

# Including Native Plants in Your Landscape



## What Are Native Plants?

Native plants in North America are plants (flowers, grasses, shrubs, trees) that are indigenous to an area; that is, they have developed naturally in their given environment. Most of today's native plant species were here before European settlement.

## Why Are Native Plants Important?

Interest in native plants has risen dramatically over the past few years. Native plants possess certain traits that make them uniquely adapted to local conditions:

- They add interest to the landscape and match the finest cultivated plants in beauty.
- They thrive in Indiana's soils and climate.
- They provide food and habitat for wildlife.
- They are a vital part of Indiana's natural heritage.

Because they are well adapted to their ecosystem, native plants surpass non-natives in ruggedness and resistance to drought, insects, and disease. They maintain or improve soil fertility and reduce erosion. Native plants have natural defenses against many local pests and require less fertilization than non-natives. This means less fertilizer and pesticides—which can save you money and time. (Also, using fewer chemicals means you reduce harmful run-off to streams and rivers.)

## Ecological Benefits

On a broad ecological scale, planting native species contributes to the overall health of natural communities. Disturbances in the natural ecosystem—such as land-clearing activities—increase the potential for invasion by non-native species. Native plants help to maintain a balanced ecosystem. Because they developed with the rest of the ecosystem, they are part of the delicate checks-and-balances system that takes place in all healthy ecosystems.

Native plants provide familiar sources of food and shelter for wildlife. As natural habitats are replaced by urban and suburban development, the use of native plants in landscaping can provide essential shelter for displaced wildlife. Dramatic increases in nesting success of both game birds and songbirds have been observed in fields planted with native grasses, which also offer excellent winter cover.

On a smaller ecological scale, the backyard gardener will discover that native plants attract a greater variety of butterflies, hummingbirds, songbirds, and other wildlife than traditional lawns.



*“Indigenous plants are a significant part of a region's geographic context. In fact, they help define it. They have proven themselves capable of surviving in a landscape for millennia. What better plants can there be, if not the natives, to confront the soil conditions, climate, pests, and diseases of the local areas?”*

Michael Homoya, State Botanist  
Indiana Department of Natural Resources

## Trees and Shrubs Native to Indiana Available at Garden Gate Greenhouse, Inc.

Please note that this list is subject to change. Our inventory rotates often and varieties may be available at different times of the year. Varieties with a \* are selected cultivars of the native. See the sidebar “Native or Nativar” on the back of this page for more information.

### Trees

\*Red Maple ‘Red Sunset’ *Acer rubrum*  
Sugar Maple *Acer saccharum*  
Eastern Redbud *Cercis canadensis*  
Serviceberry *Amelanchier laevis*  
Fringetree *Chionanthus virginicus*  
English Hawthorn *Crataegus laevigata*  
Eastern White Pine *Pinus strobus*  
Tulip Tree/Yellow Poplar  
*Liriodendron n. tulipifera*

### Shrubs

\*Dogwood ‘Cardinal’ *Cornus stolonifera*  
Eastern arborvitae *Thuja occidentalis*  
Ninebark *Physocarpus opulifolius*  
Smooth Hydrangea *arborescens*  
Winterberry Holly *Ilex verticillata*  
Elderberry *Sambucus Canadensis*  
Spicebush *Lindera benzoin*  
\*Viburnum ‘Blue Muffin’ *Viburnum dentatum*  
\*American cranberrybush ‘Red Wing’  
*Viburnum trilobum*  
Pussy Willow *Salix discolor*  
\*Wisteria ‘Amethyst Falls’  
*Wisteria frutescens*  
Magnolia *Magnolia virginiana*



## Native Perennials Available at Garden Gate Greenhouse, Inc.

- \*Blue Star 'Blue Ice' *Amsonia tabernaemontana*
- Butterfly milkweed *Asclepias tuberosa*
- \*New England Aster 'Purple Dome'  
*Symphotrichum novae-angliae*
- False Indigo *Baptisia australis*
- Goldstar *Crysogonum virginianum*
- Bugbane *Cimifuga racemosa*
- Fringed Bleeding Heart *Dicentra eximia*
- \*Purple Coneflower 'Ruby Star' *Echinacea purpurea*
- \*Joe Pye Weed 'Little Joe' *Eupatorium purpureum*
- Cardinal Flower *Lobelia cardinalis*
- \*Bee Balm 'Jacob Cline' *Monarda didyma*
- \*Beard Tongue 'Husker Red' *Penstemon digitalis*
- Obedient Plant 'Miss Manners' *Physostegia virginiana*
- Jacob's Ladder *Polemonium reptans*
- Tall Phlox *Phlox paniculata*
- Solomon's Seal *Polygonatum commutatum*
- \*Black-Eyed Susan 'Goldsturm' *Rudbeckia fulgida*
- Turtlehead *Chelone glabra*
- Columbine *Aquilegia canadensis*
- \*Gay Feather or Blazing Star 'Kobold' 'Floristan'  
*Liatris spicata*

### Other

- \*Fern: Lady Fern 'Lady in Red' *Athyrium filix-femina*
- \*Fern: 'Ostrich' *Matteuccia struthiopteris*
- \*Fern: 'Cinnamon' *Osmunda cinnamomea*
- Fruit: \*Highbush Blueberry 'Blue Jay'  
*Vaccinium corymbosum*
- \*Grass: 'Northern Sea Oats' *Chasmanthium latifolium*
- Vine: Coral Honeysuckle *Lonicera sempervirens*

For additional information on plants native to Indiana, visit  
Indiana Native Plant & Wildflower Society (INPAWS):  
[www.inpaws.org](http://www.inpaws.org)

For information on plants native to North America, visit the  
American Beauties Native Plants Web site:  
[www.abnativeplants.com](http://www.abnativeplants.com)

### NATIVE OR NATIVAR?



There's a whole lotta hoopla regarding what constitutes a "native" plant. [You'll hear similar debates regarding heirloom/heritage cultivars.] Although there is no "one-size-fits-all" definition of the term, generally a native plant is one that grows in the same habitat in which it originated.

Some say that a plant is native to a certain area when it occurs *naturally without human intervention*. Therein lies the crux of the debate: the value of pure native species over cultivars of the natives. For example, *Acer rubrum* (Red Maple) is a native tree. *Acer rubrum* 'Red Sunset' is a cultivar of the native.

World-renowned horticulturist Dr. Allan Armitage has coined the term "nativar" to describe a cultivar and/or hybrid of a native species that he feels is superior to the original. Many gardeners associate natives with a wild or unkempt look. Cultivars focus on particular features (size, bloom, etc.) to enhance the native's appeal.

American Beauties Native Plants also includes many cultivars of natives in its selections (including 'Red Sunset'). Often, a cultivar is derived from a "selected seedling" or "sport" of the native, something that occurs quite naturally.

Native or Nativar: It's a matter of preference and practicality!

# USING NATIVE PLANTS IN YOUR LANDSCAPE



Red Maple  
*Acer rubrum*

Compliments of



Garden Gate Greenhouse, Inc.  
3415 E 500 S  
Peru, In 46970

765-473-4992