

2023 Capital Region NY Native Plant Shopping Guide

Why Native Plants

Native plants are the foundational block in the ecosystem we all rely on. They have coevolved with weather patterns and other factors for over hundreds of years. Which means your success rate increases when you choose native plants over species that came from other countries. During this evolution they also created unique relationships with the wildlife. For example the migrating Monarch Butterfly requires the host plant milkweed to lay her eggs and feed the soon to hatch caterpillars. This serves as a poisonous protection against some predators that would like to make a meal out of all life stages of the butterfly. There are also several native bees and pollinators who require specific plants or flower shapes in order to survive. Healthy pollinator populations means better crop yields for humans! Not to mention all of the water management, carbon sequestering, and general pollutant cleaning characteristics of our native plants.

The Basics

Before leaving for a nursery, see our list of [local nurseries](#) selling native plants, make sure to know the site you will be planting in. Just think of typical gardening practices such as how much sunlight, soil type, and moisture levels. Perhaps it is best to keep a journal or digital notes on your phone with site location specifics. This is also a great place to jot down native plants that you might learn about and want to purchase in the future. Keeping it all in one spot and easy to grab to take with you shopping is a huge help!

When shopping use the full scientific name, including the first (Genus) and second (species) names. Common names are not as accurate and may refer to more than one plant. Our chapter suggests using the [New York Flora Atlas](#) to confirm if the plant is native to New York. Since this organization is based here in state and run by industry experts/leaders they have some of the most specific information. If you are not committed to New York native only then feel free to use [BONAP](#) or any other book to confirm it is native to the US. Just note that we live in an area with harsh winters, some native to USA plants won't tolerate it well here and end up only surviving for one growing season. This means any wildlife that used that plant will miss it the following year.

For the time being it is best to avoid cultivars or “nativars” of native plants. The current trend is to create more attractive traits for humans, such as color changes and double blooms. Until the industry starts propagating native plants to sustain the wildlife that depend on them these nativars offer no ecological support. Some scientific research is being done but has not undergone peer review so who knows what the future will hold.

Questions to Ask

- Does the nursery use any pest/herbicides? If yes then walk away, the point is to feed the food chain and many pesticides or herbicides are systemic and reside in the plant or soil from weeks to years. These residues can kill off pollinators and leach into your soil killing off other plants in your garden.

- Where do they source their plants?
 - Ideal:** Grown from locally and ethically sourced seed. This is the best way to introduce the most biodiversity. Local ecotype seeds will also be completely adjusted to the growing conditions described in the "[Why Native Plants](#)" section.
 - Good:** Grown from an ethically sourced cutting. This is great for slower growing plants such as shrubs. There won't be as much biodiversity but there will be a shrub producing more berries to support birds and other winter wildlife faster than grown by seed.
 - Avoid:** Generic Locally Grown as it does not mean the same as Local Ecotype, unless the nursery can confirm the origins of the seed/cutting. Plants that were dug from the wild, this is an extreme case type of situation, like about to be bulldozed and destroyed. Most native plants have a well established root system that does not like being transplanted. Not to mention this method is an easy way to transfer invasive species unknowingly.

- If they would be interested in learning more and offering native plant species. Sometimes it doesn't hurt to ask even if you are just starting the journey and not an expert. Point them towards Wild Ones we would be happy to help.

Advanced

Consider growing your own native plants from seed as this is typically the most cost efficient method. It is best to sow close to harvest as many native plant seeds need a cold moist stratification period in order to germinate. In some cases you can hold the seed back until Winter really or right before the first snowfall as this will protect your seeds from any hungry wildlife. Yes we do want to feed them but we need to establish the plants first!

Online ordering has become much more easy to access in recent years. Just make sure you have already decided on if you are sticking to local ecotype, native to NY, or just native to the USA with similar growing conditions. Many websites have a Q&A or common questions that you should read to learn a bit more about their growing process and shipping/refund policy. If you are looking for reputable online ordering then check out the [Wild Ones Journal](#), just check out the ads.

Division is ok depending on the plant and since this is so specific it is best to research that specific plant before digging. Currently it is also suggested not to share plants between different properties. The Jumping Worm and other invasive species could unknowingly transfer as seeds or eggs on the plant to the new garden.

Last Thoughts

Most of us grew up learning the specimen species style of gardening. This is when one plant is showcased and typically all plants are spaced apart with a heavy layer of mulch, and maybe even weeds, between them. Our native plants are used to growing in a matrix or community so do not be afraid to plant them close together. Get into succession gardening and mix seeds of plants that will bloom in spring, summer, and fall all together in the same space. Don't shy away from native grasses to fill the spaces. This is also a great way to prevent plants from flopping over. Use mosses to create walking paths and just really try to shrink the lawn.

About Wild Ones

Wild Ones: Native Plants, Natural Landscapes wildones.org a national non profit environmental education and advocacy organization. Our mission is to promote environmentally sound landscaping practices to encourage biodiversity through the preservation, restoration, and establishment of native plant communities.

Learn about our programs, resources, and our native plant sales at capitalregionny.wildones.org and on Facebook at facebook.com/WOCapitalRegionNY. Please consider joining Wild Ones or making a donation directly to our chapter to help us spread our critical mission. The more resources we have the more people we can reach and the more native plants we can get in the ground!

