

# Easy Native Plants for Gardens

Assembled by the *Lexington Wild Ones* chapter: [www.lexington.wildones.org](http://www.lexington.wildones.org)

## Perennials for shade listed roughly in order of flowering time March through September

Virginia bluebells (*Mertensia virginica*), a true ephemeral  
Allegheny spurge (*Pachysandra procumbens*), spreads slowly to form evergreen ground cover  
Wild ginger (*Asarum canadense*), spreads slowly to make ground cover, flowers are hidden  
Celandine poppy (*Stylophorum diphyllum*), showy yellow flowers; needs moisture  
Bellwort or merrybells (*Uvularia grandiflora*), needs some moisture  
Jacob's ladder (*Polemonium reptans*), light blue flowers in spring, clumping, self-seeds  
Foam flower (*Tiarella cordifolia*)  
Woodland phlox (*Phlox divaricata*), spreads when happy  
Woodland creeping phlox (*Phlox stolonifera*), also spreads when happy, cultivars available  
Golden ragwort (*Packera aurea*), needs some moisture, spreads fast when happy  
False Solomon's seal (*Maianthemum racemosum*), 2 ft. tall, colonizes  
Pennsylvania sedge (*Carex pennsylvanica*), and Appalachian sedge (*Carex appalachica*)  
Wild geranium (*Geranium maculatum*), benefits from a good bit of sun light  
Prairie alumroot (*Heuchera richardsonii*), partial shade  
Dittany (*Cunila origanoides*), tolerates dry conditions but likes some sun  
Cardinal flower (*Lobelia cardinalis*), needs moisture, tolerates sun if kept moist  
White wood aster (*Aster divaricata*), long stems but they lie down making this a short plant  
Heart-leaved aster (*Aster cordifolius*), 2-3 ft. tall, blue to lavender flowers

## Perennials for sun listed roughly in order of flowering time May through October

Golden alexander (*Zizia aurea*), benefits from some shade  
Eastern bluestar (*Amsonia tabernaemontana*), drought tolerant  
False blue indigo (*Baptisia australis*)  
Small's beardtongue (*Penstemon smallii*)  
Smooth beardtongue (*Penstemon digitalis*), beautiful when planted in a drift  
Eared coreopsis (*Coreopsis auriculata*), pretty spot of gold in the whites and pinks of spring  
Lanceleaf coreopsis (*Coreopsis lanceolata*), drought tolerant  
Butterfly milkweed (*Asclepias tuberosa*), drought tolerant, needs full sun  
Culver's Root (*Veronicastrum virginicum*), tall  
Purple coneflower (*Echinacea purpurea*), the poster child of the native plant garden  
Tennessee coneflower (*Echinacea tennesseensis*), similar to above, more drought tolerant  
Wild quinine (*Parthenium integrifolium*), beautiful complement to the coneflowers  
Ox-eye sunflower (*Heliopsis helianthoides*)  
Slender mountain mint (*Pycnanthemum tenuifolium*)  
Bergamot (*Monarda fistulosa*), drought tolerant  
Wild petunia (*Ruellia humilis*), drought tolerant, flowers open in the morning  
Threadleaf coreopsis (*Coreopsis verticillata*), drought tolerant  
Rattlesnake master (*Eryngium yuccifolium*), unusual grey-green flower  
Garden phlox (*Phlox paniculata*), needs some moisture, tolerates shade  
Short-toothed mountain mint (*Pycnanthemum muticum*), tiny flowers, great for pollinators  
Blazing star (*Liatris spicata*), drought tolerant  
Purple giant hyssop (*Agastache scrophulariifolia*), great pollinator plant  
Joe Pye weed (*Eutrochium purpureum*, formerly *Eupatorium purpureum*)  
Black-eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia hirta*)  
Mistflower (*Conoclinium coelestinum*), needs moisture, benefits from some shade  
Gray goldenrod (*Solidago nemoralis*)  
Smooth aster (*Aster laevis*)  
Aromatic aster (*Symphotrichum oblongifolium*), blooms in October

## Shrubs roughly organized by height

Gro-Low sumac (*Rhus aromatica* 'Gro-Low'), yellow flowers, 2' tall, sun, dry to medium,  
A taller variety at 8-9' high is also available.

