



GREEN SPRING GARDENS PARK

PLANT INFORMATION SHEET

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RECOMMENDED NATIVE HERBACEOUS PERENNIAL PLANTS FOR SUNNY GARDENS IN THE WASHINGTON, D.C. AREA

Native plants are species that occur in the region in which they evolved. Therefore, they are uniquely adapted to local conditions. Native plants provide food and shelter for a myriad of birds, butterflies, and other wildlife. Best of all, gardeners can feel the satisfaction of preserving a part of our natural and historical heritage while enjoying the beauty of native plants in the garden.

Native herbaceous perennial plants form little or no woody tissue, live for several years, and are deciduous. Some perennials are short-lived and may only live three years (e.g., wild columbine), while others can live for decades. They are a group of plants that gardeners are very passionate about because of their lovely flowers and foliage, and wide variety of textures, forms, and heights.

Native herbaceous perennial plants are a joy to garden with because they are easily moved to create new design combinations and provide an ever-changing scene in the garden. They are appropriate for a wide range of gardens, from perennial borders to meadow-like gardens.

The following are useful definitions:

- **Cultivar (cv.)** – a cultivated variety designated by single quotes ('Bluebird'). A **variety (var.)** or **subspecies (subsp.)**, in contrast, is found in nature and is a subdivision of a species.
- **Naturalistic use** – native plants that, when properly sited, perform well with minimal care; best used in an informal design that suggests a natural landscape. Most native species can be used this way, but this is the best way to use some species with informal growth habits or others that reseed readily.

The following is a list of native herbaceous perennial plants that perform well in sunny gardens in the Washington, D.C. area (6 hours or more of full sun daily). Native perennials that **require** shade are not included in this plant information sheet (however, some species are adaptable) – see **Recommended Native Herbaceous Perennial Plants for Shade Gardens in the Washington, D.C. Area (plant information sheet #14)**. Most recommended native ornamental grasses are listed in **Recommended Hardy Ornamental Grasses, Sedges, and Rushes for Gardens in the Washington, D.C. Area (#8)**; grasses that are native to Virginia are marked with an asterisk). A few grass species that are not listed in information sheet #8 are included here because they have value for naturalistic use and for special habitat uses.

Most of these plants prefer a moist, well-drained site. Light requirements and special cultural requirements or tolerances are noted in the comments column. Perennials that need to grow in wet sites are not included. Help conserve native plant populations by buying only propagated plants: never buy plants collected from the wild. The Virginia Native Plant Society (www.vnps.org) and the Maryland Native Plant Society (www.mdflora.org) list nurseries that sell propagated native plants. Species are native to

Virginia unless stated otherwise – all plants are native to the eastern or southeastern United States.

A. Herbaceous Perennials

Scientific Name	Common Name	Comments
<i>Agastache nepetoides</i> (best for naturalistic use – tall & coarse texture)	Yellow Giant Hyssop	Full sun; some reseeding Note: <i>A. foeniculum</i> (blue giant hyssop; native to KY, etc.) – short-lived perennial but reseeds readily; tolerates drier sites than the above; use in gardens – not for natural areas
<i>Allium cernuum</i>	Wild Nodding Onion	Full sun; a bulb but behaves like a perennial – foliage persists the entire growing season; tolerates dry sites; some reseeding
<i>Amsonia tabernaemontana</i> (<i>montana</i> is shorter than the sp. – not a true variety)	Eastern Bluestar	Full sun to light shade; reseeds readily in moist sites
<i>Antennaria plantaginifolia</i>	Plantain Pussytoes	Full sun to part shade; tolerates dry sites; reseeds readily
<i>Aquilegia canadensis</i>	Wild Columbine	Full sun (moist site) to part shade; allow to reseed: individual plants short-lived perennials
<i>Asclepias incarnata</i> <i>A. tuberosa</i> Note: <i>A. syriaca</i> (common milkweed) – best for naturalistic use due to spreading nature	Swamp Milkweed Butterfly Weed	Full sun in moist or wet sites Full sun in dry or moist sites Note: <i>A. verticillata</i> is good for rock garden use & other well drained sites
Aster – shorter plants (usually under 3 ½ ft. tall): <i>A. laevis</i> (<i>Symphyotrichum laeve</i>) ('Bluebird' is a good cv.; sp. itself best for naturalistic use) <i>A. lateriflorus</i> (<i>Symphyotrichum lateriflorum</i> ; 'Lady in Black' has performed well; 'Lovely' is possibly a selection of this sp.) <i>A. (Symphyotrichum) novae-angliae</i> 'Purple Dome' <i>A. (Symphyotrichum) novi-belgii</i> 'Professor Kippenburg' & 'Wood's Pink' (have not tried to grow var. <i>elodes</i> , the VA native) <i>A. oblongifolius</i> (<i>Symphyotrichum oblongifolium</i>) ('Raydon's Favorite'; 'October Skies' is a shorter plant)	Smooth Blue Aster Calico Aster Purple Dome Aster New York Aster Cultivars Shale Barren Aster	Full sun best for asters but some will tolerate light shade; most asters tolerate dry sites; <i>A. laevis</i> reseeds readily & is very drought tolerant Dwarf version of the sp.; prefers moist sites Short cultivars; prefers moist sites Very drought tolerant

