

## Native Plants in the Garden

### **I. Many reasons to use natives. They are:**

- A. Adapted:
  - To local climate
  - To local soils -- with help, in the wake of land "development"
- B. Attractive and "unusual", with lots of potential for new cultivar selection  
Watch for more "designer natives" over time
- C. "Added value" for a landscape:
  - Plenty of public interest, attention, admiration
  - Wildlife attraction and support
  - Built-in story-telling because plants have a local history
  - Distinctive regional look is possible (Michigan is specially favored in this area, containing several major floral zones)

### **II. Native plants *are* available**

- A. From native plant nurseries... and standard garden centers
- B. Sources and terms you should know
  - Genotype: Why Zone 3-8 red maples may fail even in the "right" zone
  - Locally collected, locally grown; ethics of wild-collecting
  - Seedlings, whips, bare roots: Why smaller is often better, and faster

### **III. You may already have natives, Nature's gift.**

What you need to identify a tree or shrub that:

- You already have, or
- You see and admire but haven't a name for.

### **IV. Caution: Natives have been misrepresented as "superplants"**

- A. Billed as lower maintenance plants and landscapes
  - *If* well designed. (The right plant must be in the right place.)
  - In the long run
  - Not lower maintenance but different maintenance
  - Both maintenance and management needed. Everyday and far-view care by someone who recognizes where it's going in long run.

B. Establishment period is critical, and may take longer than for exotics

1. Roots of transplants sometimes adapt to pot or nursery culture
2. Drought tolerance, shade tolerance may have driven your selection, yet both take time to operate. An exotic may "make it" while native fails simply because exotic was never expected to "go without" water or light.

## V. Using native plant reference books to make the plant-place match

A. Don't treat Michigan or Great Lakes as homogeneous whole

- Township by township, site by site differences
- Help for you in books and on the Internet

B. Each species has its own niche. Match plant and place.

- Light needs are top priority
- Recognize terms for soil type: Clay, silt, sand, loam, poor, rich
- Respect soil moisture terms: Wet, mesic, dry

C. Be aware of what choosing for "tolerance" can mean:

- Wind tolerance can mean healthy in wind, but distorted
- Drought tolerance may mean it "checks out" during a drought
- Ability to handle wide temperature swings at beginning or end of season may translate to very slow growth
- Tolerance for summer heat and humidity...or a *need* for it?
- Winter hardiness in any plant improves with health an age
- There are even species for naturally compacted soils -- but not many!

## VI. Giving your natives a good start.

A. Planting tips, in wooded lots and not

B. First year care:

- Water-wise
- Don't fertilize
- Use your eyes

## Great Lakes Trees and Shrubs in the Landscape

### Natives Available and Commonly Used

#### Trees:

*Abies balsamea* (balsam fir)  
*Acer rubrum*, *A. saccharum*, *A. saccharinum* (red, sugar, silver maples)  
*Amelanchier canadensis*, *A. arborea*, *A. laevis* (downy, Allegheny serviceberries)  
*Cercis canadensis* (redbud)  
*Cornus florida* (flowering dogwood) (look for locally collected, locally grown!)  
*Crataegus crus-galli* (cockspur hawthorn)  
*Fagus grandifolia* (American beech)  
*Fraxinus americana*, *F. pennsylvanica* (white, green ash trees)  
*Hamamelis virginiana* (common witchhazel)  
*Juglans nigra* (black walnut)  
*Juniperus virginiana* (Virginia juniper / red cedar)  
*Larix laricina* (eastern larch)  
*Liriodendron tulipifera* (tuliptree / tulip poplar)  
*Picea glauca* (white spruce)  
*Pinus strobus* (eastern white pine)  
*Platanus occidentalis* (American sycamore)  
*Quercus alba*, *Q. palustris*, *Q. rubra* (white, pin northern red oaks)  
*Rhus copallina*, *R. typhina* (shining, staghorn sumacs)  
*Thuja occidentalis* (eastern arborvitae / white cedar)  
*Tsuga canadensis* (Canadian hemlock)  
*Ulmus americana* (American elm)

#### Shrubs:

*Cornus stolonifera* (redosier dogwood)  
*Ilex verticillata* (winterberry / Michigan holly)  
*Juniperus communis*, *J. horizontalis* (common, rug junipers)  
*Potentilla fruticosa* (shrubby cinquefoil)  
*Rhus aromatica* (fragrant sumac)  
*Rubus strigosus* (cultivated raspberry)  
*Symphoricarpos albus* (snowberry)  
*Taxus canadensis* (Canadian yew)  
*Viburnum trilobum* (American cranberrybush viburnum)

