



## MAKE YOUR GARDEN "GREEN" WITH NATIVE PLANTS

Native plant gardens should feature a variety of species and plant types, including wildflowers, ferns, shrubs and grasses. Design considerations can also include texture, long-term growth, and stunning natural beauty throughout the year.

### Why use native plants in your landscape?

- *Wildlife Habitat:* Native birds, butterflies, and other animals depend on native plants for food, cover, and habitat.
- *Low Maintenance:* Native plants are well-suited to local soils and climate, and require relatively little upkeep once established.
- *Conserve Nature:* Preserve the diversity and health of our local natural heritage by using regional flora in your garden.
- *Local Character:* NYC has its own regional flavor and distinct assemblage of native plants. Using local flora allows gardens to provide a powerful sense of place.
- Wild ginger (*Asarum canadense*) Grows to 8 in. tall. Leaves lustrous green. Flowers hidden below, deep purple-brown in spring. Very shade tolerant.
- Blue-stemmed goldenrod (*Solidago caesia*) Grows to 3 ft. Clusters of small yellow flowers in fall. Attracts butterflies. Try also zig zag goldenrod (*S. flexicaulis*).
- Canada violet (*Viola canadensis*) Grows to 18 in. Quaint lavender flowers in spring. Attracts butterflies, leaves eaten by caterpillars.
- Maidenhair fern (*Adiantum pedatum*) Fronds to 3 ft. A delicate spiral of airy leaflets on black, wiry stems. One of our most beautiful native ferns.
- Pennsylvania sedge (*Carex pensylvanica*) Grows to 12 in. Leaves semi-evergreen. Blooms spring. Seeds eaten by songbirds.

All plants listed are native to New York and hardy to zone 5.

### Potted shade gardens

"Shade" does not mean "utter darkness." Dappled sunlight throughout the day or attenuated light for at least 4 hours is the minimum required. Soils should have a healthy dose of organic material and be kept consistently moist. Consider using the wildflowers that receive little light on the forest floor. One combination is ferns and spring ephemerals. The fronds begin to expand as the flowers die out.

### Suggested Species

- Virginia bluebells (*Mertensia virginiana*) Grows to 2 ft. Sky blue flowers in early spring. Spring ephemeral.
- Foamflower (*Tiarella cordifolia*) Grows to 12 inches. Airy spires of white flowers in spring. Attractive groundcover.

### Where to purchase native plants

- *NYC retail:* Gowanus Nursery, Brooklyn [gowanusnursery.com](http://gowanusnursery.com)
- *NYC wholesale:* Greenbelt Native Plant Center [nycgovparks.org/sub\\_about/parks\\_divisions/gnpc/index.html](http://nycgovparks.org/sub_about/parks_divisions/gnpc/index.html)
- *Mail order:* Prairie Nursery [www.prairienursery.com](http://www.prairienursery.com)
- Also try native plant society seasonal plant sales (usually spring and fall)

**For more on gardening with natives, visit [nycwildflowerweek.org](http://nycwildflowerweek.org)**