

# Native Plants for Sunny Locations

Flowering Perennials,  
Ferns, & Grasses

Shrubs & Small Trees

## **Introduction:**

The Turtle Creek Watershed Association promotes the use of rainfall and stormwater as the valuable natural resource it is.

We encourage measures to manage stormwater in ways that preserve or mimic natural infiltration or storage methods, thus allowing the rain to slowly reach our streams or ground water table. This prevents damage from erosion, sedimentation, sewer overflows, and flooding.

Gardens can be a good way to help manage stormwater. Their soils contain lots of organic matter that absorbs rainfall before it can run off. Plants take in water through their roots and transpire gallons of it each day through their leaves. These roots along with soil organisms such as earthworms and burrowing insects create tunnels that also allow water to infiltrate.

Native plants are well-adapted to local conditions. Relying upon them as the backbone of your garden is a good way to insure beautiful success while reducing maintenance chores. As noted in their descriptions, they often have value to wildlife (that prey upon harmful insects), and many were once used as medicines or dyes – beautiful as well as practical.

Limiting use of harsh chemical fertilizers and pesticides will protect beneficial organisms, allowing them to help you improve your soil and keep harmful insects in check. This will also reduce the amounts of these pollutants entering our streams and ground water. Relying upon integrated pest management approaches and upon milder fertilizers can also save money.

Gardeners who use rain barrels or cisterns to hold and store roof runoff have a source of pure water for their gardens – and can save money while reducing the volume of stormwater that causes local problems.

The following information is a  
distillation of lists from:  
US EPA, USDA, Pa DEP,  
Brooklyn Botanical Garden,  
Connecticut Botanic Garden,  
Missouri Botanic Garden, and  
Pennsylvania Native Plant Society

Please note: Specific genus and species names are important to obtain the correct plants. (That being true, as research into genetic relationships continues, genus names change from time to time to more accurately reflect these relationships.) Even so, all plants will not grow in all locations. Success depends upon light conditions, soil components and substrate, soil pH, soil nutrients, total water, animal activities, and proximity to roads (and road salt), among other factors. Determine conditions in your garden, then choose the plants best suited to your site.



*Achillea millefolium* (common yarrow)

- 12"-15"; white flowers in July with lacy green foliage.
- Grows in sunny sites with moderately fertile, neutral soils and can tolerate some dry conditions.
- Used to remove toxins, stimulate blood circulation, and to aid digestion.
- Repels harmful insects and attracts beneficials.

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*Aquilegia canadensis* (wild columbine)

- 12"-15"; reddish orange and yellow flowers in May and June.
- Grows in sunny to partially shady sites in a variety of loose soils with various moisture contents. Drought tolerant.
- Used as an anti-spasmodic.
- Attracts butterflies.



National Park Service



*Asclepias tuberosa* (butterfly weed)

- 15"-20"; showy orange (sometimes red) flowers in July.
- Grows in well-drained average soils and is drought tolerant.
- Comes up late in the spring, so mark clumps so they are not disturbed.
- Used as expectorant for colds and coughs.
- Attracts butterflies.

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*Aster novae-angliae* (New England aster)

- 30" - 36"; purple or pink flowers with yellow centers in August and September.
- Grows in full sun and damp soils from pH 5.5 to 7.5, but do not over-water. Drought tolerant when established.
- Attracts butterflies.



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***Baptisia australis*** (false indigo)

- 24" -36"; showy blue flowers in late June and early July.
- Grows in sun to partial shade in a slightly acidic, fertile soil, but tolerates a variety of soil and water conditions. (Does not like damp soils, but must be kept well-watered until established.)
- Used to produce a weak blue dye.
- Attracts butterflies.



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***Dryopteris marginalis*** (marginal wood fern)

- 12" -15"; triangular shaped leaves; gray green, leathery fronds; grows as single plant.
- Grows well in slightly acidic soil pockets tucked between rocks in partial shade with average moisture; needs wind protection to prevent drying.
- Evergreen fronds offer winter cover.
- Low maintenance after established.