## Little-used Natives Worth Looking For

### Trees:

*Acer spicatum* (mountain maple)  
*Alnus rugosa* (speckled alder)  
*Betula lutea* (yellow birch)  
#*Carpinus caroliniana* (musclewood / ironwood / blue beech / American hornbeam)  
*Carya glabra*, *C. ovata* (pignut, shagbark hickories)  
#*Celtis occidentalis* (common hackberry; look for 'Prairie Pride', 'Chicagoland')  
*Cornus alternifolia* (pagoda dogwood)  
*Crataegus mollis*, *C. punctata* (downy-, dotted- and other hawthorns)  
#*Euonymus atropurpureus* (eastern wahoo)  
#*Fraxinus nigra* (black ash)  
#*Gymnocladus dioica* (Kentucky coffeetree)  
*Malus ioensis* (prairie crabapple)  
*Nyssa sylvatica* (black gum / black tupelo / sour gum)  
#*Ostrya virginiana* (American hophornbeam)  
#*Picea mariana* (black spruce)  
#*Pinus banksiana* (jack pine)  
*Pinus resinosa* (red pine)  
*Quercus bicolor* (swamp white oak)  
#*Quercus macrocarpa* (bur oak)  
#*Salix amygdaloides* (peachleaf willow)  
#*Salix discolor* (pussywillow)  
*Tilia americana* (basswood)  
*Viburnum lentago*, *V. prunifolium* (nannyberry, blackhaw viburnums)

### Shrubs:

*Amelanchier sanguinea* (roundleaf serviceberry)  
*Andromeda polifolia* (bogrosemary andromeda)  
#*Aronia melanocarpa* syn *Photinia melanocarpa* (black chokeberry)  
*Aronia prunifolia* (purplefruit chokeberry)  
*Betula pumila* (low birch)  
*Ceanothus americanus* (jerseytea)  
*Cephalanthus occidentalis* (buttonbush)  
*Comptonia peregrina* (sweetfern)  
*Cornus amomum*, *C. racemosa*, *C. rugosa* (silky, gray, roundleaf dogwoods)  
*Corylus americana* (American filbert)  
#*Diervilla lonicera* (dwarf bush honeysuckle)  
*Dirca palustris* (Atlantic leatherwood)  
#*Hypericum kalmianum* (Kalm St. Johnswort)  
*H. prolificum* (shrubby St. Johnswort)  
*Kalmia angustifolia* (lambkill laurel)  
*Lindera benzoin* (spicebush)  
#*Physocarpus opulifolius* (ninebark)  
#*Ribes odoratum* (clove currant)

#*Salix humilis*, *S. lucida* (prairie willow, shining willow)  
*Sambucus canadensis*, *S. pubens* (elder, red elder)  
*Shepherdia canadensis* (buffaloberry)  
*Vaccinium angustifolium*, *V. corymbosum* (lowbush, highbush blueberry)  
*Viburnum acerifolium* (mapleleaf viburnum)  
#*Viburnum nudum* var. *cassinoides* (witherod viburnum)

#Offers about everything we need, including high tolerance for air pollution, heat/drought, compacted soil, variable pH, salt, night lighting and "mine spoils." Few pest problems. Transplant readily. Unmarked have some aspects but not all.

## Native herbaceous plants (perennial "wildflowers")

**Commonly Used Michigan Natives** Sun, PS part sun, Shade, Wet, Moist, Dry  
Native Perennials Unusual but Becoming Available

**Achillea millefolium (common yarrow/thousand-leaf yarrow) white, June, S, Dr-M**

Actaea rubra (red baneberry) white, June, red berries, July, Sh, M  
Anaphalis margaritacea (pearly everlasting) white, August, S, Dr-M, sandy  
Andropogon scoparius, A. gerardii (big, little bluestem) S, Ps, M-Dr  
Anemone canadensis (Canada anemone) white, June-July, Ps-S, M  
Antennaria spp., A. parlinii (pussy toes/cat's paw) white, May-June, S-Ps, Dr-M, sandy

