Herbaceous perennial	Part shade
<i>Iris fulva</i>	copper iris	Herbaceous perennial	Part shade
<i>Iris virginica</i>	southern blue flag	Herbaceous perennial	Best in full sun
<i>Lobelia cardinalis</i>	cardinal flower	Herbaceous perennial	Part shade
<i>Lobelia siphilitica</i>	blue cardinal flower	Herbaceous perennial	Part shade
<i>Lonicera flava</i>	yellow honeysuckle	Vine	Part shade
<i>Lonicera sempervirens</i>	coral honeysuckle	Vine	Some light shade
<i>Melanthium virginicum</i>	bunchflower	Herbaceous perennial	Part shade
<i>Monarda punctata</i>	spotted beebalm	Herbaceous perennial	Best in full sun
<i>Packera aurea</i>	golden ragwort	Herbaceous perennial	Part shade
<i>Packera obovata</i>	round-leaved ragwort	Herbaceous perennial	Part shade

<i>Panicum virgatum</i>	switch grass	Ornamental grass	Some light shade
<i>Penstemon digitalis</i>	foxglove beardtongue	Herbaceous perennial	Best in full sun
<i>Philadelphus pubescens</i>	broad-leaf mock orange	Deciduous shrub	Some light shade
<i>Phlox paniculata</i>	garden phlox	Herbaceous perennial	Some light shade
<i>Pycnanthemum muticum</i>	blunt mountain mint	Herbaceous perennial	Some light shade
<i>Ratibida pinnata</i>	grey-head coneflower	Herbaceous perennial	Best in full sun
<i>Ribes odoratum</i>	clove currant	Deciduous shrub	Part shade
<i>Rosa carolina</i>	Carolina rose	Deciduous shrub	Best in full sun
<i>Rudbeckia fulgida</i>	black-eyed Susan	Herbaceous perennial	Best in full sun
<i>Sedum ternatum</i>	three-leaved stonecrop	Herbaceous perennial	Part shade
<i>Silphium integrifolium</i>	wholeleaf rosinweed	Herbaceous perennial	Best in full sun
<i>Silphium terebinthinaceum</i>	prairie dock	Herbaceous perennial	Best in full sun
<i>Sisyrinchium angustifolium</i>	blue-eyed grass	Herbaceous perennial	Part shade
<i>Solidago speciosa</i>	showy goldenrod	Herbaceous perennial	Best in full sun
<i>Vernonia arkansana</i>	curlytop ironweed	Herbaceous perennial	Best in full sun
<i>Viburnum rufidulum</i>	rusty blackhaw	Deciduous shrub	Some light shade
<i>Zizia aurea</i>	golden Alexander	Herbaceous perennial	Part shade

Wooded, rocky hillside

Scientific name	Common name	Plant type	Shade tolerance
<i>Anemone virginiana</i>	thimbleweed	Herbaceous perennial	Full shade
<i>Antennaria parlinii</i>	Parlin's pussytoes	Herbaceous perennial	Part shade
<i>Aquilegia canadensis</i>	red columbine	Herbaceous perennial	Part shade
<i>Ceanothus americanus</i>	New Jersey tea	Deciduous shrub	Part shade
<i>Cunila origanoides</i>	common dittany	Herbaceous perennial	Part shade
<i>Echinacea purpurea</i>	purple coneflower	Herbaceous perennial	Part shade
<i>Elephantopus carolinianus</i>	elephant's foot	Herbaceous perennial	Full shade
<i>Elymus hystrix</i>	bottlebrush grass	Ornamental grass	Part shade
<i>Geranium maculatum</i>	wild geranium	Herbaceous perennial	Part shade
<i>Heuchera parviflora</i>	littleflower alumroot	Herbaceous perennial	Full shade
<i>Heuchera richardsonii</i>	prairie alumroot	Herbaceous perennial	Part shade
<i>Manfreda virginica</i>	American agave	Herbaceous perennial	Part shade
<i>Monarda bradburiana</i>	eastern beebalm	Herbaceous perennial	Part shade
<i>Physocarpus opulifolius</i>	ninebark	Deciduous shrub	Part shade
<i>Polystichum acrostichoides</i>	Christmas fern	Fern	Full shade
<i>Pycnanthemum tenuifolium</i>	slender mountain mint	Herbaceous perennial	Part shade
<i>Rhus aromatica</i>	fragrant sumac	Deciduous shrub	Part shade
<i>Ruellia humilis</i>	wild petunia	Herbaceous perennial	Part shade
<i>Scutellaria incana</i>	downy skullcap	Herbaceous perennial	Part shade
<i>Sedum ternatum</i>	three-leaved stonecrop	Herbaceous perennial	Part shade
<i>Silene virginica</i>	fire pink	Herbaceous perennial	Part shade
<i>Solidago ulmifolia</i>	elm-leaved goldenrod	Herbaceous perennial	Part shade
<i>Staphylea trifolia</i>	bladdernut	Deciduous shrub	Full shade
<i>Stenaria nigricans</i>	diamondflowers	Herbaceous perennial	Part shade
<i>Symphoricarpos orbiculatus</i>	coralberry	Deciduous shrub	Part shade
<i>Symphyotrichum patens</i>	spreading aster	Herbaceous perennial	Some light shade
<i>Verbesina helianthoides</i>	crown beard	Herbaceous perennial	Some light shade

