



# American Littoral Society Shore Stewards Fact Sheet - *Native Plants*

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“Native plants have naturally evolved in a particular region in which they are found. Native plants have adapted to local physical conditions such as soil, geology, and climate. Therefore they require less maintenance, are resistant to most pests and diseases, and require little or no irrigation or fertilizers, once established. Planting native trees, shrubs, and herbaceous plants is a great way of complimenting and restoring the natural environment. Native plants have a diversity of characteristics which provide intriguing shapes, colors, and sizes, while their flowers, fruits, and foliage attract beneficial wildlife including songbirds and butterflies.” ...Rutgers University



## Native Plant Sources

"Native Plant Sources" is provided for information only. It is not an exhaustive list of native plant nurseries for New Jersey or the Mid-Atlantic region nor is it an endorsement by Rutgers Cooperative Extension or the American Littoral Society.

### General Plant Materials

#### New Jersey

Arrowwood Native Plant  
Nursery

(856) 697-6045

Franklinville, NJ

*Also available: bare-root  
seedlings*

Croshaw Nursery

(609) 298-0477

The Cummins Garden

(732) 536-2591

Marlboro, NJ

Church's Beachgrass & Nursery

(609) 884-3927

Cape May, NJ

Dearborn Farms

732-264-0256

2170 Route 35, Holmdel, NJ

Coastal Natives Nursery

(856) 785-1102

Mauricetown, NJ

Flora for Fauna

(609) 861-5102

Woodbine, NJ

Herb and Botanical Alliance  
(609) 965-0337  
Egg Harbor, NJ

*Also available: bare-root  
seedlings*

Kuperus Farmside Gardens  
(201) 875-3160  
Sussex, NJ

Princeton Nurseries  
(609) 259-7671  
Allentown, NJ  
*Also available: balled-and-  
burlapped  
bare-root seedlings*

Mapleton Nurseries  
(609) 430-0366  
Kingston, NJ  
*Also available: balled-and-  
burlapped*

Toad Shade Wildflower Farm  
(908) 996-7500  
Frenchtown, NJ  
*Herbaceous plants only*

New Jersey Forest Tree Nursery  
(732) 928-0029  
Jackson, NJ  
*Also available: bare-root  
seedlings*

Triple Oaks Nursery and Herb Garden  
856-694-4272  
Franklinville, NJ  
*Also available: balled-and-  
burlapped*

Pinelands Nursery  
(609) 291-9486, 800-667-2729  
Columbus, NJ

Wild Earth Native Plant Nursery  
Freehold, NJ  
(732) 308-9777



# Native Trees and Shrubs for Riparian Forest Buffers

*New Jersey, Inner Coastal Plain*

Color indicates species is more commonly available.