***Echinacea purpurea*** (eastern purple coneflower)

- 24" -30"; rosy purple flowers with spiky gold centers from July to September.
- Prefers full sun, but is adaptable to some shade and various soil types.



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***Elymus hystrix*** (eastern bottlebrush grass)

- 12" -15"; forms tufts of narrow bladed, rough-textured, medium green leaves with spiky seed heads in July.
- Grows in sunny sites in a variety of well-drained soils.
- Low maintenance.
- Birds eat the seeds.



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*Eupatorium rugosum* (white snakeroot)

- 36"-48"; clusters of white flowers from July to September.
- Grows in sunny, slightly moist soils of average fertility, but adapts to other conditions.
- Used as a snakebite remedy.
- Attracts butterflies.

*Geranium maculatum* (wild geranium, cranesbill)

- 12"-15"; deeply cleft leaves; rosy purple to blue flowers in late May to early June.
- Prefers to grow in open or partial shade/partial sun in loose loamy soils with a nearly neutral pH.
- Used medicinally for digestive ailments, skin infections, and to clot open wounds.
- Birds and butterfly larvae eat the fruit. Deer may eat the leaves.



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*Heliopsis helianthoides* (oxeye daisy)

- 24"-30"; yellow flowers with brown centers in June and July.
- Grows in sunny sites with fertile, moist soils; is drought tolerant when established.
- Used as a decongestant and fever reducer.
- Provides food and cover for butterflies and birds.

*Heuchera americana* (coral bells)

- 12"-24"; white or pink flowers in July; low green foliage with white to rusty tones.
- Grows in sunny to partially shady sites in average soil; some drought tolerance.
- Powdered roots used to sprinkle on wounds.
- Nectar source for hummingbirds and butterflies.



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*Matteuccia struthiopteris* (ostrich fern)

- 36"; palm-like fronds that create cover.
- Grows in partial shade or sun in moist soils.
- Fiddleheads are a New England delicacy.
- Excellent cover for small reptiles and amphibians.



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*Monarda didyma* or *M. fistulosa* (bee balm or bergamot)

- 36"; red to pink to purple flowers from July to August.
- Grows in full sun to partial shade in damp, fertile soil, forming clumps.
- Used as an anti-septic for wounds and throat infections.
- Attracts butterflies and hummingbirds.

*Penstemon digitalis* (beardtongue)

- 24"-30"; white flowers in June; reddish foliage and stems.
- Grows in full sun in a variety of soils and moisture conditions. Low maintenance.
- Flowers attract butterflies and birds eat the seeds.



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*Phlox paniculata* (summer phlox)

- 40"; fragrant, showy dark pink heads in July.
- Grows in full sun and average soil, but prefers cool roots (mulch) and good air circulation.
- Used as a laxative.
- Attracts hummingbirds and butterflies.



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*Physostegia virginiana* (obedience plant)

- 24"; white or pink flower heads in July.
- Grows in full sun and average soil, but prefers cool roots (mulch).
- Attracts butterflies.

*Schizachyrium scoparium* (little blue stem grass)

- 40"; narrow green leaves; purplish bronze seed heads from late July to September.
- Grows in sunny sites in a variety of soils; very drought tolerant.
- Looks best grown in clumps of several plants.
- Low maintenance.



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*Sedum ternatum* (whorled stonecrop)

- 6"; white flowers in July.
- Grows well in sun or shade in a variety of soils, and in pockets of soil in rocky sites. Drought tolerant.
- Good nectar plant.

*Sisyrinchium angustifolium* (blue-eyed Mary)

- 6"-8"; blue flowers with yellow eyes in May and June
- Grows well in sunny sites with moderate moisture. Drought tolerant.
- Used to treat upset stomach and parasites.
- Attracts butterflies and birds.



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*Solidago rugosa* (wrinkled leaf goldenrod)

- 36"; yellow flowers in August and September.
- Forms clumps in sunny locations with a wide variety of soil conditions. Drought tolerant.
- Flowers attract butterflies and birds eat seeds.

