

Native Plant Suggestions from HGCNY

Try to choose some of the Biodiversity All-Stars! **Use the first AND last Latin names to be sure you get what you think you're getting.** And check your site conditions and the plant's needs before purchasing. Make sure they're a match.

*** **Biodiversity All-Stars** *** Selected from Tallamy's and Cullina's lists

- Oaks (*Quercus spp.*) – Oaks such as red oak are important habitat plants
- Cherries (*Prunus serotina*, *P. caroliniana*, *P. virginiana*)
- Plums (*Prunus americana* or *P. maritime*)
- Willows, such as pussy willow (*Salix discolor*)
- Crabapples (*Malus spp.*)
- Hawthorns (*Crateagus spp.*)
- Serviceberries (*Amelanchier canadensis*, *A. arborea*, *A. laevis*)
- Birches such as river birch (*Betula nigra*), sweet birch (*B. lenta*)
- Blueberries (*Vaccinium spp.*) or Huckleberries (*Gaylussacia spp.*)
- Poplars e.g. Quaking aspen (*Populus tremuloides*) or cottonwood (*P. deltoids*)
- Sugar maple (*Acer saccharum*)
- Wild roses such as Virginia rose (*Rosa virginiana*) or Pasture rose (*R. carolina*)
- Eastern red cedar (*Juniperus virginiana*)
- Black elderberry (*Sambucus canadensis*)
- Pagoda dogwood (*Cornus alternifolia*)
- Shrub dogwood: Gray (*Cornus racemosa*), Silky (*C. amomum*), Redtwig (*C. sericea*)
- Goldenrods (*Solidagos*) are important nectar plants and DO NOT cause allergies!
 - Blue-stemmed goldenrod (*Solidago caesia*)
 - Stiff goldenrod (*Solidago rigida*)
 - Rough-stemmed goldenrod (*Solidago rugosa*)
- New England aster (*Aster novae-angliae*) – fall nectar
- New York aster (*Aster novi-belgii*) – fall nectar
- Eastern white pine (*Pinus strobus*)
- Common sunflower (*Helianthus annuus*) or Woodland sunflower (*H. divaricatus*)
- Sedges (*Carex spp.*) such as Plantain sedge (*Carex plantaginea*)
- Grasses such as
 - Big bluestem (*Andropogon gerardii*)
 - Tufted hairgrass (*Deschampsia cespitosa*)
 - Switch grass (*Panicum virgatum*)
 - Little bluestem (*Schizachrium scoparium*)
 - Indian grass (*Sorghastrum nutans*)
 - Northern dropseed (*Sporobolus heterolepis*)
- Black tupelo (*Nyssa sylvatica*)
- Winterberry (*Ilex verticillata*) – need at least one male for females
- Summersweet, Sweet pepperbush (*Clethra alnifolia*) - nectar
- Northern bayberry (*Myrica pensylvanica*) – need at least one male for females
- Viburnums such as American cranberrybush (*V. trilobum*)
- Spicebush (*Lindera benzoin*)
- Milkweeds e.g. swamp milkweed (*Asclepias incarnata*); butterflyweed (*A. tuberosa*)
- New York ironweed (*Vernonia noveboracensis*) – great for butterflies

Additional Wildflowers

- Turtlehead (*Chelone glabra*) – host plant for Baltimore checkerspot
- Wild columbine (*Aquilegia canadensis*) – hummingbird favorite
- Pussytoes (*Antennaria neglecta* or *A. plataginifolia*) – host for American Lady
- Black cohosh (*Cimicifuga racemosa*, renamed *Actaea racemosa*) - nectar
- Purple coneflower (*Echinacea purpurea*) - nectar
- Joe-pye weed (*Eupatorium fistulosa*, renamed *Eutrochium fistulosa*)
- Northern blazing star (*Liatris scariosa*) and other liatris – great nectar plants
- Great blue lobelia (*Lobelia syphilitica*) - nectar
- Culver's root (*Veronicastrum virginicum*) – good nectar plant
- Canada violet (*Viola canadensis*) – a caterpillar food plant for some butterflies
- Jack-in-the-pulpit (*Arisaema triphyllum*)
- Wild ginger (*Asarum canadense*) – nice groundcover
- Blue false indigo (*Baptisia australis*)
- Blue cohosh (*Caulophyllum thalictroides*)
- Wild geranium (*Geranium maculatum*)
- Alumroot (*Heuchera americana*)
- Rose mallow (*Hibiscus moscheutos*)
- Northern blue flag (*Iris versicolor*) – for moist areas
- Cardinal flower (*Lobelia cardinalis*) – moist areas - hummingbird favorite
- Oswego tea (*Monarda didyma*) – The monardas are great nectar plants
- Wild bergamot (*Monarda fistulosa*)
- Beardtongue (*Penstemon digitalis*) - nectar
- Obedient plant (*Physostegia virginiana*)
- Jacob's ladder (*Polemonium reptans*)
- Bloodroot (*Sanguinaria canadensis*)
- Foamflower (*Tiarella cordifolia*)

Additional Ferns

- Maidenhair fern (*Adiantum pedatum*)
- Sensitive fern (*Onoclea sensibilis*) – can spread quite a bit
- Christmas fern (*Polystichum acrostichoides*)
- New York fern (*Thelypteris noveboracensis*)

Additional Vines

- Trumpet honeysuckle (*Lonicera sempervirens*) – NOT Japanese varieties!