<p><i>Aster (Eurybia) spectabilis</i> Note: <i>A. grandiflorus</i> (<i>Symphotrichum grandiflorum</i>) & <i>A. (Symphyotrichum) patens</i> good for naturalistic use; <i>A. 'Fanny's'</i> & <i>'Our Latest One'</i> are hybrids of native spp. – garden use (floppy but lovely flowers) Aster – taller plants (usually over 3 ½ ft tall): <i>A. (Symphyotrichum) novae-angliae</i> & taller cvs. ('Honeysong Pink', 'Harrington's Pink', & 'Treasurer') <i>A. umbellatus (Doellingeria umbellata)</i></p>	<p>Showy Aster</p> <p>New England Aster</p> <p>Tall Flat-topped White Aster</p>	<p>Full sun to light shade; tolerates dry sites (found in sandy soils in nature but does well in dry loams) Note: <i>A. cordifolius</i> (<i>Symphotrichum cordifolium</i>) can take full sun (especially in moist sites) but generally grown in shady areas</p> <p>Full sun to light shade; <i>A. novae-angliae</i> reseeds readily & prefers moist sites</p> <p>Full sun; likes moisture</p>
<p><i>Baptisia australis</i> (var. <i>minor</i> is shorter & native to MO, etc.) <i>B. alba</i> (native to NC south; often sold under <i>B. pendula</i>)</p>	<p>Blue Wild Indigo</p> <p>White Wild Indigo</p>	<p>Full sun; <i>B. australis</i> tolerates dry sites, reseeds readily, & is an easier species to grow</p>
<p><i>Boltonia asteroides</i> ('Pink Beauty' & 'Snowbank')</p>	<p>Boltonia</p>	<p>Full sun; moist or wet sites</p>
<p><i>Callirhoe involucrata</i> (naturalized in VA – probably native to Midwest)</p>	<p>Purple Poppy Mallow</p>	<p>Full sun; tolerates dry sites; some re-seeding</p>
<p><i>Campanula rotundifolia</i></p>	<p>Bluebell</p>	<p>Full sun to light shade; tolerates dry sites; often a short-lived perennial</p>
<p><i>Chelone obliqua</i> (<i>C. glabra</i> has white flowers – best in naturalistic plantings)</p>	<p>Pink Turtlehead</p>	<p>Full sun to part shade in moist or wet sites</p>
<p><i>Coreopsis auriculata</i> ('Nana') <i>C. major</i></p> <p><i>C. tripteris</i></p> <p><i>C. verticillata</i> ('Grandiflora' & 'Zagreb')</p> <p>Note: <i>C. rosea</i> (MD native, etc.) likes more moisture than other spp. – found in wet, sandy, acid soils in nature; pink flowers</p>	<p>Eared Coreopsis Woodland Coreopsis</p> <p>Tall Coreopsis</p> <p>Threadleaf Coreopsis</p>	<p>Full sun to light shade Full sun to part shade; tolerates dry sites Full sun; reseeds readily; likes moist sites – can tolerate periodically wet sites Full sun; tolerates dry sites</p>
<p><i>Echinacea purpurea</i></p> <p><i>E. pallida</i> (both spp. naturalized in VA – native to central U.S.)</p>	<p>Eastern Purple Coneflower Pale Purple Coneflower</p>	<p>Full sun; tolerate dry sites; some re-seeding; <i>E. laevigata</i> is a federally endangered VA native – do not grow naturalized spp. near <i>E. laevigata</i> populations</p>
<p><i>Eryngium yuccifolium</i></p>	<p>Rattlesnake Master</p>	<p>Full sun</p>