Shady, moist soils

Scientific name	Common name	Plant type	Shade tolerance
<i>Aesculus pavia</i>	red buckeye	Deciduous shrub	Part shade
<i>Aralia racemosa</i>	American spikenard	Herbaceous perennial	Full shade
<i>Aruncus dioicus</i>	goat's beard	Herbaceous perennial	Part shade
<i>Asarum canadense</i>	wild ginger	Herbaceous perennial	Full shade
<i>Bignonia capreolata</i>	cross vine	Vine	Full shade
<i>Carex albicans</i>	white-tinged sedge	Sedge	Full shade
<i>Carex eburnea</i>	bristle-leaved sedge	Sedge	Full shade
<i>Claytonia virginica</i>	spring beauty	Herbaceous perennial	Full shade
<i>Dirca palustris</i>	leatherwood	Deciduous shrub	Full shade
<i>Dodecatheon meadia</i>	shooting star	Herbaceous perennial	Full shade
<i>Erythronium albidum</i>	white trout lily	Herbaceous perennial	Full shade
<i>Euonymus americanus</i>	strawberry bush	Deciduous shrub	Full shade
<i>Gentiana andrewsii</i>	bottle gentian	Herbaceous perennial	Part shade
<i>Hydrangea arborescens</i>	smooth hydrangea	Deciduous shrub	Part shade
<i>Lindera benzoin</i>	spicebush	Deciduous shrub	Full shade
<i>Maianthemum racemosum</i>	false Solomon's seal	Herbaceous perennial	Full shade
<i>Matteuccia struthiopteris</i> subsp. <i>pensylvanica</i>	ostrich fern	Fern	Full shade
<i>Mertensia virginica</i>	Virginia bluebells	Herbaceous perennial	Full shade
<i>Phlox divaricata</i>	wild blue phlox	Herbaceous perennial	Full shade
<i>Polemonium reptans</i>	Jacob's ladder	Herbaceous perennial	Part shade
<i>Polygonatum biflorum</i>	Solomon's seal	Herbaceous perennial	Full shade
<i>Spigelia marilandica</i>	Indian pink	Herbaceous perennial	Full shade
<i>Staphylea trifolia</i>	bladdernut	Deciduous shrub	Full shade
<i>Stylophorum diphyllum</i>	celandine poppy	Herbaceous perennial	Full shade
<i>Tradescantia ernestiana</i>	woodland spiderwort	Herbaceous perennial	Full shade
<i>Uvularia grandiflora</i>	large-flowered bellwort	Herbaceous perennial	Full shade

