

# Native Plant Suggestions from HGCNY

These Biodiversity All-Stars provide the most habitat! **Use the first AND last Latin names to be sure you get what you think you're getting.** Please select the species, not cultivars ("named" varieties). Match your site conditions with the plant's needs.

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

Oaks (*Quercus spp.*) – Oaks such as red oak are very important habitat plants  
Cherries: Black cherry (*Prunus serotina*); Chokecherry (*P. virginiana*)  
Plums such as American plum (*Prunus americana*)  
Willows, such as pussy willow (*Salix discolor*) (but **not** weeping willow)  
Crabapples (*Malus coronaria*)  
Hawthorns (*Crateagus spp. such as C. phaenopyrum or C. viridis*)  
Serviceberries (*Amelanchier canadensis, A. arborea, A. laevis*)  
Birches such as river birch (*Betula nigra*), sweet birch (*B. lenta*)  
Blueberries such as *Vaccinium angustifolium* or *V. corymbosum*  
Poplars e.g. Quaking aspen (*Populus tremuloides*) or cottonwood (*P. deltoids*)  
Sugar maple (*Acer saccharum*)  
Wild roses such as Virginia rose (*Rosa virginiana*) or swamp rose (*R. palustris*)  
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 (*Solidago*) are important nectar plants and DO NOT cause allergies!  
    Ex: 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 hair grass (*Deschampsia cespitosa*)  
    Switch grass (*Panicum virgatum*)  
    Little bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*)  
    Indian grass (*Sorghastrum nutans*)  
    Northern dropseed (*Sporobolus heterolepis*)  
Black tupelo (*Nyssa sylvatica*)  
Winterberry (*Ilex verticillata*) – need a male for females  
Summersweet aka Sweet pepperbush (*Clethra alnifolia*)  
Northern bayberry (*Myrica pensylvanica*) – need a male for females  
Spicebush (*Lindera benzoin*) – need a male for females if you want berries  
Milkweeds e.g. swamp milkweed (*Asclepias incarnata*); butterflyweed (*A. tuberosa*)  
    common milkweed (*A. syriaca*); poke milkweed (*A. exaltata*)  
New York ironweed (*Vernonia noveboracensis*) – great for butterflies

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## Additional Wildflowers

Turtlehead (*Chelone glabra*) – host plant for Baltimore checkerspot  
Wild columbine (*Aquilegia canadensis*)  
Pussytoes (*Antennaria neglecta* or *A. plataginifolia*) – host for American Lady  
Black cohosh (*Cimicifuga racemosa*, renamed *Actaea racemosa*) - nectar  
Purple coneflower (*Echinacea purpurea*)  
Joe-pye weed (*Eupatorium fistulosa*, renamed *Eutrochium fistulosa*)  
Liatris such as *Liatris scariosa* or *L. spicata* or *L. aspera*  
Great blue lobelia (*Lobelia syphilitica*)  
Culver's root (*Veronicastrum virginicum*) – great nectar plant  
Violet such as *Viola canadensis* or *V. sororia* - host for fritillaries  
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*)  
Jewelweed (*Impatiens capensis*) or (*I. pallida*); reseeding annual  
Alumroot (*Heuchera americana*)  
Rose mallow (*Hibiscus moscheutos*)  
Northern blue flag (*Iris versicolor*) – good 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*) – attracts many interesting insects  
Beardtongue (*Penstemon digitalis*)  
Obedient plant (*Physostegia virginiana*) – but can spread!  
Jacob's ladder (*Polemonium reptans*)  
Bloodroot (*Sanguinaria canadensis*)  
Foamflower (*Tiarella cordifolia*)

## Additional Ferns

Maidenhair fern (*Adiantum pedatum*)  
Sensitive fern (*Onoclea sensibilis*) – can spread  
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 a male for females  
American mountain ash (*Sorbus americana*)  
Red chokeberry (*Aronia arbutifolia*, renamed *Photinia pyrifolia*)  
Black chokeberry (*Aronia melanocarpa*, renamed *Photinia melanocarpa*)  
Ninebark (*Physocarpus opulifolius*)  
Rhododendron (*Rhododendron canadense*)  
Fragrant sumac (*Rhus aromatica*) – need a male for females  
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 native plants spread all over my yard. Aren't they invasive?

Some native plants (for example, jewelweed or New England aster) 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 the invasive plants in the following list, plant the suggested native alternatives (labeled “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:** native 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, bayberry, highbush blueberry, pasture rose  
Japanese bush honeysuckles - **ALT:** 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

### Aquatic (sometimes sold for backyard ponds)

Anacharis - **ALT:** Elodea canadensis  
Parrot-feather - **ALT:** Coon's tail (*Ceratophyllum demersum*)  
Water chestnut - **ALT:** Floating pondweed (*Potamogeton natans*)

### Herbaceous plants

Dame's rocket - **ALT:** garden phlox  
Purple loosestrife - **ALT:** Joe-pye, cardinal lobelia, NY ironweed, liatris  
Japanese knotweed - **ALT:** Goat's beard, clethra, fragrant sumac, buttonbush  
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

### Non-horticultural invasive plants to watch out for and remove

Garlic mustard - If you pull before it goes to seed, you can eradicate it in 5 yrs!  
Swallowwort - especially bad for monarch butterflies!  
Buckthorn - **ALT:** Grey dogwood, black chokeberry, blackhaw  
Mile-a-minute – barbed vine that grows up to 6” a day, forming a mat

### Websites for native plants and for invasive plants

These websites don't all officially include NYS, but plants are similar:

**IMPORTANT:** Make sure the “invasive” you're about to remove is not a native look-alike! Check “*Mistaken Identity*” NY Botanic Gardens (free download): [nybg.org/files/scientists/rmaczi/Mistaken\\_Identity\\_Final.pdf](http://nybg.org/files/scientists/rmaczi/Mistaken_Identity_Final.pdf)

*Native Plants for Wildlife Habitat and Conservation Landscaping*  
[fws.gov/Chesapeakebay/pdf/NativePlantsforWildlifeHabitatandConservationLandscaping.pdf](http://fws.gov/Chesapeakebay/pdf/NativePlantsforWildlifeHabitatandConservationLandscaping.pdf) (free download)

*Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center*

[wildflower.org/collections/](http://wildflower.org/collections/) - Lists for NYS and for pollinators etc.

*Plant Invaders of Mid-Atlantic Natural Areas*

[invasive.org/eastern/midatlantic/](http://invasive.org/eastern/midatlantic/)

Info on native alternatives to invasive plants and how to eradicate invasives.

### Recommended Books

*The Nature of Oaks* by Douglas Tallamy

*Nature's Best Hope* by Douglas Tallamy

*Bringing Nature Home* by Douglas Tallamy

*The Living Landscape* by Rick Darke and Douglas Tallamy

*Native Plants of the Northeast* by Donald Leopold

*Invasive Plants: A Guide to Identification and...* by Sylvan Kaufman et al.

*Designing Gardens with Flora of the American East* by Carolyn Summers

*Noah's Garden and Planting Noah's Garden* by Sara Stein

Where to buy native plants in CNY? Download our FREE Native Plant Shopping Guide at [hgcnv.org/shopping](http://hgcnv.org/shopping)



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Habitat Gardening in Central New York