



Sunny/
Moist



Bring Home the Natives

More than just pretty plants

Why should I care about native plants?

Native plants create beautiful landscapes that provide native wildlife with the best habitat and food they need to survive. Native plants also help to protect watersheds and maintain the unique natural heritage of an area.

In Pennsylvania, our native plants lend a sense of place that is recognized and enjoyed by citizens and visitors from all over the world. If our native plants continue to be replaced with species from other places, Pennsylvania will lose the natural beauty and resources that define the state.

Not only do native plants provide benefits to the environment as a whole, they also provide value to you and your backyard. Because Pennsylvania's native plants are meant to grow here, they thrive with less maintenance in the right conditions, thereby reducing the need to water and fertilize them. They also serve as pollinators and attract wildlife.

What is a native plant?

A **native plant** is one that occurred within the state before settlement by Europeans. Native plants include ferns and clubmosses; grasses, sedges, rushes, and their kin; flowering perennials; annuals, which only live one year; biennials, which have a two-year life cycle; and, of course, the woody trees, shrubs, and vines that covered "Penn's Woods" when the first settlers arrived. More than 2,100 native plant species make up the botanical diversity of Pennsylvania.

A "growing" problem

While new plants are coming into Pennsylvania, native plants are being lost to habitat destruction, invasive plants, and introduced pests and diseases. By 2000, five percent of Pennsylvania's native plant species had been eliminated and another 25 percent were in danger of becoming extinct. The good news is that action can be taken to protect and enhance the remaining diversity of these beautiful and often useful plant species.

An **introduced** or **non-native plant** is one that has been brought into the state and become established. At the turn of the 21st century, about 1,300 species of non-native plants existed in Pennsylvania. That is 37 percent of Pennsylvania's total plant flora (about 3,400 species), and more introduced plants are identified every year.

An **invasive plant** is a species that has become a weed pest—one that grows aggressively, spreads, and displaces other plants. Although some native plants are aggressive on disturbed areas, most invasive plants are introduced from other regions, leaving behind the pests, diseases, predators, and other natural controls that usually keep them in check.



Visit iConservePA.org for a larger list of native plants, native plant nurseries, garden templates & more!

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
Department of Conservation and Natural Resources

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Backyard Best Bets



Bee-balm

This colorful herb has a fruity, minty aroma. It's a good choice for attracting butterflies and hummingbirds to your garden.



Serviceberry

This beautiful, small, slow-growing tree provides fruit enjoyed by songbirds and humankind alike. Its white flowers in spring and red leaves in autumn are the perfect complement to a backyard landscape.



White oak

If you like summer shade, this majestic species has a spreading crown that can get as wide as the height of the tree. It is one of the pre-eminent and longest-living hardwoods of eastern North America.



Black chokeberry

This glossy-leaved, multi-stemmed shrub sets clusters of bitter, dark purple to black fruit consumed by songbirds, upland game birds, and small mammals. It can tolerate a wide variety of growing conditions.



Red-osier dogwood

This popular ornamental tree displays showy red stems, adding year-round color to a backyard landscape. It can form dense thickets for privacy as well.



Indian grass

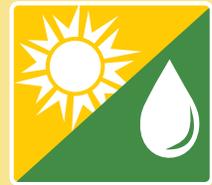
A perennial bunch grass that can reach eight feet in height, Indian grass is a nice selection for garden borders. The seed head shimmers silver and gold in sunlight.

How can I help?

- Learn more about native plants
- Landscape with native plants
- Buy nursery-propagated native plants
- Practice responsible landscaping techniques
- Protect your property against invasive plants
- Do not remove native plants from the wild
- Protect native plant communities and minimize habitat destruction

DCNR's Backyard Best Bets were chosen based on their hardiness potential in any soil condition, availability in the nursery trade, wildlife and habitat benefit, and viability in the overall ecosystem.

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Key for Symbols



Attracts Birds



Nectar Plant



Deer Resistant



Drought Resistant



Edible



Colorful Fall Leaves



Attracts Wildlife



Evergreen



Fragrant



Durable Plants



Ground Cover



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Trees	Size	Bloom Period	Bloom/Fruit										 Backyard Best Bet	 Ground Cover
Red maple <i>Acer rubrum</i>	40-100'	Mar-Apr	red flowers	■									■	
Serviceberry <i>Amelanchier arborea</i>	20-30'	Mar-May	white flowers	■					■				■	■
American hornbeam <i>Carpinus caroliniana</i>	15-30'	Apr-May												
Green ash <i>Fraxinus pennsylvanica</i>	30-50'	Apr-May	yellow flowers			■								
Tulip poplar <i>Liriodendron tulipifera</i>	75-100'	May-Jun	green flowers				■							
Eastern white pine <i>Pinus strobus</i>	60-90'		light brown cone		■				■				■	
Sycamore <i>Platanus occidentalis</i>	70-100'	Apr-May	brown round fruit											
Wild plum <i>Prunus americana</i>	15-30'	Apr-May	white flowers						■				■	
White oak <i>Quercus alba</i>	60-80'	Mar-May	acorn fruit										■	■
Pin oak <i>Quercus palustris</i>	60-70'	Apr-May	acorn fruit	■									■	
Eastern hemlock <i>Tsuga canadensis</i>	60-80'		light brown cone						■				■	