## Trees - Overstory

**River birch** - *Betula nigra*

Bitternut hickory - *Carya cordiformis*

Pignut hickory - *Carya glabra*

Mockernut hickory - *Carya tomentosa*

**Atlantic white cedar** - *Chamaecyparis  
thyoides*

American beech - *Fagus grandifolia*

**White ash** - *Fraxinus americana*

**Green ash** - *Fraxinus pennsylvanica*

**Tuliptree** - *Liriodendron tulipifera*

Sourwood - *Oxydendrum arboreum*

**White pine** - *Pinus strobus*

Virginia pine - *Pinus virginiana*

**Sycamore** - *Platanus occidentalis*

**Swamp white oak** - *Quercus bicolor*

**Scarlet oak** - *Quercus coccinea*

**Southern red oak** - *Quercus falcata*

**Pin oak** - *Quercus palustris*

**Willow oak** - *Quercus phellos*

**Red oak** - *Quercus rubra*

**Black oak** - *Quercus velutina*

**Black willow** - *Salix nigra*

Fringetree - *Chionanthus virginicus*

**Alternate-leaf dogwood** - *Cornus  
alternifolia*

**Flowering dogwood** - *Cornus florida*

**Persimmon** - *Diospyros virginiana*

American holly - *Ilex opaca*

**Red cedar** - *Juniperus virginiana*

**Sweetbay magnolia** - *Magnolia  
virginiana*

**Black gum** - *Nyssa sylvatica*

Hoptree - *Ptelea trifoliata*

Aromatic sumac - *Rhus aromatica*

Winged sumac - *Rhus coppalina*

**Possumhaw** - *Viburnum nudum*

**Blackhaw** - *Viburnum prunifolium*

## Trees - Understory

**Smooth alder** - *Alnus serrulata*

**Downy juneberry** - *Amelanchier  
arborea*

**Shadbush** - *Amelanchier canadensis*

**Smooth juneberry** - *Amelanchier laevis*

Pawpaw - *Asimina triloba*

**Gray birch** - *Betula populifolia*

**Ironwood** - *Carpinus caroliniana*

**Redbud** - *Cercis canadensis*

## Shrubs

Indigo bush - *Amphora fruticosa*

**Red chokeberry** - *Aronia arbutifolia*

**Black chokeberry** - *Aronia melanocarpa*

**Purple chokeberry** - *Aronia prunifolia*

New Jersey tea - *Ceanothus americanus*

**Buttonbush** - *Cephalanthus occidentalis*

Virgin's bower - *Clematis virginiana*

**Sweet pepperbush** - *Clethra alnifolia*

**Silky dogwood** - *Cornus amomum*

**Gray dogwood** - *Cornus racemosa*

Fetterbush - *Eubotrys racemosa*

**Winterberry** - *Ilex verticillata*

**Virginia sweetspire** - *Itea virginica*

**Spicebush** - *Lindera benzoin*

**Maleberry** - *Lyonia ligustrina*

**Northern bayberry** - *Myrica pennsylvanica*

Common ninebark - *Physocarpus opulifolius*

Pinxterbloom azalea - *Rhododendron periclymenoides*

**Swamp azalea** - *Rhododendron viscosum*

**Swamp rose** - *Rosa palustris*

**Elderberry** - *Sambucus canadensis*

**Meadowsweet** - *Spirea latifolia*

**Steeplebush** - *Spirea tomentosa*

American bladdernut - *Staphylea trifolia*

**Highbush blueberry** - *Vaccinium corymbosum*

**Arrowwood** - *Viburnum dentatum*

## Advantages of native plants:

- add beauty to the landscape and preserve our natural heritage
- provide food and habitat for native wildlife
- serve as an important genetic resource for future food crops or other plant-derived products
- help slow down the spread of fire by staying greener longer
- decrease the amount of water needed for landscape maintenance
- require very little long-term maintenance if they are properly planted and established
- produce long root systems to hold soil in place
- protect water quality by controlling soil erosion and moderating floods and droughts

## What is a Native Plant?

Native plants (also called indigenous plants) are plants that have evolved over thousands of years in a particular region. They have adapted to the geography, hydrology, and climate of that region. Native plants occur in communities, that is, they have evolved together with other plants. As a result, a community of native plants provides habitat for a variety of native wildlife species such as songbirds and butterflies.

## What is a Non-Native Plant?

Non-native plants (also called non-indigenous plants, invasive plants, exotic species, or weeds) are plants that have been introduced into an environment in which they did not evolve. Introduction of non-native plants into our landscape has been both accidental and

deliberate. Purple loosestrife, for example, was introduced from Europe in the 1800's in ship ballast and as a medicinal herb and ornamental plant. It quickly spread and can now be found in 42 states.

In general, aggressive, non-native plants have no enemies or controls to limit their spread. As they move in, complex native plant communities, with hundreds of different plant species supporting wildlife, will be converted to a monoculture. This means the community of plants and animals is simplified, with most plant species disappearing, leaving only the non-native plant population intact.

For example, purple loosestrife colonizes wetland areas, replacing native plants unable to compete for available sunlight, water, and nutrients. Wetlands infested with purple loosestrife lose as much as 50% of their original native plant populations. This limits the variety of food and cover available to birds and may cause the birds to move or disappear from a region altogether.

### **Why Should I Use Native Plants?**

Native plants provide a beautiful, hardy, drought resistant, low maintenance landscape while benefiting the environment. Native plants, once established, save time and money by eliminating or significantly reducing the need for fertilizers, pesticides, water and lawn maintenance equipment.

