

Latin & Common Name	Height	Culture	Comments
<i>Liatis spicata</i> Marsh blazingstar	2-5 ft	Full sun, moist	Grass-like leaves and long spikes of pinkish-purple flowers in mid summer. Though harder to find, other native liatris are available with more drought tolerance and similar or larger flowerheads.
<i>Lobelia cardinalis</i> Cardinal flower	2-3 ft	Light shade to full sun, moist to wet	Bright red flowers in late summer attract hummingbirds and butterflies. Do not allow plant to dry out.
<i>Matteuccia struthiopteris</i> Ostrich fern	2-5 ft	Shade to part sun, moist to wet rich soil	Erect, gently arching light-green V-shaped fronds. Brown fertile fronds provide winter interest. Keep soil moist, give plant plenty of room to spread.
<i>Monarda fistulosa</i> Wild bergamot	3-4 ft	Full to part sun, moist to slightly dry	Lavender-pink rounded flowerheads in midsummer attract butterflies. Scented foliage. Tends to spread but easily controlled by pulling.
<i>Rudbeckia hirta</i> Black-eyed Susan	2-3 ft	Full to part sun, moist to dry	Bright yellow daisy-like flowers all summer, especially if deadheaded. Will tolerate some shade. Some varieties may be annual or biennial.
<i>Ruellia humilis</i> Hairy wild petunia	1 ft	Full to part sun, moist to dry	Lavender petunia-like flowers for 2 months in summer. Tolerates heat and drought. Leaves and stems covered with white hairs.
<i>Schizachyrium scoparium</i> Little bluestem	2-3 ft	Full sun, well-drained average soil	Blue-green foliage, fluffy silvery seedheads, and reddish fall color. Holds shape and color in winter. Very drought resistant once established.
<i>Silphium terebinthinaceum</i> Prairie dock	Foliage to 2 ft, 9-10 ft in flower	Full sun, moist to slightly dry	Striking plant with yellow daisy-like flowers on long leafless stems above clump of huge leaves in late summer. Slow to establish, but then very drought tolerant and long-lived, with a taproot extending 12-15 feet into the soil.
<i>Solidago rigida</i> (now <i>Oligoneuron rigidum</i>) Stiff goldenrod	3-5 ft	Full sun, average moisture, any soil	One of the more attractive goldenrods, with bright yellow flowers in compact domed clusters. May flop during bloom when grown in moist, fertile soil.
<i>Sporobolus heterolepis</i> Prairie dropseed	1.5-3 ft	Full sun, well-drained average soil	Finely textured, arching, golden green leaves. Good fall color. Heat and drought tolerant once established. Unique fragrance of flowers has been described as coriander or popcorn.
<i>Tradescantia ohioensis</i> Ohio spiderwort	2-3 ft	Full to part sun, average moisture	Blooms are short-lived (one morning) but numerous, with violet-blue flowers for 4-6 weeks in early summer. Grass-like leaves. Cut back after bloom to encourage new growth and possible rebloom.

For more information on gardening please visit:
<https://extension.illinois.edu/global/horticulture>
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Using Native Plants in the Garden



Garden Tips
from
Knox County
Master Gardeners

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Extension

There has been increased interest in the use of native plants in the landscape. These plants provide many benefits for both the gardener and the environment.

What exactly is a native plant? The most common definition is a plant that was established in a location before European settlers arrived. The particular location must be specified - is a plant native to the United States, the Midwest, all of Illinois, or just a small part of Illinois? Also, many plants include both native and non-native species, as well as cultivars of native species. Native plants are not the same as wildflowers, which are simply flowers that grow well without human intervention, and can be either native or a naturalized non-native.

There are many reasons to use native plants. They are often better adapted to local climate and conditions, and require less maintenance once established. They provide food and shelter for native wildlife. Using fewer resources such as water and chemicals, and reducing mowing is better for the environment. Finally, native plants add beauty and diversity to the garden, and provide a connection to the local ecosystem.

Native plants include trees and shrubs as well as herbaceous plants. Native trees such as oaks, red maple, and river birch, are often used in the landscape. In this brochure, we will concentrate on native perennial flowers, grasses, and ferns for use in the home garden.

Using Native Plants

You can use as many or as few native plants in your landscape as you desire. At one extreme, some gardeners have turned their whole yard into a prairie or meadow. Others set aside a small plot for native plantings, or create butterfly gardens, rain gardens, or ponds. Still others mix native and non-native plants together in beds and borders.