Shrubs	Size	Bloom Period	Bloom/Fruit										 Backyard Best Bet	 Ground Cover
Red chokeberry <i>Photinia pyrifolia (Aronia arbutifolia)</i>	5-10'	Mar-May	red berries	■										
Black chokeberry <i>Photinia (Aronia) melanocarpa</i>	3-6'	Apr-May	dark blue berries											■
Buttonbush <i>Cephalanthus occidentalis</i>	6-15'	Jun-Sep	creamy white flowers				■							
Summersweet <i>Clethra alnifolia</i>	6-12'	Jul-Aug	white-pink flowers							■		■		
Red-osier dogwood <i>Cornus stolonifera (sericea)</i>	6-12'	May	white flowers										■	■
Winterberry <i>Ilex verticillata</i>	6-10'	May-Jun	red berries		■								■	
Silky dogwood <i>Cornus amomum</i>	6-12'	May-Jun	bluish berries		■								■	
Mountain Laurel <i>Kalmia latifolia</i>	12-20'	May-Jul	white to pink flowers						■					
Pinxter-flower <i>Rhododendron periclymenoides</i>	6-12'	Apr-May	pink to white flowers											
Elderberry <i>Sambucus canadensis</i>	5-15'	Jun-Jul	white flowers						■				■	
Highbush blueberry <i>Vaccinium corymbosum</i>	6-12'	May-June	dark blue fruit						■				■	
Ninebark <i>Physocarpus opulifolius</i>	5-10'	May-Jul	pink to white flowers			■								

Landscape with rain gardens

Rain gardens are a great way to return a piece of your yard to the forest or meadow ecosystem that existed before your house was built. These specially constructed gardens capture and filter the storm water run off from your house and driveway. The garden's native plants clean pollutants from the water and allow the rain water to

return naturally to the groundwater system and recharge aquifers, streams and rivers. The unique native plant communities you choose for your rain garden ecosystem can provide habitat for a host of wildlife and years of enjoyment for you. Visit iConserve.PA.org/inyouryard.html for more information about installing a rain garden in your own backyard.

Ferns and Grasses	Size	Bloom Period	Bloom/Fruit										 Backyard Best Bet	 Ground Cover
Cinnamon fern <i>Osmunda cinnamomea</i>	1'-2'				■									
Riverbank wild rye <i>Elymus riparius</i>	1-5'	Jul-Sep												
Virginia wild rye <i>Elymus virginicus</i>	1-5.5'	Jul-Sep												
Switch grass <i>Panicum virgatum</i>	3-6'	Jul-Oct			■									
Indian grass <i>Sorghastrum nutans</i>	2.5-8'	Aug-Sep										■	■	

Perennials	Size	Bloom Period	Bloom/Fruit										 Backyard Best Bet	 Ground Cover
Swamp Milkweed <i>Asclepias incarnata</i>	2-6'	Jul-Aug	rose flowers									■	■	
Common milkweed <i>Asclepias syriaca</i>	2-6'	Jun-Aug	pale purple flowers					■				■	■	
New England aster <i>Symphyocarpus (Aster) novae-angliae</i>	2-6'	Aug-Oct	purple flowers			■		■						
Turtlehead <i>Chelone glabra</i>	1-3'	Jul-Sep	white-pink flowers					■						
Joe-pye-weed <i>Eupatorium fistulosum</i>	3-10'	Aug-Sep	pink-purple flowers					■					■	
Boneset <i>Eupatorium perfoliatum</i>	1-5'	Jul-Oct	white flowers					■						
White snakeroot <i>Ageratina altissima (Eupatorium rugosum)</i>	2-3'	Jul-Oct	white flowers					■						
Wild geranium <i>Geranium maculatum</i>	1-2'	Apr-Jul	lavender-pink flowers					■						
Sneezeweed <i>Helenium autumnale</i>	2-6'	Aug-Oct	yellow flowers											
Oxeye sunflower <i>Heliopsis helianthoides</i>	1-5'	Jul-Sep	yellow flowers		■			■						
Cardinal flower <i>Lobelia cardinalis</i>	2-5'	Jul-Sep	scarlet flowers		■			■						
Great blue lobelia <i>Lobelia siphilitica</i>	1-4'	Jul-Oct	blue flowers		■			■						
Monkey flower <i>Mimulus ringens</i>	2-3'	Jul-Sep	violet flowers											
Bee-balm <i>Monarda didyma</i>	2-5'	Jul-Aug	red flowers					■					■	
Bee-balm (Wild bergamot) <i>Monarda fistulosa</i>	2-5'	Jul-Aug	pink to purple flowers		■			■						
Sundrops <i>Oenothera perennis</i>	1-2'	Jun-Aug	yellow flowers			■								
Virginia creeper vine <i>Parthenocissus quinquefolia</i>	25-35'		bluish-black berry	■								■		■
Beard-tongue <i>Penstemon digitalis</i>	2-5'	May-Jul	white flowers					■						
Wild blue phlox <i>Phlox divaricata</i>	1-2'	May-Jun	lilac flowers					■			■			
Wild sweet William <i>Phlox maculata</i>	1-3'	Jun-Sep	purple flowers					■			■			
Garden phlox <i>Phlox paniculata</i>	2-5'	Jul-Oct	pink flowers					■			■			
New York ironweed <i>Vernonia noveboracensis</i>	3-6'	Jul-Sep	purple flowers					■						