*Sorghastrum nutans* (Indian grass)

- 36"; red gold seed heads; forms clumps.
- Grows in full sun in a wide variety of soil and moisture conditions. Low maintenance.
- Birds and mammals eat seeds.



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*Vernonia noveboracensis* (ironweed)

- 48"-60"; purple heads in August, forms broad clumps.
- Grows best in full sun and moist soils, but adapts to a wide variety of soil and moisture conditions.
- Attracts butterflies.

*Zizia aurea* (golden alexander)

- 12"-24"; toothed leaves; yellow flowers in June.
- Grows in full sun or partial shade in average soil with medium moisture and nearly neutral pH.
- Looks best in small clumps.
- Formerly used as fever remedy, but not recommended.
- Attracts butterflies.



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*Amelanchier arborea* (serviceberry)

- 20'; fragrant white flowers in late April or early May; red fruits in summer.
- Grows in sun or partial shade in soils with average fertility, moisture, and pH.
- Can be grown as single trunk tree or multi-trunk shrub.
- Edible fruits attract birds and mammals.

*Aronia melanocarpa* (black chokeberry)

- 3'-6'; white flowers in May; purple berries in late summer.
- Grows in sun or partial shade in soils with average fertility, moisture, and pH.
- Edible fruits attract birds and mammals.



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*Chionanthus virginicus* (graybeard or fringe tree)

- 12'-18'; covered in fragrant white flowers in early June.
- Grows in sunny or partially shaded sites in fertile, slightly acidic, well-drained soil, but is tolerant of other soil types.
- Attracts butterflies to flowers and birds to small fruits.

*Hamamelis virginiana* (witch hazel)

- 15'; delicate yellow flowers in October.
- Prefers richly organic, moist soils, but is very adaptable once established.
- Used as a skin astringent to treat inflammation, insect bites, etc.
- Attractive bird nesting sites and a late season nectar source for insects.



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*Ilex glabra* (inkberry holly)

- 4'; white flowers in early June, then females set dark berries in the fall; evergreen.
- Grows best in moist, slightly acidic soil of average fertility in full sun, but adapts to other conditions.
- Flowers attract small pollinators; birds eat the fruits and use the evergreen cover.

*Ilex verticillata* (winterberry holly)

- 6'-8'; pale flowers in early June, then females set red berries in the fall.
- Grows best in moist, slightly acidic soil of average fertility in full sun, but adapts to other conditions.
- Used to reduce fevers.
- Flowers attract small pollinators; birds eat the fruits.



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*Itea virginica* [Henry's garnet] (sweetspire)

- 3'-4'; fragrant white flower spikes in June; dark red foliage in the fall.
- Is normally a wetland shrub, but adaptable to a wide variety of moisture, soil, and pH conditions.
- Attracts butterflies.

*Lindera benzoin* (spicebush)

- 6'-8'; fragrant yellow flowers in May; red berries in fall on female plants.
- Good damp understory shrub.
- Used to treat colds, coughs, and parasites.
- Host plant for butterfly larvae; birds eat berries.



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***Potentilla fruticosa*** (shrubby cinquefoil)

- 2'-3'; yellow flowers from July to September.
- Grows in full sun in a variety of soils; low maintenance.
- Used to treat indigestion.
- Attracts butterflies and birds eat the seeds.

***Vaccinium angustifolium*** (lowbush blueberry)

- 3'; small white flowers in spring; sets blue fruits in summer.
- Grows in a variety of slightly acidic soils and tolerates some dry conditions.
- Flowers attract butterflies and birds and mammals eat fruits.



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***Viburnum dentatum*** (arrowwood) ***Viburnum nudum*** (witherod)  
***Viburnum prunifolium*** (blackhaw)

- 5'; white, fragrant, flat clusters in May; dark blue berries in August.
- Grows in sun or open shade in slightly damp conditions, but is adaptable to many soil types.
- Fruits rich in vitamin C.
- Attracts butterflies and birds.

***Viburnum trilobum*** (highbush cranberry)

- 5'; white, fragrant, flat clusters in May; red berries in August.
- Grows in sun or open shade in slightly damp conditions, but is adaptable to many soil types.
- Fruits rich in vitamin C
- Attracts butterflies and birds.