Inkberry (*Ilex glabra*), evergreen, 4-6' but can easily be pruned, sun to part-shade, slow growing  
Red Sprite winterberry (*Ilex verticillata* 'Red Sprite'), white flowers, but the show is in the later  
appearing red berries if a male cultivar ('Jim Dandy') is planted nearby, 2-3', part-shade,  
medium to moist, likes acidic soil. Taller varieties available

Smooth hydrangea (*Hydrangea arborescens*), white to cream flowers, 3-4', sun to part-shade,  
medium to moist, cut back in spring, 'Annabelle' variety is common

Pee Wee hydrangea (*Hydrangea quercifolia* 'Pee Wee'), white to cream flowers, 4', sun to part-  
shade, medium moisture, taller varieties available

Virginia sweetspire (*Itea virginica*), white flowers, 2-5', cultivars distinguished by height ('Henry's  
Garnett', 'Little Henry' and 'Merlot'), sun to shade, medium to moist

St. John's wort (*Hypericum*, several species), showy yellow flowers, 3-4', sun to part-shade,  
dry to medium, dense and interesting branches, excellent native landscape shrub

Summersweet (*Clethra alnifolia*), 'Hummingbird' 3 ft. tall and 'Sixteen Candles' 3-5 ft. tall,  
white flowers in mid-summer, very fragrant, sun to shade, moist, taller varieties available

Spicebush (*Lindera benzoin*), early small yellow flowers, somewhat moist and shady site

Red chokeberry (*Aronia arbutifolia*), small white flowers in spring and persistent red berries in  
winter. This shrub is essentially leafless at the bottom producing its leaves and flowers in the  
top third of its height. A great plant for narrow spaces and in flower beds.

Black chokeberry (*Aronia melanocarpa*), black berries, bushier than red chokeberry

Sweet shrub (*Calycanthus floridus*), unusual, long-lasting, maroon flowers mid-spring, sun/shade

Ninebark (*Physocarpus opulifolius*), fast-growing, coarse beautiful shrub; needs regular pruning;  
several cultivars, incl. dark-leaf ones, available at garden centers

Strawberry bush (*Euonymus americana*), upright, beautiful berries

Arrowwood viburnum (*Viburnum dentatum*), the most commonly planted native viburnum, dense  
branches, smallish, dark green leaves, beautiful blue berries that the birds love

Buttonbush (*Cephalanthus occidentalis*), for wet areas but adjusts to normal garden conditions

American hazelnut (*Corylus americana*), for naturalizing, suckers

Gray dogwood (*Cornus racemosa*), a suckering shrub perhaps an alternative to bush honeysuckle

Blackhaw viburnum (*Viburnum prunifolium*), a useful but unprepossessing landscape shrub

Rusty blackhaw viburnum (*Viburnum rufidulum*), glossy leaves upright growth

Bottlebrush buckeye (*Aesculus parviflora*), needs a large space since it suckers, beautiful when in  
bloom with upright candles

Eastern wahoo (*Euonymus atropurpureus*), red fruit in late fall which is spectacular

Common witch hazel (*Hamamelis virginiana*), broad spreading shrub, blooms in late fall

## Small Trees

Serviceberry (*Amelanchier arborea* or *A. laevis*; *A. grandiflora* is a cross between these two),  
blooms early in spring and makes red berries in early summer that are eaten by the birds,  
the crowns are airy so that light easily filters through, good fall color

Red buckeye (*Aesculus pavia*), beautiful red flowers in early spring

Alternate leaf dogwood (*Cornus alternifolia*) distinct horizontal branching structure

Pawpaw (*Asimina triloba*), flowers are maroon, beautiful but not showy, large leaves give this tree a  
tropical appearance, suckers profusely from the ground

Hoptree/wafer ash (*Ptelea trifoliata*), adapts to sun or shade, very useful, not an ash

American hornbeam (*Carpinus caroliniana*), for naturalizing, but the beautiful smooth gray bark can  
make it a good specimen, too. Responds to moisture

American hophornbeam or ironwood (*Ostrya virginiana*), beautiful unusual flowers, slow growing,  
drought-tolerant