Many native plants look best in an informal landscape, but there are plants to fit virtually any style of garden. Adding items such as fencing, paths, finished edges, benches, or signs will make an area seem less "wild."

As you would when choosing any new plants, consider the needs of the plant and the conditions of your site, the intended function, seasonal interest, individual preferences, and disease and insect problems. If you want to attract wildlife, find out what plants are preferred.

If you're not sure, start small. Even if you have big plans, start small - take it one step at a time.

Choosing Native Plants

Don't assume that any native plant is automatically a better choice than an exotic variety. While many native plants are adapted to a wide variety of conditions, others require very specific conditions that may be difficult to duplicate. Developed or disturbed sites such as housing developments or even old farm fields may provide conditions quite different from what was originally present.

Some native plants can be attacked by non-native pests or diseases to which they have little resistance. Others may have disease or insect problems that don't cause long-term harm but make them unacceptable in home landscapes.

Some natives can be aggressive or self-seed, or be unattractive or unruly. While this is a subjective choice, some locations have "weed laws" that prohibit or require special permits for certain types of plantings. Be aware of this if you want to put in a large planting of prairie plants, especially in the front yard.

It's important to do a little research before choosing native plants. Not every native plant is appropriate for your garden situation.

Obtaining Native Plants

Common native plants are readily available, but may be cultivars or non-local varieties. For more unusual plants, it may be necessary to seek out a reputable native plant nursery close to your home (lists are available online).

Don't dig plants in the wild. It may be illegal on public land, and some species are endangered.

Use caution when buying "wildflowers-in-a-can." While good mixtures are available, many contain weedy or non-native species.

Planting and Care

For best results, try to find a spot that duplicates the plant's natural growing conditions as much as possible. Plants can be started from seed or from transplants. Transplants are easier, especially for individual specimens or small areas, but are more expensive.

While ultimately requiring less maintenance, native plants need a little extra care until established. Keep weeds down and keep well-

watered. Once established, plants that thrive in poor, dry soil can be weakened by over-fertilization or excess water.

Many prairie plants use most of their energy the first several years to establish an extensive root system that helps them withstand drought. Be patient. The plant may not look like it's doing much for a few years, but as long as it looks healthy it will eventually thrive.

Suggested Varieties

The following is just a small sample of some native plants to try in the garden - there are many more to choose from. Most of these plants are native to Illinois, and others to neighboring states. Some might be a bit hard to find but are well worth the effort.

Latin & Common Name	Height	Culture	Comments
<i>Aquilegia canadensis</i> Wild columbine	2-3 ft	Light shade, moist to dry	Red & yellow flowers attract hummingbirds. Attractive foliage. Mature plants can tolerate full sun.
<i>Asclepias tuberosa</i> Butterfly milkweed	1-3 ft	Full sun, moist to dry, well-drained soil	Bright orange flat-topped flowers all summer. Drought and heat tolerant. Attracts bees and butterflies. Slow to emerge in spring. Also try swamp and purple milkweed.
<i>Athyrium felix-femina</i> Lady fern	1.5-3 ft	Full to part shade, moist to wet rich soil	Arching, finely-cut foliage. Spreads slowly. Sends up new fronds throughout the summer. Try planting at the edge of a pond.
<i>Baptisia australis</i> Blue wild indigo	3-5 ft	Full sun, average moisture	Blue pea-like flowers in spring. Attractive foliage forms a large shrub-like plant. White and yellow varieties are also available.
<i>Echinacea purpurea</i> Purple coneflower	2-4 ft	Full to part sun, average moisture	Light purple daisy-like flowers all summer. Good cut flowers. Leave seedheads on plant to attract birds. Many cultivars available.
<i>Eupatoriadelphus maculatus</i> Spotted Joe-Pye weed	3-6 ft	Full to part sun, wet to moist	Large clusters of purplish-pink flowers in mid to late summer. Whorled leaves on sturdy purple stems. A bold plant that is a favorite of butterflies.
<i>Gentiana andrewsii</i> Bottle gentian	1-2 ft	Full to part sun, moist rich soil	An unusual plant - clusters of deep blue flowers in late summer that never open, appearing as large buds. Flowers sometimes change color as they mature. Pollinated by large bumblebees that are strong enough to force their way inside.