**Aquilegia canadensis (eastern columbine) red/yellow, May-June, Ps, M-W-Dr**

**Arisaema triphyllum (jack in the pulpit/memory root) green/maroon, May, Sh, M-W**

**Asarum canadense (wild ginger ) maroon, April-May, Sh-Ps, M**

Asclepias incarnata (swamp milkweed) purple, July, S-Ps, W-M

**Asclepias tuberosa (butterfly weed/orange glory plant) orange, July-August, S-Ps, Dr-M**

**Aster spp.**

**Aster ericoides (white aster, heath aster) white, July-August S, Dr-W**

**Aster lateriflorus (thousand leaf aster) white, August, Ps, M-W**

**Aster novae-angliae (New England aster) purple+, Aug.-Sept., S, M-W**

Caltha palustris (marsh marigold) yellow, May, S-Ps, W

**Camassia scillioides (eastern quamash) (Macomb/St. Clair only) blue, May, S, M-W**

**Campanula rotundifolia (harebell/bellflower) violet, June-July, S-Ps, Dr-M**

Caulophyllum thalictroides (blue cohosh/papoose root) blue leaf, green/yellow, May, Sh, M

Chelone glabra (turtlehead) white/pink, August, Ps-Sh, M-W

Claytonia virginiana (spring beauty) pink, April, Sh, M-Dr

Clematis virginiana (woodbine/wild clematis) white, Jul.-Aug., Ps-Sh, M-W

Clematis verticillaris (purple clematis) mauve, June, Ps-Sh, M

**Coreopsis lanceolata (tickseed) (mostly northern Michigan) 2-3', yellow, June-July, S-Ps, M-Dr**

**Coreopsis tripteris (tall tickseed) 8', yellow, July-August, S-Ps, Dr-**

Cornus canadensis (bunchberry) white, May, S-Sh, M-W, acid soil

Dentaria diphylla (toothwort) white, May, Sh, M-W

**Dicentra canadensis, D. cucularia (squirrel corn, Dutchman's breeches) white, April, Sh, M**

Epilobium angustifolium (fireweed) violet, white, July, Ps-S, D-W

Erythronium canadense (dogtooth violet, trout lily) yellow, May, Sh, D-M

Euonymus obovatus (woodbine) Ps-Sh, M

Eupatorium maculatum (white snakeroot), white/mauve/purple, July, Ps-S, M-W

## **More... Native herbaceous plants (perennial "wildflowers)**

### **Commonly Used Michigan Natives**

Native Perennials Unusual but Becoming Available

*Eupatorium perfoliatum* (boneset/white Joe Pye) white, August, Ps-S, M-W

*Eupatorium purpureum* (Joe Pye) mauve, August, Ps, M-W

### ***Fragaria virginiana* (wild strawberry) white, June, S-Ps, M-Dr**

*Gentiana andrewsii* (closed gentian) blue, August-September, S-Ps, M-W

## **More... Native herbaceous plants (perennial "wildflowers)**

### **Commonly Used Michigan Natives**

Native Perennials Unusual but Becoming Available

### ***Helenium autumnale* (Helen's flower/helenium () oranges, Aug.-Sept., S-Ps, M-W**

*Geranium maculatum* (wild geranium/spotted cranesbill) violet, May-June, Sh-Ps, M

*Geum rivale* (purple water avens) purple, June, Ps-Sh, M-W

*Helianthus divaricatus* (woodland sunflower) yellow, August, Ps, Dr-M

### ***Helianthus tuberosus* (Jerusalem artichoke) yellow, August, moist S, M-W**

### ***Heliopsis helianthoides* (false sunflower/ox-eye) yellow, July, S, M-W**

*Hepatica acutiloba*, *H. americana* (liverwort, hepatica) violet, May, Sh, M

*Hibiscus moscheutos/palustris* (rose mallow/marsh mallow) white/pink/rose, Aug., S, W

*Iris versicolor* (wild iris/blue flag) (northern Michigan) blue/violet, May-June, S, W-M

*Iris virginiana* (blue flag) S, W-M

*Jeffersonia diphylla* (twinleaf) white/green, April-May, Sh, M

*Liatriis cylindracea* Ps, Dr, *L. aspera* S-Ps, Dr (blazing star) purple, July,

### ***Liatriis spicata* (gayfeather/blazing star) purple/white, July, S, W-M**

*Lilium michiganense* (Michigan lily) orange, July-August, Ps-Sh, M-W

*Lilium philadelphicum* (wood lily) orange, July, Ps-S, W-Dr

*Lithospermum caroliniense*, *L. canescens* (hairy/ hoary puccoon) orange, July, S-Ps, Dr, sand