<i>Eupatorium fistulosum</i> (other Joe Pye weed spp. & hybrids: <i>E. purpureum</i> [<i>Atropurpureum</i> may be a hybrid w/ <i>E. maculatum</i>], 'Big Umbrella', & 'Gateway'; cvs. shorter than <i>E. fistulosum</i> in gardens) <i>E. perfoliatum</i>	Joe Pye Weed Boneset	Full sun to light shade in consistently moist sites; most species reseed readily Note: natives primarily for naturalistic use: <i>E. (Conoclinium) coelestinum</i> (mistflower) & <i>E. hyssopifolium</i> (hyssopleaf eupatorium; the later sp. tolerates dry sites & has not reseeded at Green Spring) Full sun to light shade in moist or wet sites
<i>Euphorbia corollata</i>	Flowering Spurge	Full sun; tolerates dry sites; some reseeding
<i>Filipendula rubra</i>	Queen of the Prairie	Full sun to light shade; needs consistently moist sites
<i>Helianthus angustifolius</i> <i>H. decapetalus</i> <i>H. divaricatus</i> <i>H. maximiliani</i> (naturalized in VA – introduced from central US) <i>H. strumosus</i> Note: <i>H.</i> 'Lemon Queen' is a beautiful plant for full sun – hybrid of native spp.	Swamp Sunflower Forest Sunflower Spreading Sunflower Maximilian Sunflower Roughleaf Sunflower	Full sun to light shade for most spp. (<i>H. decapetalus</i> , <i>H. divaricatus</i> , & <i>H. strumosus</i> will also tolerate part shade); moist or wet sites for <i>H. angustifolius</i> (this also reseeds in some sites) – the other spp. are tolerant of dry sites; <i>H. divaricatus</i> : plant in areas where it can spread (dry sites will slow its spread)
<i>Heliopsis helianthoides</i> & cvs.	False Sunflower	Full sun; tolerates dry sites; similar to a sunflower but blooms sooner; some reseeding
<i>Hibiscus laevis (militaris)</i> , <i>H. coccineus</i> (native to GA, etc. – naturalized in VA), & <i>H. moscheutos</i> (subsp. <i>palustris</i> has been merged with <i>moscheutos</i> now)	Hardy Herbaceous Hibiscus	Full sun; wet or moist sites; hybrids of these species beautiful in garden settings – not for naturalistic use
<i>Iris virginica</i> (<i>I. versicolor</i> is similar & a more northern sp.)	Virginia Iris, Southern Blue Flag	Full sun to light shade in moist or wet sites; <i>I. prismatica</i> is not as showy – naturalistic use
<i>Liatris spicata</i> ('Kobold') Note: <i>L. aspera</i> has performed well in my home garden with little irrigation – not happy at Green Spring with heavier soils, more irrigation, & crowding	Liatris, Blazing Star, or Gayfeather	Full sun; tolerate dry sites (especially <i>L. aspera</i>)
<i>Lobelia cardinalis</i> <i>L. siphilitica</i>	Cardinal Flower Great Blue Lobelia	Full sun to part shade in moist or wet sites; often short-lived perennials; some reseeding Full sun (moist site) to light shade in rich soil; some reseeding

