

Recommended Native Plants for River Friendly Gardens

Wherever your property is in the watershed, your landscape affects stream quality and flow. Lawns and pavements let runoff flow more quickly and in higher volumes than densely planted gardens, carrying increased pollutants and excess fertilizer, causing detrimental scouring and erosion of waterways, and flooding downstream neighbors. However a garden planted with diverse native plants can mimic natural woodlands and reduce runoff while beautifying your property, supporting healthy streams, improving habitat, and increasing infiltration to replenish groundwater. Use this list to begin selecting native plants that do well in most of our gardens and are not difficult to grow.

Key: LIGHT: SU = full sun; PS = part shade; SH = shade. MOISTURE: D = dry; M = moist; W = wet.

Ferns



Polystichum acrostichoides - Christmas fern
Light: PS, SH - Moisture: D, M - Height: 1'-1.5'
Evergreen; drought tolerant; deer resistant



Thelypteris noveboracensis - New York fern
Light: PS, SH - Moisture: M, W - Height: 1'-2'
Spreading; tolerates very low pH; deer resistant



Muhlenbergia capillaris - pink muhly grass
Light: SU - Moisture: D, M - Height: 1'-3', seed heads to 5'
Rare/endangered in Del. river watershed; deer resistant



Sporobolus heterolepis - prairie dropseed
Light: S - Moisture: D - Height: 1'-2', seed heads to 3'
Drought tolerant; deer resistant

Herbaceous Perennials



Amsonia tabernaemontana - eastern bluestar
Light: SU, PS - Moisture: M, W - Height: 1'-3'
Spring bloom; southern US native; forms large clumps



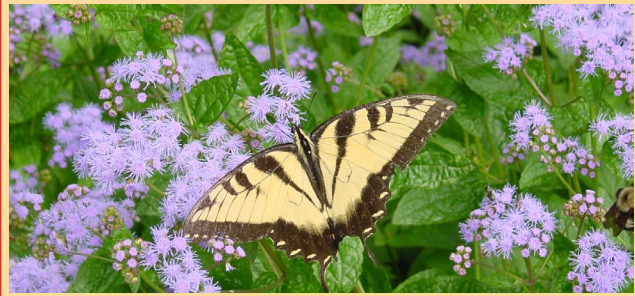
Asclepias syriaca - common milkweed
Light: SU - Moisture: D, M - Height: 2'-3'
Adaptable; spreads; monarch host; deer resistant



Asclepias tuberosa - butterfly weed
Light: SU, PS - Moisture: D, M - Height: 1'-3'
Drought tolerant; monarch host; deer resistant



Baptisia australis - blue wild indigo
Light: SU, PS - Moisture: D, M - Height: 3'-4'
Late spring bloom; drought tolerant; shrub-like form



Conoclinium coelestinum - blue mistflower
Light: SU, PS - Moisture: D, M, W - Height: 1'-3'
Adaptable; deer resistant



Coreopsis verticillata - threadleaf coreopsis
Light: SU - Moisture: D, M - Height: 0.5'-3'
Bed border; tolerates poor soils; deer resistant



Dicentra eximia - fringed bleeding-heart
Light: PS, SH - Moisture: M - Height: 1'-1.5'
Long bloom period; fern-like foliage



Geranium maculatum - wild geranium
Light: PS, SH - Moisture: D, M - Height: 1'
Blue-flowered varieties available; use as groundcover



Iris versicolor - larger blueflag
Light: SU, PS - Moisture: M, W - Height: 0.5'-1.5'
Spring bloom; adaptable; deer resistant



Penstemon digitalis - foxglove beardtongue
Light: SU, PS - Moisture: D, M - Height: 2'-4'
Attracts hummingbirds; many varieties



Silene virginica - firepink
Light: SU, PS - Moisture: D, M - Height: 1'-3'
Early spring bloom; pink varieties available



Tiarella cordifolia - foamflower
Light: SU, PS, SH - Moisture: M - Height: 0.5'-1'
Bed border or shade garden; bronze leaved varieties

Shrubs and Vines



Cornus sericea - redosier dogwood, redbud dogwood
Light: SU, PS - Moisture: M, W - Height: 5'-9'
Red winter stems; white berries; high wildlife value



Hydrangea quercifolia - oakleaf hydrangea
Light: SU, PS, SH - Moisture: D, M - Height 6'-7'
SE US native; purple fall color; large white blooms



Ilex verticillata - common winterberry
Light: SU, PS, SH - Moisture: M, W - Height: 6'-10'
Fruit lasts into winter; high wildlife value