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# Addendum – Larger Native Trees



*Acer saccharum* Sugar Maple

- 50'; vibrant yellow and orange fall color
- Prefers deep loamy soils, but will tolerate others except sand; salt intolerant; roots create hydraulic lift to bring water from deeper to more shallow soil layers

*Aesculus glabra* Ohio Buckeye

- 65'; showy yellowish flowers in May; seeds are good tannin source
- Prefers moist bottomland, neutral slightly alkaline soils; adaptable to other conditions, but will grow more slowly



*Carya ovata* Shagbark Hickory

- 80'; bark peels in long, thin strips; nuts appeal to humans and wildlife
- Prefers moist, well-drained, light soils – but tolerates a variety of soil and moisture conditions

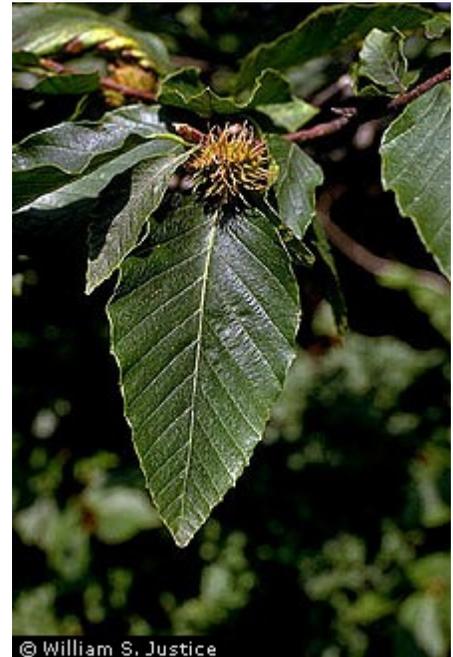


***Catalpa speciosa* Northern Catalpa**

- White, bell flowers with yellow and purple accents; long brown seed pods; large, heart-shaped leaves
- 40'-70' x 20' - 30'; prefers full sun in damp soils, but is adaptable to a variety of conditions

***Fagus grandifolia* American Beech**

- 60' - 70'; thin, light colored bark; important source of wildlife food when mature
- Prefers moist, fertile, bottom land soils; withstands short periods of flooding; intolerant of long dry periods



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***Liriodendron tulipifera* Tulip Poplar**

- At least 100'; yellow and orange flowers in spring; grows relatively quickly, but wood is strong
- Prefers fertile, slightly acidic, well-drained soils, tolerates short periods of flooding; intolerant of long dry or wet periods; disease resistant

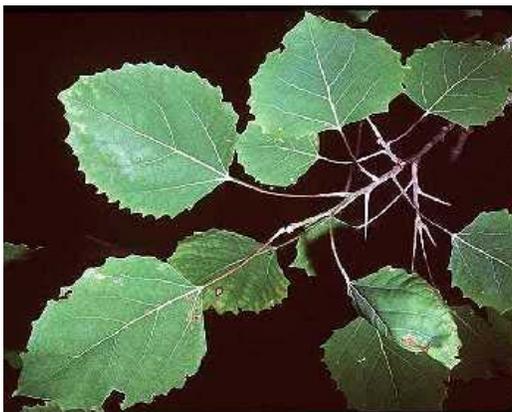


*Pinus virginiana*    **Virginia Pine**

- 35'; new cones are rusty orange color; attractive to wildlife; trunks and branches often assume interesting shapes
- Grows best in well-drained loam, but adaptable to poor, sandy soils

*Platanus occidentalis*    **American Sycamore**

- 100'; brown, reddish, tan, and white exfoliating bark; tan, fuzzy seed balls in fall; long-lived
- Prefers damp, slightly acidic soils near streams and rivers; tolerant of a wide variety of conditions



*Populus grandidentata*    **Big Tooth Aspen**

- 60'; yellow fall color
- Prefers light, moist soils; adaptable to poor, disturbed soils; can slowly create large vegetative colonies over time