### ***Lobelia cardinalis* (cardinal flower/redbirds) red, Jul.-Aug., Ps-Sh, M-W**

*Lobelia siphilitica* (great blue lobelia) blue, July-August, Ps-Sh, M-W

### ***Lupinus perennis* (lupine) violet/pink/white, May-June, S-Ps, Dr**

*Lysimachia ciliata* (fringed loosestrife) yellow, July, Ps-S-Sh, M-W

*Maianthemum canadense* (wild lily of the valley) white, May, Sh, M

### ***Mertensia virginica* (Virginia bluebells) blue, May, Ps, M-Dr**

*Mitchella repens* (partridgeberry) white/orange-red, May/fall Sh, M

*Monarda fistulosa* (wild bergamot) mauve, July, S-Ps, Dr-M

*Monarda didyma* (bee balm) (St. Clair/Macomb only) S-Ps, M-W

*Monarda punctata* (dotted monarda/horsemint) cream, July-August, S-Ps, Dr-M

*Nymphaea odorata*, *N. tuberosa* (waterlily) white, June-July, S, W

### ***Oenothera fruticosa* (sundrops/day primrose) yellow, June, S, Dr-Mn**

### ***Oenothera biennis* (evening primrose) yellow, summer, S-Ps, M-Dr**

*Opuntia humifusa* (prickly pear cactus) yellow, July, S-Ps, Dr, sand

*Osmunda regalis* (royal fern) green, Ps-Sh, M-W

### ***Panicum virgatum* (switch grass) S, M-W**

*Parnassia glauca* (grass of parnassus) white, July, S-Ps, M-W

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**Penstemon digitalis (beardtongue) white, June-July, S-Ps, M**

Phlox divaricata (wild blue phlox) blue/violet, May-June, S-Ps, M-W

**Physostegia virginiana (obedient plant/false dragonshead) pink/white, July, S-Ps, M-W**

**Podophyllum peltatum (mayapple) white, May, Sh-Ps, Dr-M**

**Polygonatum biflorum (Solomon's seal) white, May-June, Sh-Ps, M-Dr**

Polygonum monspeliensis (rabbit's foot grass) S-Ps, M-Dr

Pycnanthemum virginianum (mountain mint) white/green, June-July, S, M-W

**More... Native herbaceous plants (perennial "wildflowers)**

**Commonly Used Michigan Natives**

Native Perennials Unusual but Becoming Available

Ratibida pinnata (grey coneflower) yellow, July, S, M

**Rudbeckia hirta, R. triloba, R. laciniata (black eye Susan) yellow, July, S-Ps, W-Dr**

Sagittaria latifolia (arrowhead/duck potato) white, July, S, W

Sanguinaria canadensis (bloodroot) white, April, Sh, M

Silphium terebinthinaceum (prairie dock), S. perfoliatum (cup plant) yellow, August, S, M-W

Sisyrinchium angustifolium (blue eyed grass) blue, June, S-Ps, W-M

Smilacina racemosa (false Solomon seal) white, June, Sh-Ps, M-Dr

Solidago canadensis, 33 other spp.! (goldenrod) yellow, July-August, S, M-W

Solidago caesia (bluestem goldenrod) yellow, August-Sept., Ps-Sh, W-Dr

Sorghastrum nutans (Indian grass) Ps-S, Dr-M

Stylophorum diphyllum (celandine/celandine poppy) yellow, May-June, Sh, M-Dr

Symplocarpus foetidus (skunk cabbage) green/white, April, S-Ps, W

Tanacetum huronense (Huron tansy) yellow, June-July, S, Dr-M

Thalictrum dasycarpum (purple meadow rue) white, June-July, S-Ps, M-W

**More... Native herbaceous plants (perennial "wildflowers)**

**Commonly Used Michigan Natives**

Native Perennials Unusual but Becoming Available

Tiarella cordifolia (foamflower) white, May, Sh-Ps, M-W

Tradescantia ohiensis (spiderwort) violet/white, June, S-Ps, M-Dr

**Trillium grandiflorum (trillium) white, May, Sh-Ps, M-Dr**

Typha species: T. angustifolia, T. latifolia, T. minima (cattail) brown, July, S, W

Uvularia grandiflora (bellwort/merrybells) yellow, May, Sh, M

Verbena hastata (hoary vervain) violet, July, Ps, S, M-W

Veronicastrum virginicum (culver's root) white, July, PS-S, M

**Viola pubescens, V. canadensis, V. pedata (violets, many spp.) S-Ps, M-Dr**

**See also: Our outline *Native Great Lakes Wildflowers for Gardens***



## Nursery Sources for Great Lakes Native Species

A starter list:

Many native species are available at the "average" garden center. Ask their first -- it encourages local suppliers to stock natives if they don't already. You might even provide them this list for its wholesale suppliers.

