1

Keystone Plants

Native Species of:
- Oaks
- Cherries
- Willows
- Birches
- Cottonwoods
- Elms
- Goldenrods
- Asters
- Sunflowers

2

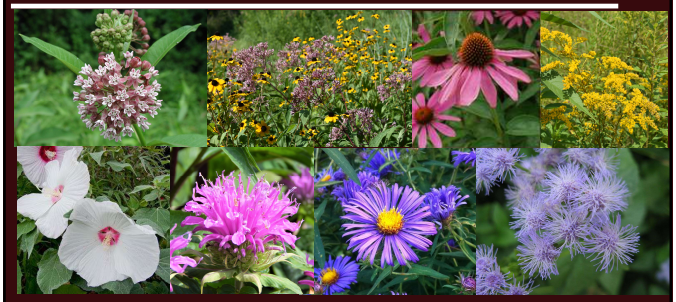
How "Native" Do You Need to Be?

- Most impact – regionally native
- Do the insects that use this plant live here?
- Adapted to soils/climate
- All plants are "native" somewhere

Photo credit: USDA PLANTS database

3

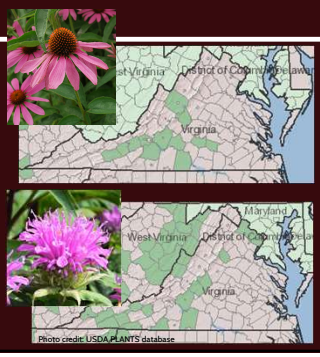
Common Native Plants



4

Should We Still Plant It?

- Pollen & nectar source
- Birds eat the seeds (especially finches)
- May not be well adapted to our heat, humidity, and soil types
- Is it displacing a more productive regionally-native species?



5

What Makes Them Noteworthy?

- Ecological value
- Well-behaved in the garden
- Garden worthy
- Easy to grow
- Beauty!
- Native to Hampton Roads

6

Botanical Name:
Decumaria barbara /
Hydrangea barbara
Common Name:
Climbing
Hydrangea

7

Grow It!
• Deciduous, clinging vine
• Sun to part shade (afternoon shade)
• White flowers in early summer
• Average to moist soils
• 12 – 36 feet – prune to control size
• Somewhat slow growing
Ecological Value
• Host plant to several skipper species
• Nectar source
• Deer resistant
• Nesting site in larger plants

8

Botanical Name: *Silene caroliniana*
Common Name: Carolina Campion / Wild Pink

9

Botanical Name: *Silene stellata*
Common Name: Starry Campion

10

Grow It!
• Full sun to part shade
• 4" to 1' tall & wide, mounding habit
• Avoid heavy wet soils
Grow It!
• Full sun to part shade
• 2 – 3' tall
• Blooms June / July
• Tolerates drought, clay
Ecological Value
• Host plant to 5 caterpillar species
• 2 species of moths from *Hadena* genus native to East Coast – *Silenes* are primary host plant for both

11

Botanical Name: *Monarda punctata*
Common Name: Spotted Bee Balm

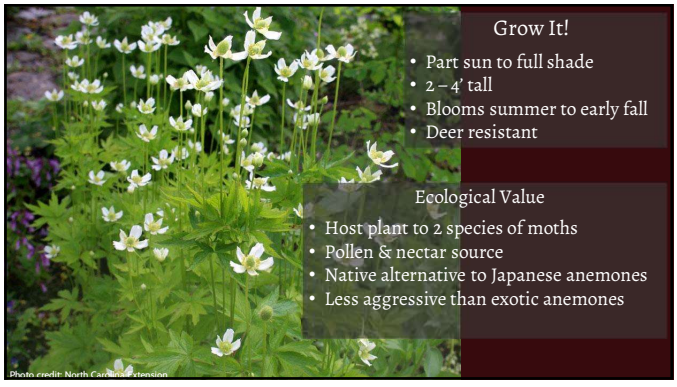
12

Grow It!
• Full sun to part shade
• 1 – 2' tall
• Blooms in mid – late summer
• Not as aggressive as other bee balms
• Tolerant to drought, deer, rabbits
Ecological Value
• Host plant to 12 species of butterflies & moths, including Southern Emerald & Gray Marvel
• Supports 3 types of specialized bees
• Attracts Ruby Throated Hummingbirds
Southern Emerald
Photo credit: butterfliesandmoths.org

13

Botanical Name: *Anemone virginiana*
Common Name: Tall Anemone

14


Grow It!
• Part sun to full shade
• 2 – 4' tall
• Blooms summer to early fall
• Deer resistant
Ecological Value
• Host plant to 2 species of moths
• Pollen & nectar source
• Native alternative to Japanese anemones
• Less aggressive than exotic anemones

15

Botanical Name:
Sisyrinchium angustifolium
Common Name:
Blue Eyed Grass

16

Grow It!
• Commonly sold as selection 'Lucerne'
• Not a true grass – member of Iris family
• Full sun to part shade
• 12 – 18" tall
• Small blue flowers appear in spring & summer
• Clumping – 'Lucerne' rarely spreads by seed
Ecological Value
• Small black fruit eaten by birds
• Nectar and pollen source for native bees & pollinating flies