<p><i>Monarda didyma</i> & <i>M. fistulosa</i> (powdery mildew resistant cvs.: 'Bessie Bryant', 'Claire Grace', 'Gardenview Scarlet', 'Jacob Cline', 'Raspberry Wine', & 'Violet Queen')</p> <p>Note: <i>M. clinopodia</i> (basil bee balm) has white flowers; <i>M. punctata</i> is an unusual short-lived perennial</p>	<p>Bee Balm (<i>M. fistulosa</i> also called wild bergamot)</p>	<p>Full sun to light shade; <i>M. fistulosa</i> & <i>M. punctata</i> tolerate drier sites & prefer more sun; some reseeding by <i>M. fistulosa</i> & <i>M. punctata</i></p>
<p><i>Napaea dioica</i></p>	<p>Glade Mallow</p>	<p>Full sun; likes moisture</p>
<p><i>Oenothera fruticosa</i> (subsp. <i>glauca</i> is a lovely form)</p>	<p>Sundrops</p>	<p>Full sun; tolerates dry sites Note: <i>O. argillicola</i> (shale barren oenothera) – biennial to short-lived perennial for naturalistic use (even more tolerant of dry sites)</p>
<p><i>Phlox glaberrima</i> (subsp. <i>glaberrima</i> & subsp. <i>triflora</i> found in VA; 'Anita Kistler' – selected in VA) <i>P. paniculata</i> (also powdery mildew resistant cvs. such as 'Bright Eyes', 'David', 'Nicky', 'Katherine', & 'Shortwood') <i>P. pilosa</i> ('Eco Happy Traveler')</p> <p><i>P. subulata</i> & cvs. Note: <i>P. nivalis</i> (trailing phlox; 'Snowdrift') for rock gardens & dry, sandy soil in full sun</p>	<p>Smooth Phlox</p> <p>Garden Phlox</p> <p>Downy Phlox</p> <p>Creeping Phlox</p>	<p>Full sun to light shade</p> <p>Full sun to light shade (less pest problems in light shade); likes consistently moist sites; reseeds readily</p> <p>Full sun; best in dry sites because can become invasive in moist sites Full sun; tolerates dry sites – needs good drainage</p>
<p><i>Physostegia virginiana</i> ('Vivid')</p>	<p>Obedient Plant</p>	<p>Full sun to light shade; tolerates periodically wet sites</p>
<p><i>Porteranthus trifoliatus</i> (<i>Gillenia trifoliata</i>) Note: <i>P. stipulatus</i> (<i>G. stipulata</i>) is a more open plant</p>	<p>Bowman's Root</p>	<p>Full sun to light shade; <i>P. stipulatus</i> best for naturalistic use (<i>P. trifoliatus</i> is more versatile); some reseeding</p>
<p><i>Pycnanthemum incanum</i>, <i>P. montanum</i>, & <i>P. muticum</i> (<i>P. virginianum</i> & <i>P. tenuifolium</i> – primarily naturalistic use)</p>	<p>Mountain Mint</p>	<p>Full sun to light shade; <i>P. muticum</i> can be invasive in moist sites (spreads by runners); tolerate dry sites; some reseeding for <i>P. incanum</i></p>
<p><i>R. fulgida</i> (var. <i>speciosa</i> is one var. that is found in VA; showier var. <i>sullivantii</i> ('Goldsturm' is a selection) found in WVA & Midwest <i>R. laciniata</i></p> <p><i>R. maxima</i> (native to LA, etc.) <i>R. subtomentosa</i> (native to TN, etc.)</p>	<p>Orange Coneflower</p> <p>Green-headed Coneflower</p> <p>Great Rudbeckia</p> <p>Sweet Coneflower</p>	<p>Full sun to light shade; some reseeding; looks best in moist sites</p> <p>Full sun to light shade; likes moist sites</p> <p>Full sun; likes moist sites Full sun; tolerates dry sites</p>