Sunny, dry, rocky soil

Scientific name	Common name	Plant type	Shade tolerance
<i>Allium cernuum</i>	nodding onion	Bulb	Some light shade
<i>Allium stellatum</i>	prairie onion	Bulb	Some light shade
<i>Amorpha canescens</i>	lead plant	Deciduous shrub	Best in full sun
<i>Antennaria neglecta</i>	field pussytoes	Herbaceous perennial	Some light shade
<i>Asclepias tuberosa</i>	butterfly weed	Herbaceous perennial	Best in full sun
<i>Baptisia australis</i>	blue false indigo	Herbaceous perennial	Some light shade
<i>Berlandiera texana</i>	Texas green eyes	Herbaceous perennial	Some light shade
<i>Bouteloua curtipendula</i>	sideoasts grama	Ornamental grass	Best in full sun
<i>Callirhoe bushii</i>	Bush's poppy mallow	Herbaceous perennial	Some light shade
<i>Callirhoe involucrata</i>	purple poppy mallow	Herbaceous perennial	Best in full sun
<i>Clematis fremontii</i>	Fremont's leather flower	Herbaceous perennial	Some light shade
<i>Clinopodium arkansanum</i>	limestone calamint	Herbaceous perennial	Best in full sun
<i>Coreopsis lanceolata</i>	lanceleaf coreopsis	Herbaceous perennial	Best in full sun
<i>Coreopsis pubescens</i>	star tickseed	Herbaceous perennial	Best in full sun
<i>Dalea gattingeri</i>	Gattinger's prairie clover	Herbaceous perennial	Best in full sun

<i>Dalea purpurea</i>	purple prairie clover	Herbaceous perennial	Best in full sun
<i>Echinacea pallida</i>	pale purple coneflower	Herbaceous perennial	Some light shade
<i>Echinacea paradoxa</i>	yellow coneflower	Herbaceous perennial	Best in full sun
<i>Echinacea simulata</i>	wavyleaf purple coneflower	Herbaceous perennial	Best in full sun
<i>Erigeron pulchellus</i>	Robin's plantain	Herbaceous perennial	Some light shade
<i>Eryngium yuccifolium</i>	rattlesnake master	Herbaceous perennial	Best in full sun
<i>Glandularia canadensis</i>	rose verbena	Herbaceous perennial	Best in full sun
<i>Heliopsis helianthoides</i>	oxeye sunflower	Herbaceous perennial	Some light shade
<i>Liatris aspera</i>	rough blazing star	Herbaceous perennial	Best in full sun
<i>Liatris cylindracea</i>	cylindrical blazing star	Herbaceous perennial	Best in full sun
<i>Liatris mucronata</i>	narrow-leaved gayfeather	Herbaceous perennial	Best in full sun
<i>Liatris pycnostachya</i>	prairie blazing star	Herbaceous perennial	Best in full sun
<i>Liatris scariosa</i>	blazing star	Herbaceous perennial	Best in full sun
<i>Oenothera macrocarpa</i>	Missouri evening primrose	Herbaceous perennial	Best in full sun
<i>Opuntia humifusa</i>	prickly-pear	Herbaceous perennial	Best in full sun
<i>Penstemon cobaea</i>	dew flower	Herbaceous perennial	Best in full sun
<i>Penstemon pallidus</i>	pale beardtongue	Herbaceous perennial	Some light shade
<i>Phemeranthus calycinus</i>	fameflower	Herbaceous perennial	Best in full sun
<i>Phlox bifida</i>	sand phlox	Herbaceous perennial	Some light shade
<i>Ratibida columnifera</i>	Mexican hat plant	Herbaceous perennial	Best in full sun
<i>Rudbeckia missouriensis</i>	Missouri coneflower	Herbaceous perennial	Best in full sun
<i>Schizachyrium scoparium</i>	little bluestem	Ornamental grass	Best in full sun
<i>Sedum pulchellum</i>	widow's cross	Herbaceous perennial	Some light shade
<i>Solidago drummondii</i>	cliff goldenrod	Herbaceous perennial	Best in full sun
<i>Solidago nemoralis</i>	gray goldenrod	Herbaceous perennial	Best in full sun
<i>Sporobolus heterolepis</i>	prairie dropseed	Ornamental grass	Best in full sun
<i>Symphyotrichum laeve</i>	smooth aster	Herbaceous perennial	Best in full sun
<i>Symphyotrichum oblongifolium</i>	aromatic aster	Herbaceous perennial	Best in full sun
<i>Symphyotrichum sericeum</i>	silky aster	Herbaceous perennial	Best in full sun
<i>Vernonia baldwinii</i>	western ironweed	Herbaceous perennial	Best in full sun