17

Botanical Name:
Osmundastrum cinnomomeum
Common Name:
Cinnamon Fern

18

Grow It!
• Shady, moist areas
• 2 – 3' tall & wide
• Tolerates heavy shade and deer browsing
• Cinnamon fronds persist through summer, turning yellow in autumn
• Good fall color
Ecological Value
• Host to 7 species of butterflies & moths
• Only locally native host to Osmunda Moth
• Used in nest building by songbirds
• Provides cover for birds
Photo credit: North Carolina Extension

19

Botanical Name: *Carex vulpinoidea*
Common Name: Fox Sedge

20

Grow It!
• Part shade to full sun
• 2 – 3' tall
• Spreads slowly in gardens/ clumping*
• Dry or moist soils – tolerates heavy clay
• Deer & rabbit resistant
• Evergreen
Ecological Value
• Host to more than 30 types of caterpillars – several skipper butterflies
• Erosion control on banks of ponds, streams, rivers, swales, rain gardens
• Nesting sites for birds
• Food for winter birds

21

Botanical Name: *Carex laxiculmis*
Common Name: Creeping Sedge

22

Grow It!
• Commonly sold as 'Bunny Blue'
• Full to part shade
• Striking blue foliage
• Evergreen
• 12' tall & wide
• Deer resistant
Ecological Value
• Hosts 36 species of caterpillars
• Nesting material for birds

23

Botanical Name: *Rhododendron periclymenoides*
Common Name: Pinxter Azalea

24

Grow It!
• Prefers afternoon shade
• 6 – 8' tall
• Pink/white flowers in spring
• Tolerates heat, drought, compacted soils
• Somewhat slow growing
Ecological Value
• Hosts 50 species of caterpillars
• Spring source of nectar & pollen for native bees
• Funnel-shaped flowers attract hummingbirds

25

Botanical Name: *Viburnum dentatum*
Common Name: Arrowwood Viburnum

26

Grow It!
• Full sun to shade
• 5 – 10' tall
• White flowers in spring/blue fruit in fall
• Adaptable to most soils
• Great fall color
• Heat & drought tolerant
Ecological Value
• Host to Spring Azure butterfly
• Spring source for nectar & pollen
• Nesting site
• Food for birds in fall

27

Botanical Name: *Viburnum nudum*
Common Name: Possumhaw Viburnum

28

Photo credit: Missouri Master Naturalists
Grow It!
• Full sun to shade
• 5 – 12' tall
• White flowers in spring/multi-color fruit in fall
• Prefers moist soils – adaptable
• Tolerates heat, drought, flooding
Ecological Value
• Host to hummingbird clearwing moths
• Spring source for nectar & pollen
• Nesting site
• Food for birds in fall
Photo credit: Go Botany

29

Botanical Name: *Sedum ternatum*
Common Name: Whorled Stonecrop

30

Grow It!
• Shade loving
• 3-6" tall
• Moist to dry soils
• Showy white flowers April to June
• Mat forming semi-evergreen
Ecological Value
• Pollen source for native bees, wasps and flies
Photo Credit: Missouri Botanical Garden

31

Botanical Name: *Verbena hastata*
Common Name: Swamp Verbena

32

Grow It!
• Full sun to part shade
• 2 – 5' tall
• Purple flowers in summer
• Long bloom season
• Average to wet soils
Ecological Value
• Seeds eaten by cardinals, sparrows & juncos
• Host plant for Verbena moth & Common Buckeye
• Pollen & nectar source for long & short tongued bees, cuckoo bees, miner bees, halictid bees, Verbena bee, thread-waisted wasp, bee flies, golden soldier beetle, hummingbird moths

33

Botanical Name: *Gillenia trifoliata*
Common Name: Bowman's Root

34

Grow It!
• Shade to part sun
• 18 – 24" tall
• Best planted in groups of 3 – 5 or more
• White flowers on red stems
• Drought tolerant
• Deer & rabbit resistant
Ecological Value
• Spring nectar & pollen source

35

Botanical Name: *Sarracenia flava*
Common Name: Yellow Pitcher Plant
Photo credit US Forest Service

36

37

Grow It!

- Full sun
- Yellow – up to 3'
- Purple – 12 – 18"
- Bog plants – moist, nutrient pool soils
- Yellow – deciduous
- Purple - Evergreen

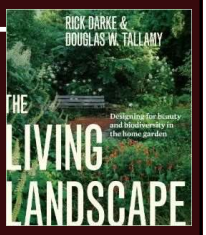
Ecological Value

- Provide cover for amphibians
- Yellow is host plant to Epauleted Pitcher Plant Moth
- Purple's prey species include grasshoppers, crickets, snails
- Ants, wasps, bees visit for nectar
- Beetles & spiders use as hunting grounds

38

Resources

- Any book by Doug Tallamy
- Homegrown National Park website - www.homegrownnationalpark.org
- USDA PLANTS database - https://plants.sc.egov.usda.gov/home
- NC Extension Gardener Plant Toolbox – https://plants.ces.ncsu.edu
- National Wildlife Foundation Native Plant Finder - https://www.nwf.org/NativePlantFinder
- Audubon Society Plants for Birds - https://www.audubon.org/plantsforbirds
- Native Plants for Southeast Virginia guide - https://www.plantvirginianatives.org/plant-southeast-virginia-natives



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