

Sexy Natives for Native Pollinators!

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Native Plant Defined

Native plants have certainly become a hot commodity these days, and for good reason! They have the ability to endure the weather challenges found in their native provenance as well as provide food and habitat for native animals and insects. For example, the larva of Baltimore Checkerspot Butterfly feed primarily on Turtlehead, *Chelone glabra*. The challenge is to define exactly what constitutes a native plant. Is it a plant naturally growing only in your county, your state or your regional portion of the country? Is it only a plant that is open pollinated and reproduced by seed, or is it possible for asexually propagated cultivars or selections to be included? Some people feel that cultivars reduce the amount of genetic variability and phenotypic expression. I feel that the definition is personal and it is up to each gardener to establish what is best for their own garden. Personally, I feel that a garden is an art form that is created by human hands. Cultivars, which are either created or reproduced through human hands, are therefore acceptable in a garden. In a wild or totally naturalistic environment, I prefer and appreciate the broad diversity found within seedling produced plants; the diversity of form, disease resistance and appeal to pollinators is a valid concern. Of course, this is merely my definition and although this discussion and the list below is based upon my arbitrary definition of regionalism, it is up to you to determine what works best for your garden.

One other concern is the aggressive and naturalizing aspect of certain non native plants, such as *Ranunculus ficaria* or more commonly known as Lesser Celandine. By the simple fact that they have naturalized in woodland areas and are becoming ubiquitous, many people now consider them to be native. Far from the truth!

Perennials

Spring

Aquilegia canadensis - Columbine

Amsonia tabernaemontana – Blue Star
‘Seaford Skies’

Amsonia hubrectii – Blue Star

Baptisia australis – False Indigo
‘Moonlight’
‘Screaming Yellow’
‘Twilite Prairie Blues’

Chrysogonum virginianum – Golden Star

Dicentra cucullaria – Dutchman’s Breeches

Iris cristata – Dwarf Crested Iris
‘Tennessee White’
‘Powder Blue Giant’

Iris versicolor – Blue Flag Iris

Iris virginica – Southern Blue Flag

Jeffersonia diphylla – Twinleaf

Sanguinaria canadensis – Bloodroot

Summer

Echinacea purpurea – Cone Flower
‘White Swan’

Echinacea paradoxa – Yellow Cone Flower

Eupatorium dubium – Joe Pye Weed

Lobelia cardinalis – Cardinal Flower

Monarda didyma - Oswego Tea

Monarda fistulosa – Bee Balm

Pycnanthemum muticum – Mountain Mint

Rudbeckia subtomentosa ‘Henry Eilers’ – Black-eyed Susan

Silphium perfoliatum – Cup Plant

Silphium terebinthinaceum – Prairie Dock

Vernonia lettermannii – Dwarf Ironweed

Vernonia noveboracensis – NY Ironweed

Fall

Actea pachypoda – Doll’s Eyes

Symphotricum (Aster) oblongifolius ‘October Skies’ – Fragrant Aster

Chelone lyonii – Turtle Head
‘Hot Lips’

Chelone glabra – White Turtle Head

Helianthus angustifolius – Swamp Sunflower

Grasses

Carex pennsylvanicum – Pennsylvania sedge

Panicum virgatum – Switchgrass
‘Dallas Blues’

Schizachrium scoparium – Poverty Grass
‘Standing Ovation’
‘The Blues’

Woody Plants

Aesculus parviflora var. *serotina* – Bottlebrush Buckeye

Diervilla sessifolia ‘Butterfly’ – Southern Bush Honeysuckle

Hydrangea arborescens – Smooth Hydrangea
‘Annabelle’
Invincible® Spirit
‘White Dome’

Itea virginica ‘Henry's Garnet’ – Virginia Sweetspire

Magnolia macrophylla – Bigleaf Magnolia

Rubus odoratus – Purple-flowered Raspberry

Taxodium ascendens – Pond Cypress