The following are wholesale (W) and retail (R) nurseries which carry one or more of the species listed on previous pages: Tree, shrubs (t,s) or perennials (p).

American Roots, Trish Hennig, 1958 Hidden Lake Trail, Ortonville, MI 48016  
248-627-8525 (R, p)

Arrowhead Alpines, P.O. Box 857, 1310 N. Gregory Road, Fowlerville, MI 48836,  
(517) 223-3581 (R,W; t,s,p)

Cold Stream Farm, 2030 Free Soil Rd., Free Soil, MI 49411 (616) 464-5809 (t,s seedlings)

Forestfarm, 990 Tetherow Road, Williams, OR 97544-9599, (541) 846-7269 (R,  
t,s,p)

Hartmann's Plant Company, P.O. Box 100, Lacota, MI 49063-0100 (269) 253-4281  
[www.hartmannsplantcompany.com](http://www.hartmannsplantcompany.com)

Hortech, P.O. box 533, Spring Lake, MI 49456-0533, (616) 842-1392 (W,p,s)

Michigan Wildflower Farm, 11770 Cutler Road, Portland, MI 48875, (517) 647-6010 (p)  
[www.michiganwildflowerfarm.com](http://www.michiganwildflowerfarm.com)

The Native Plant Nursery, Box 7841, Ann Arbor, MI 48107, (734) 677-3260  
[www.nativeplant.com](http://www.nativeplant.com) (p)

Nesta Prairie Perennials, 1019 Miller Rd., Kalamazoo, MI 49001, (800) 233-5025 (p)

Newaygo Conservation District Nursery, 1725 E. 72nd St., Newaygo, MI 49337 (231)  
652-7493 (t, s, bare root)

Oikos Tree Crops, P.O. Box 19425, Kalamazoo, MI 49019-0425 (269) 624-6233  
[www.oikostreecrops.com](http://www.oikostreecrops.com) (t)

Sandhill Farm, 11250 10 Mile Rd., Rockford, MI 49341 (616) 691-8214 [cherylt@iserv.net](mailto:cherylt@iserv.net)

Wetlands Nursery, P.O. Box 14553, Saginaw, MI 48601, (989) 752-3492  
[www.wetlands-nursery.com](http://www.wetlands-nursery.com) (p)

Wildtype Native Plant Nursery, 900 N. Every Road, Mason, MI 48854, 517-244-  
1140 [www.wildtypeplants.com](http://www.wildtypeplants.com) (R,t,s,p)

**Essential and recommended resources:**

The following references will assist the student in understanding the material and completing assignments in this session:

Michigan Flora, Volumes I, II, III, Edward G. Voss, Cranbrook Institute of Science

Michigan Wildflowers, Harry Lund

Dirr, Michael A., *Manual of Woody Landscape Plants*, 1998, Stipes Publishing, Champaign, IL

Hightshoe, Gary, *Native Trees, Shrubs and Vines for Urban and Rural America*, 1988, Van Nostrand Reinhold, NY (Out of print. Check [www.ABEbooks.com](http://www.ABEbooks.com), other used book sites)

*Soil Survey* of your county, USDA Soil Conservation Service: "Woodland Management and Productivity" chart, "Environmental Plantings" chart.

Symonds, George W.D., *The Shrub Identification Book: The visual method for the identification of shrubs, vines and ground covers*, 1963, HarperCollins Publishing, NY

Websites:

USDA website, native plants and ranges:

<http://plants.usda.gov/>

Michigan Conservation District's "Gateway to Michigan's Native Plants"

<http://www.macd.org/rollovers/nativeplants/nphome.html>

Northwest lower Michigan's "Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council" plant lists

<http://www.watershedcouncil.org/nativeplants.html>

Michigan Native Plant Producers Association. Links to native plant nurseries, invasive species list

<http://www.mnppa.org/>

Michigan Department of Natural Resources links re wildflowers, invasive species, wildlife, natural communities, etc.

[http://www.michigan.gov/dnr/0,1607,7-153-10370\\_12146---,00.html](http://www.michigan.gov/dnr/0,1607,7-153-10370_12146---,00.html)

"Green Landscaping With Native Plants", brochure, by U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

<http://www.epa.gov/greenacres/navland.html>