Note: <i>Rudbeckia hirta</i> (black-eyed Susan) & <i>R. triloba</i> (three-lobed coneflower) are biennials to short-lived perennials; <i>Rudbeckia</i> 'Autumn Sun' is a long-lived hybrid of 2 native spp. – for garden use (showy but often needs staking)		<i>R. hirta</i> tolerates dry sites & reseeds some at Green Spring; <i>R. triloba</i> reseeds readily
<i>Salvia azuea</i> var. <i>grandiflora</i> (native to TN, etc.) <i>S. lyrata</i> (purple-leaved forms available; naturalistic use best)	Azure Salvia Lyreleaf Salvia	Full sun to light shade; tolerate dry sites
<i>Sanguisorba canadensis</i>	Canadian Burnet	Full sun; mostly naturalistic use in consistently moist or wet sites
<i>Scutellaria incana</i>	Showy Skullcap	Full sun to light shade; some reseeding
<i>Senecio aureus</i> (<i>Packera aurea</i>)	Golden Ragwort	Full sun (moist site) to part shade; moist or periodically wet sites; reseeds readily; somewhat invasive in gardens
<i>Silphium asteriscus</i> <i>S. perfoliatum</i> <i>S. terebinthinaceum</i> <i>S. trifoliatum</i> Note: <i>S. laciniatum</i> (compass plant; naturalized in VA – native TN, etc.) - full sun & moist sites to bloom well	Southern Rosinweed Cup Plant Prairie Dock Whorled Rosinweed	Full sun to light shade (<i>S. asteriscus</i> is the most shade tolerant); tolerate dry sites; some reseeding (<i>S. perfoliatum</i> reseeds the most – reseeds readily)
<i>Solidago roanensis</i> <i>S. rugosa</i> ('Fireworks') (reseeds readily) <i>S. sphacelata</i> 'Golden Fleece' (have not tried to grow the sp.) Note: <i>S. juncea</i> , <i>S. sempervirens</i> , & <i>S. speciosa</i> for naturalistic use; <i>S. odora</i> for dry, sandy soil	Roan Mountain Goldenrod Rough-stemmed Goldenrod Golden Fleece Goldenrod	Full sun; tolerate dry sites Full sun to part shade; tolerates dry sites
<i>Stokesia laevis</i> (native to NC, etc.)	Stoke's Aster	Full sun to light shade
<i>Thalictrum pubescens</i> (<i>polygamum</i>)	Tall Meadow-rue	Full sun to light shade; best in moist sites, but tolerates drier sites & periodically wet sites
<i>Tradescantia virginiana</i> (hybrids such as 'Concord Grape' are attractive but not for natural areas)	Virginia Spiderwort	Full sun (moist site) to part shade; reseeds readily; <i>T. hirsuticaulis</i> (native to NC, etc.) is low growing, goes dormant in summer, & foliage comes back again in fall – tolerates dry sites
<i>Verbena</i> (<i>Glandularia</i>) <i>canadensis</i> (may just be naturalized in VA); <i>V. hastata</i> (swamp verbena) – naturalistic use	Verbena	Full sun; <i>V. canadensis</i> needs a well-drained soil to be winter hardy; the popular 'Homestead Purple' is a <i>V. canadensis</i> hybrid

<i>Vernonia gigantea</i> <i>V. noveboracensis</i>	Giant Ironweed New York Ironweed	Full sun to light shade; reseed readily; tolerate periodically wet sites
<i>Veronicastrum virginicum</i>	Culver's Root	Full sun to light shade; some reseeding
<i>Zizia aptera</i> <i>Z. aurea</i>	Heartleaf Golden Alexanders Common Golden Alexanders	Full sun to light shade in dry or moist sites (<i>Z. aurea</i> can tolerate part shade & has finely divided foliage); some reseeding

Note: additional spp. for naturalistic use (some also appropriate for special habitats): *Chrysopsis mariana* (Maryland goldenaster; sandy soil or very dry soil), *Erigeron pulchellus* (Robin's plantain), *Helenium autumnale* (sneezeweed; doesn't cause sneezing!), *Mimulus ringens* (Alleghany monkey flower; moist or wet sites), *Opuntia humifusa* (prickly pear; extremely drought tolerant but very spiny), *Parthenium integrifolium* (wild quinine or American feverfew), *Ruellia humilis* (wild petunia), *Senna (Cassia) hebecarpa* & *S. marilandica* (wild senna), & *Verbesina (Actinomeris) alternifolia* (wingstem)

B. Ornamental Grasses

Natives of Virginia that are best for gardens are marked with an asterisk in **Recommended Hardy Ornamental Grasses, Sedges, and Rushes for Gardens in the Washington, D.C. Area (plant information sheet #8)**. In addition, the following spp. are not listed in the ornamental grass information sheet because these spp. tend to be for naturalistic use or for special habitat uses rather than garden use:

**Andropogon ternarius* (splitbeard bluestem; needs dry, sandier soils) & *A. gerardii* (big bluestem; floppy in most gardens – striking in meadows)

**Elymus canadensis* (Canada wild rye; floppy in gardens)

**Tridens flavus* (purpletop or redtop; best for meadows - reseeds readily)

**Tripsicum dactyloides* (eastern gamagrass; coarse, large plant; moist or wet sites)

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Developed by Brenda Skarphol, Curatorial Horticulturist at Green Spring Gardens Park

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