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.

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.

**What are Native Plants?**

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.

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.

Why Native Plants?

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.

Northern Virginia Soil & Water Conservation District
703-324-1460, TTY 711
ConservationDistrict@fairfaxcounty.gov

Brochure created in partnership with Fairfax County Park Authority

Resources

**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.

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.
### Try these native alternatives

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

- **Trees**
  - *Norway Maple (Acer platanoides)*
  - *Flowering Pears - Bradford, Callery, or ornamental (Pyrus calleryana)*
  - *Siberian Elm (Ulmus pumila)*
  - Saucer Magnolia (Magnolia soulangiana)
  - Kousa Dogwood (Cornus kousa)
  - *Barberry (Berberis thunbergii)*
  - Butterfly Bush (Buddleia davidii)
  - *Burning Bush (Euonymus alatus)*
  - Rose of Sharon (Hibiscus syriacus)
  - Heavenly Bamboo (Nandina domestica)
  - Leatherleaf Mahonia (Mahonia bealei)
  - *Border Privets (Ligustrum spp.)*
  - *Invasive Spirea (Spiraea japonica)*
  - Invasive Viburnums - Linden, doublefile, Siebold (Viburnum spp.)
  - Invasive Bamboos

- **Shrubs and Borders**
  - Red Maple (Acer rubrum)
  - Black Tupelo (Nyssa sylvatica)
  - Downy Serviceberry (Amelanchier arborea)
  - American Elm - resistant cultivars (Ulmus americana)
  - White Oak (Quercus alba)
  - Sweetbay Magnolia (Magnolia virginiana)
  - Flowering Dogwood (Cornus florida)
  - Pinkster Azalea (Rhododendron periclymenoides)
  - Summersweet (Clethra alnifolia)
  - Virginia Sweetspire (Itea virginica)
  - Swamp Rose Mallow (Hibiscus moscheutos)
  - Swamp Rose Mallow (Hibiscus syriacus)
  - Buttonbush (Cephalanthus occidentalis)
  - Swamp Rose Mallow (Itea virginica)
  - Swamp Rose Mallow (Periclymenum)
  - Swamp Rose Mallow (Lemna minor)
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