Itea virginica - Virginia sweetspire
Light: SU, PS, SH - Moisture: M, W - Height: 6'-8'
Late spring bloom; spreads; smaller cultivars available



Lonicera sempervirens - trumpet (coral) honeysuckle
Light: SU, PS - Moisture: D, M - Spread: 6'-12'
Vine; long bloom period; hummingbirds; deer resistant



Photinia pyrifolia - red chokeberry
Light: SU, PS - Moisture: D, M, W - Height: 6'-12'
Red fall color; bank stabilizer; deer resistant



Rubus odoratus - purple flowering raspberry
Light: PS, SH - Moisture: M - Height: 3'-6'
Spreads; deer resistant



Viburnum dentatum - southern arrowwood
Light: SU, PS, SH - Moisture: D, M, W - Height: 6'-12'
Adaptable; bank stabilizer; high wildlife value; deer resistant

Trees



Acer rubrum - red maple
Light: SU, PS, SH - Moisture: D, M, W - Height: 40'-60'
Red spring flowers; adaptable; high wildlife value



Amelanchier arborea - common serviceberry
Light: PS, SH - Moisture: D, M - Height: 35'-50'
Early bloom; high wildlife value; deer resistant



Betula nigra - river birch
Light: SU, PS - Moisture: M, W - Height: 50'-75'
Fast growing; adaptable; yellow fall color



Cercis canadensis - eastern redbud
Light: SU, PS, SH - Moisture: D, M - Height: 20'-35'
Very early bloom; yellow fall color; thrives in high pH soil



Chionanthus virginicus - white fringetree
Light: SU, PS, SH - Moisture: D, M - Height: 15'-30'
Yellow fall color; shrubby & can be pruned into small tree



Cornus florida - flowering dogwood
Light: SU, PS - Moisture: D, M - Height: 20'-40'
Red fall color; red fruit; high wildlife value



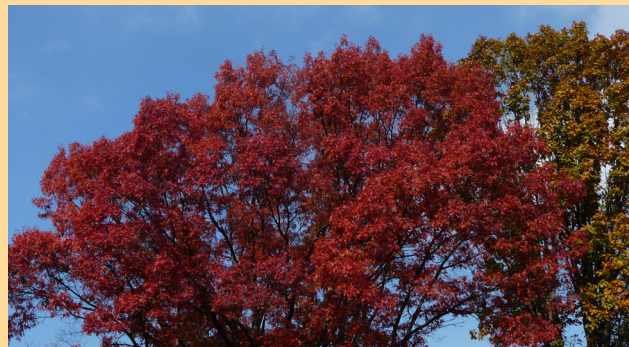
Liquidambar styraciflua - sweetgum
Light: SU, PS - Moisture: M, W - Height: 60'-100'
Yellow-to-scarlet fall color; adaptable



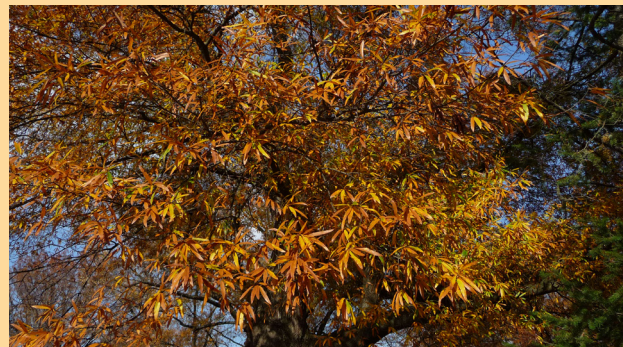
Magnolia virginiana - sweetbay
Light: SU, PS, SH - Moisture: M, W - Height: 12'-30'
Fragrant June bloom; drought tolerant when established



Nyssa sylvatica - blackgum, black tupelo
Light: SU, PS - Moisture: D, M, W - Height: 30'-75'
Early fall color; adaptable; high wildlife value



Quercus coccinea - scarlet oak
Light: SU - Moisture: D, M - Height: 40'-75'
High wildlife value; similar to red and black oak



Quercus phellos - willow oak
Light: SU, PS - Moisture: M, W - Height: 80'-100'
Adaptable; high wildlife value



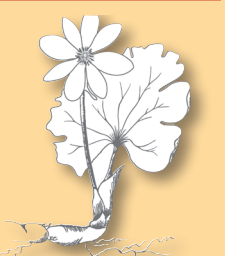
Sassafras albidum - sassafras
Light: SU, PS, SH - Moisture: D, M - Height: 35'-50'
Yellow-green flowers; varied fall color; high wildlife value



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Photo Credits

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