

Why Native Plants?

Because native plants have evolved to live in a particular region's soil and climate, they require less maintenance than introduced species. If planted in an appropriate area, they should need little to no watering or fertilizing once established. This saves both time and money.

Native plants support wildlife in the form of food and shelter. Birds, bees, butterflies, and other insects all depend on native plants for survival. Some even specialize on specific plants. Having native plants on your property will help increase the diversity of wildlife you support and see.



Golden Groundsel (*Packera aurea*) makes a great ground cover. The attractive foliage is semi-evergreen and the showy flowers provide an early source of pollen for bees.

Native plants help our landscapes come alive and enrich our lives. We have a diverse heritage of flora and fauna in Northern Virginia, and we benefit from knowing and celebrating the special plants in our area.



American Holly (*Ilex opaca*) has sweetly aromatic flowers in the spring. Female plants produce bright red berries, which are devoured by birds in late fall and winter.

Resources



Plant NOVA Natives maintains a list of nurseries and garden centers that sell native plants. You can also view their guide of native Northern Virginia plants for additional options to diversify your landscape, and to help you decide what will work best in your space. Visit plantnovanatives.org/quick-start-guide.



Plant NOVA Trees can help you find places to acquire native trees to add to your landscape. Their lists include nurseries, free/low-cost plants, seedling sales, and wholesalers. Visit plantnovatrees.org/where-to-get-plants.



If you need help identifying plants already on your property, try the iNaturalist app to upload photos, see suggested ID, and get help from the community. Also try their partner app, Seek, for real-time identification.

Images in this brochure courtesy of Dow Gardens, Bugwood.org; Elaine L. Mills, MGNV; Forest and Kim Starr, Starr Environmental, Bugwood.org; Karan A. Rawlins, University of Georgia, Bugwood.org; and Plant NoVA Natives

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Fairfax County Park Authority



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Plant This, Not That

NATIVE ALTERNATIVES TO
INVASIVE PLANTS

Threadleaf Coreopsis
Coreopsis verticillata

What are Native Plants?

Native plant species are those that occur in the region in which they evolved. Plants evolve over time, adapting to the climate, soils, weather patterns, and interactions with other plants and animals. Native plants are uniquely adapted to their local ecosystems and conditions.

What are Invasive Plants?

Humans introduce plants from other parts of the world often as accents to their gardens, as boundary screening, or even as packaging in shipping crates. When left unmanaged, these plants become invasive because they grow and spread rapidly. This results in crowding out native plants, climbing trees, or creating an environment where nothing else will grow. Research indicates that landscapes impacted by invasive plants that are native to other regions, will not adequately support the needs of local native plants and wildlife. This is true in Fairfax County.

Instead of these invasive plants



Burning Bush
(*Euonymus alatus*)



Butterfly Bush
(*Buddleia davidii*)



English Ivy
(*Hedera helix*)



Fountain Grass
(*Pennisetum alopecuroides*)



Common Periwinkle
(*Vinca minor*)



Invasive Bamboo

Try these native alternatives

These native plants provide growth habit and color similar to the invasive species, while also benefitting local wildlife.



Red Chokeberry
(*Aronia arbutifolia*)



Buttonbush
(*Cephalanthus occidentalis*)



Green and Gold
(*Chrysogonum virginianum*)



Muhly Grass
(*Muhlenbergia capillaris*)



Foamflower
(*Tiarella cordifolia*)



Eastern Red Cedar
(*Juniperus virginiana*)