If you would like more help planning your garden please check out the resources Wild Ones provides. Check out NativeGardenDesigns.WildOnes.org/ not only do they provide a starting point for those new to these practices but also specific designs with plant lists. While there is not a current design for the Capital Region the [Boston Design](#) is of a similar ecoregion and all plants suggested are native to NY.



Stumps continue to provide shelter and food sources as it decomposes into healthy soil for nearby plants such as these ferns and trillium!

Plant Sales List - Wild Ones Capital Region NY Chapter 2023

Please note this list is not updated. Plants will sell out and may not be available at a sale until they are ready to go into the ground.

Trees & Shrubs	
Common Name	Scientific Name
Black Chokeberry	<i>Aronia melanocarpa</i>
Silky dogwood	<i>Cornus amomum</i>
Red Osier Dogwood	<i>Cornus sericea</i>
American Hazelnut	<i>Corylus americana</i>
Witch Hazel	<i>Hamamelis virginiana</i>
Sand Cherry	<i>Prunus pumila var depressa</i>
Pussy Willow	<i>Salix discolor</i>
Grasses	
Common Name	Scientific Name
Side-Oats Grama	<i>Bouteloua curtipendula</i>
Copper Shouldered Oval Sedge	<i>Carex bicknellii</i>
Common Wood Sedge	<i>Carex blanda</i>
Purple love grass	<i>Eragrostis spectabilis</i>
Prairie Dropseed	<i>Sporobolus heterolepis</i>
Plants	
Common Name	Scientific Name
Giant Yellow Hyssop	<i>Agastache nepetoides</i>
White snakeroot	<i>Ageratina altissima</i>
Wild Columbine	<i>Aquilegia canadensis</i>
Nodding Onion	<i>Allium cernuum</i>
Pearly Everlasting	<i>Anaphalis margaritacea</i>
Poke Milkweed	<i>Asclepias exaltata</i>
Swamp Milkweed	<i>Asclepias incarnata</i>
Purple Milkweed	<i>Asclepias purpurascens</i>
Common Milkweed	<i>Asclepias syriaca</i>
Butterfly Weed	<i>Asclepias tuberosa</i>
Whorled Milkweed	<i>Asclepias verticillata</i>

Plants

Common Name	Scientific Name
Small Yellow Wild Indigo	<i>Baptisia tinctoria</i>
Downy Wood-Mint	<i>Blephilia ciliata</i>
Tall Bellflower	<i>Campanula americana</i>
Harebell	<i>Campanula rotundifolia</i>
White Turtlehead	<i>Chelone glabra</i>
Flat-Top Goldentop	<i>Euthamia graminifolia</i>
Prairie-smoke	<i>Geum triflorum</i>
American ipecac	<i>Gillenia stipulata</i>
Common Sneezeweed	<i>Helenium autumnale</i>
Early Sunflower	<i>Heliopsis helianthoides</i>
Blue Flag Iris	<i>Iris versicolor</i>
White Liatris	<i>Liatris spicata</i>
Turk's-cap Lily	<i>Lilium superbum</i>
Cardinal Flower	<i>Lobelia cardinalis</i>
Great blue lobelia	<i>Lobelia siphilitica</i>
coral honeysuckle	<i>Lonicera sempervirens</i>
Sundial Lupine	<i>Lupinus perennis</i>
Virginia Bluebells	<i>Mertensia virginica</i>
White Bergamot	<i>Monarda clinopodia</i>
Wild Bergamot	<i>Monarda fistulosa</i>
Foxglove Beardtongue	<i>Penstemon digitalis</i>
Hairy Beardtongue	<i>Penstemon hirsutus</i>
Downy Phlox	<i>Phlox pilosa</i>
White Spruce	<i>Picea glauca</i>
Virginia Mountain Mint	<i>Pycnanthemum virginianum</i>
Winged Sumac	<i>Rhus copallinum</i>
Green-Headed Coneflower	<i>Rudbeckia laciniata</i>
Brown-Eyed Susan	<i>Rudbeckia triloba</i>
Bloodroot	<i>Sanguinaria canadensis</i>
Hoary Skullcap	<i>Scutellaria incana</i>
Stiff Leaf Goldenrod	<i>Solidago rigida</i>
Showy Goldenrod	<i>Solidago speciosa</i>

Plants

Common Name	Scientific Name
White Wood Aster	<i>Symphyotrichum divaricatum</i>
Smooth aster	<i>Symphyotrichum laeve</i>
New England Aster	<i>Symphyotrichum novae-angliae</i>
White Trillium	<i>Trillium grandiflorum</i>
Toadshade Trillium	<i>Trillium sessile</i>
Blue Vervain	<i>Verbena hastata</i>
New York Ironweed	<i>Vernonia noveboracensis</i>
Culver's root	<i>Veronicastrum virginicum</i>
Bird's Foot Violet	<i>Viola pedata</i>
Golden Alexanders	<i>Zizia aurea</i>

Lupinus perennis is the only host plant for the picky Karner Blue Butterfly. Other varieties are now cross breeding with the native causing future plants to be inedible to this endangered caterpillar.



Monarda is one of the native plants that attracts Hummingbirds!