Additional Shrubs and Trees

- Inkberry (*Ilex glabra*) – need at least one male for females
- American mountain ash (*Sorbus americana*)
- Red chokeberry (*Aronia arbutifolia*, renamed *Photinia pyrifolia*)
- Black chokeberry (*Aronia melanocarpa*, renamed *Photinia melanocarpa*)
- Sweet spire (*Itea virginica*) – (native south of NY)
- Ninebark (*Physocarpus opulifolius*)
- Rhododendron (*Rhododendron canadense*)
- Fragrant sumac (*Rhus aromatica*) – M/F
- Arborvitae (*Thuja occidentalis*)
- Eastern hemlock (*Tsuga canadensis*)

Invasive Plants to Avoid and Eliminate

*“When a non-native species escapes into natural areas, there is a measurable chance that it will be able to grow faster and reproduce more successfully than the native vegetation in the area... Typically it takes decades for the population of the escapees to build to the point where we start to notice... By that time, they have become invasive species that expand their populations at exponential rates... Many gardeners vigorously oppose the notion that their beloved garden plants can and do escape from cultivation... What most gardeners do not see is the local mockingbird or migrating warbler swoop down, pluck a berry from the bush, and fly off...(T)he bird will perch ...and relieve itself of the load of alien seeds in its gut. If any of the seeds germinate the following spring, the escape from your garden is complete....Aliens that do not produce animal-dispersed fruits or nuts rely on the wind to carry their seeds.” ~ Douglas Tallamy, *Bringing Nature Home**

Some invasive plants are pretty and easy to grow. Why not plant them?

1) They’re degrading our natural areas, threatening the habitat of native plants and wildlife. 2) They can become a problem in urban and suburban landscapes. It is much easier to *prevent* an invasion than to *control* one! This list includes the most commonly-planted invasive plants. There are others (see websites below).

Some native plants spread all over my yard. Aren’t they invasive?

Some native plants (e.g. jewelweed or coneflower) can indeed enthusiastically spread in your yard. This might be annoying, but they aren’t a threat to the greater ecosystem as are what are officially called invasive plants.

Instead of these invasive plants, try planting the listed alternatives (ALT).

Trees

Norway maple - ALT: American beech, sugar maple, black gum, red maple,
Autumn/ Russian olive– ALT: spicebush, No. bayberry, gray dogwood, winterberry
Bradford pear- ALT: redbud, serviceberry, black haw

Vines

Japanese honeysuckle-ALT: trumpet creeper, trumpet or coral honeysuckle
Oriental bittersweet–ALT: native bittersweet, trumpet honeysuckle, trumpet creeper
Porcelainberry – ALT: virgin’s bower, trumpet creeper, trumpet honeysuckle
English ivy – ALT: Va. Creeper, wild ginger, lady fern, creeping phlox, foamflower
Periwinkle (vinca)–ALT: Va. creeper, wild ginger, creeping phlox, NY fern

Shrubs

Japanese barberry- ALT: clethra, No. bayberry, highbush blueberry, pasture rose
Japanese bush honeysuckles – ALT: No. bayberry, spicebush, red/black chokeberry
Burning bush- ALT: red chokeberry, silky dogwood, itea, highbush blueberry
Butterfly bush (buddleia) – ALT: butterflyweed, clethra, itea, liatris, NY ironweed
Japanese spirea – ALT: clethra, silky dogwood
Multiflora rose- ALT: common blackberry, pasture rose, flowering raspberry
Privet- ALT: inkberry, spicebush, red or black chokeberry

Herbaceous plants

Dames rocket – ALT: garden phlox
Purple loosestrife - ALT: Joe-pye weed, cardinal flower, NY ironweed, liatris
Japanese knotweed – ALT: Clethra, sweetspire, silky dogwood, fragrant sumac
Bamboos – ALT: big bluestem, bottlebrush grass, little bluestem, Indian grass
Common daylily – ALT: Canada lily, Turk’s cap lily, three-lobed coneflower
Star of Bethlehem – ALT: foamflower, bloodroot

Aquatic (sometimes sold for backyard ponds)

Parrotfeather
Water chestnut

Non-horticultural invasive plants to watch out for and remove

Garlic mustard – Pull before it goes to seed! Can eradicate it in 5 years.
Swallowwort – especially bad for monarch butterflies!
Buckthorn
Japanese knotweed
Mile-a-minute

Websites

Native Plants for Wildlife Habitat and Conservation Landscaping
<http://www.nps.gov/plants/pubs/chesapeake/>

Invasive Plant Atlas of New England
<http://nbii-nin.ciesin.columbia.edu/ipane>

Plant Invaders of Mid-Atlantic Natural Areas
www.nps.gov/plants/alien/pubs/midatlantic

This doesn’t officially include NYS, but invasive plants are similar. Provides information on alternative plants and information on eradicating invasives.

Recommended Books

Bringing Nature Home by Douglas Tallamy
Native Plants of the Northeast by Donald Leopold
Designing Gardens with Flora of the American East by Carolyn Summers
Noah’s Garden by Sara Stein

Wild Ones Chapter: HGCNY Habitat Gardening in Central New York

HGCNY promotes the use of native plants and natural landscaping for the benefit of wildlife and people. Our monthly meetings are free and open to the public. We’re on the web at www.hgcnny.org.