Common Invasive or Non-Native Plants in Nurseries and Their Native Substitutes

	Introduced Species	Native Substitutes		Introduced Species	Native Substitutes	
Trees	*Norway Maple (<i>Acer platanoides</i>)	Red Maple (<i>Acer rubrum</i>) Black Tupelo (<i>Nyssa sylvatica</i>)	Perennials	Lily of the valley (<i>Convallaria majalis</i>)	Wild Columbine (<i>Aquilegia canadensis</i>) Golden Groundsel (<i>Packera aurea</i>) Wild Bleeding Heart (<i>Dicentra eximia</i>)	
	*Flowering Pears - Bradford, Callery, or ornamental (<i>Pyrus calleryana</i>)	Downy Serviceberry (<i>Amelanchier arborea</i>) Hackberry (<i>Celtis occidentalis</i>)		Goutweed (<i>Aegopodium podagraria</i>)	Alumroot (<i>Heuchera americana</i>) Common Yarrow (<i>Aquilegia millefolium</i>)	
	*Siberian Elm (<i>Ulmus pumila</i>)	American Elm - resistant cultivars (<i>Ulmus americana</i>) White Oak (<i>Quercus alba</i>)		Daylily (<i>Hemerocallis fulva</i>)	Virginia Spiderwort (<i>Tradescantia virginiana</i>) Threadleaf Coreopsis (<i>Coreopsis verticillata</i>)	
	Saucer Magnolia (<i>Magnolia soulangeana</i>)	Sweetbay Magnolia (<i>Magnolia virginiana</i>)		*Yellow Flag Iris (<i>Iris pseudacorus</i>)	Blue Flag Iris (<i>Iris versicolor</i>)	
	Kousa Dogwood (<i>Cornus kousa</i>)	Flowering Dogwood (<i>Cornus florida</i>)		*Purple Loosestrife (<i>Lythrum salicaria</i>)	Obedient Plant (<i>Physostegia virginiana</i>) Blazing Stars (<i>Liatris pilosa</i> , <i>L. scariosa</i> , <i>L. spicata</i> , <i>L. squarrosa</i>)	
	*Barberry (<i>Berberis thunbergii</i>)	Lowbush Blueberry (<i>Vaccinium angustifolium</i>) Aromatic Sumac (<i>Rhus aromatica</i> 'Gro-Lo')		Italian Arum (<i>Arum italicum</i>)	Jack-in-the-Pulpit (<i>Arisaema triphyllum</i>) Mayapple (<i>Podophyllum peltatum</i>) Wild Ginger (<i>Asarum canadense</i>)	
Shrubs and Borders	Butterfly Bush (<i>Buddleia davidii</i>)	Pinkster Azalea (<i>Rhododendron periclymenoides</i>) Summersweet (<i>Clethra alnifolia</i>) Virginia Sweetspire (<i>Itea virginica</i>) Buttonbush (<i>Cephalanthus occidentalis</i>)	Vines/Ground Cover	*Winter Creeper (<i>Euonymus fortunei</i>)	Creek Sedge (<i>Carex amphibola</i>) Plaintain-leaved Sedge (<i>Carex plantaginea</i>) Barren Strawberry (<i>Geum fragarioides</i>) Green and Gold (<i>Chrysogonum virginianum</i>) Allegheny Spurge (<i>Pachysandra procumbens</i>) Partridgeberry (<i>Mitchella repens</i>) Wild Strawberry (<i>Fragaria virginiana</i>) Foamflower (<i>Tiarella cordifolia</i>) Golden Groundsel (<i>Packera aurea</i>) Bearberry (<i>Arctostaphylos uva-ursi</i>)	
	*Burning Bush (<i>Euonymus alatus</i>)	Red Chokeberry (<i>Aronia arbutifolia</i>) Winged Sumac (<i>Rhus copallinum</i>) Spicebush (<i>Lindera benzoin</i>) Virginia Sweetspire (<i>Itea virginica</i>)		*English ivy (<i>Hedera helix</i>)	Invasive Pachysandra (<i>Pachysandra terminalis</i>)	
	Rose of Sharon (<i>Hibiscus syriacus</i>)	Summersweet (<i>Clethra alnifolia</i>) Swamp Rose Mallow (<i>Hibiscus moscheutos</i>)		*Common Periwinkle (<i>Vinca minor</i>)	*Creeping Jenny (<i>Lysimachia nummularia</i>)	
	Heavenly Bamboo (<i>Nandina domestica</i>)	American Holly (<i>Ilex opaca</i> 'Maryland Dwarf') Northern or Southern Bayberry (<i>Morella pensylvanica</i> , <i>M. cerifera</i>) Inkberry Holly (<i>Ilex glabra</i>)				*Invasive Wisterias (<i>Wisteria sinensis</i>) (<i>Wisteria floribunda</i>)
	Leatherleaf Mahonia (<i>Mahonia bealei</i>)	Ninebark (<i>Physocarpus opulifolius</i>)		*Silver Grass (<i>Miscanthus sinensis</i>)	Indiangrass (<i>Sorghastrum nutans</i>) Little Bluestem (<i>Schizachyrium scoparium</i>)	
	*Border Privets (<i>Ligustrum spp.</i>)	Virginia Sweetspire (<i>Itea virginica</i>) Summersweet (<i>Clethra alnifolia</i> 'Sixteen candles') Black Chokeberry (<i>Aronia melanocarpa</i> 'Low Scape')		Grasses	Fountain Grass (<i>Pennisetum alopecuroides</i>)	Muhly Grass (<i>Muhlenbergia capillaris</i>) Purple Lovegrass (<i>Eragrostis spectabilis</i>)
	*Invasive Spiraea (<i>Spiraea japonica</i>)	Native Viburnums (such as <i>V. acerifolium</i> , <i>V. dentatum</i> , <i>V. prunifolium</i>) Witch Hazel (<i>Hamamelis virginiana</i>)			Liriope spp.	Meadow Sedge (<i>Carex flaccosperma</i>) Pennsylvania Sedge (<i>Carex pensylvanica</i>) Sedges of many varieties based on microclimates (<i>Carex spp.</i>)
	Invasive Viburnums - Linden, doublefile, Siebold (<i>Viburnum spp.</i>)	Eastern Red Cedar (<i>Juniperus virginiana</i>) American Holly (<i>Ilex opaca</i>) Arborvitae (<i>Thuja occidentalis</i>)				

*These plants have been designated by Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation as highly invasive.

These species pose a significant threat to native species, natural communities, or the economy.