**Native plants do not require fertilizers.** Vast amounts of fertilizers are applied to lawns. Excess phosphorus and nitrogen (the main components of fertilizers) run off into lakes and rivers causing excess algae growth. This depletes oxygen in our waters, harms aquatic life and interferes with recreational uses.

**Native plants require fewer pesticides than lawns.** Nationally, over 70 million pounds of pesticides are applied to lawns each year. Pesticides run off lawns and can contaminate rivers and lakes. People and pets in contact with chemically treated lawns can be exposed to pesticides.

**Native plants require less water than lawns.** The modern lawn requires significant amounts of water to thrive. In urban areas, lawn irrigation uses as much as 30% of the water consumption on the East Coast and up to 60% on the West Coast. The deep root systems of many native Midwestern plants increase the soil's capacity to store water. Native plants can significantly reduce water runoff and, consequently, flooding.

**Native plants help reduce air pollution.** Natural landscapes do not require mowing. Lawns, however, must be mowed regularly. Gas powered garden tools emit 5% of the nation's air pollution. Forty million lawnmowers consume 200 million gallons of gasoline per year. One gas-powered lawnmower emits 11 times the air pollution of a new car for each hour of operation. Excessive carbon from the burning of fossil fuels contributes to global warming. Native plants sequester, or remove, carbon from the air.

**Native plants provide shelter and food for wildlife.** Native plants attract a variety of

birds, butterflies, and other wildlife by providing diverse habitats and food sources. Closely mowed lawns are of little use to most wildlife.

**Native plants promote biodiversity and stewardship of our natural heritage.** In the U.S., approximately 20 million acres of lawn are cultivated, covering more land than any single crop. Native plants are a part of our natural heritage. Natural landscaping is an opportunity to reestablish diverse native plants, thereby inviting the birds and butterflies back home.

**Native plants save money.** A study by Applied Ecological Services (Brodhead, WI) of larger properties estimates that over a 20 year period, the cumulative cost of maintaining a prairie or a wetland totals \$3,000 per acre versus \$20,000 per acre for non-native turf grasses.

### Replacing Your Lawn

- Proper soil preparation is the most important factor in the success of a native planting.
- Use a sod cutter (which can be rented) to remove sections of your existing lawn.
- Do not turn over the exposed soil. Disturbing the soil will expose weed seeds and encourage their growth. The weeds will compete with new native seedlings for nutrients, water, and sunlight.
- If you choose to use herbicides to remove existing vegetation, use a low toxicity, non-persistent herbicide such as glyphosate (sold under various brand names). Read the label and follow the manufacturer's instructions carefully.

### Seeding vs. Transplants

- Sowing seeds is less expensive than landscaping with transplants. However, native plants grow slowly from seed, often not blooming until the third year. The first few years are spent growing long, extensive root systems. Weeds grow quickly. This is normal, so don't be discouraged.
- Transplants grow more quickly than seeds, often blooming in the first year. Keep your costs down by buying the smallest plants available. Space the plants one foot apart and mark for later identification.

### Maintenance Tips

- Mulch with a weed-free material (e.g., clean straw) to keep the weeds down.
- Cut, rather than pull, weeds. Pulling weeds may damage the roots of young native plants. Pulling also disturbs the soil, encouraging weed growth.
- If you use seeds, keeping your landscaped area cut to 6 inches during the first year will help control weeds. Most seeded native flowers and grasses will not grow taller than 6 inches the first year.

## Questions to Ask When Buying Native Plants

1. Are the native plants locally grown or shipped in? Native plants which are locally grown are best suited to the regional climatic conditions.
2. Have the seeds been propagated in a nursery or collected from the wild? Seeds from the wild need to be protected so that we do not deplete our natural areas.
3. Will the native plants grow best in sun or shade? Survey your plot carefully.
4. What soil type is required? Is it sandy or loamy, wet or dry?
5. Which native plants grow well together? Call your local extension office to find out about plant communities.
6. How long will it take seeds to germinate or plants to mature? The key to growing native plants is patience.