

NATIVE PLANTS

Native plants are an important part of our natural heritage. They have adapted to our soils and climate, and they provide homes and shelter to many other types of life. This in turn fosters a healthy, balanced ecosystem which is more resistant to damage by pests and diseases. Plants that have evolved in southern Ontario do not disrupt local ecology in the way that some exotic plants from other continents can. Purple loosestrife is a well-known example of an exotic plant that can damage natural communities.

Welcoming native plants back into our yards is also a way of recognizing the natural heritage of Southwestern Ontario. Today we tend to think of our area, Perth County, as primarily agricultural with intermittent woodlots. At one time our area was a rich tapestry of forest and wetlands within the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Forest.

Our forests consist of coniferous trees such as eastern white pine, red pine, eastern hemlock and white cedar, mixed with deciduous broad-leaved species, such as yellow birch, sugar and red maples, basswood and red oak in abundance, supporting a vast network of shrubs, smaller plants and wildlife. Enrich your garden with species that fit the conditions of our area like a glove - they were here before we were!

Sources of Native Plants

Ask for native plants at your local garden centre. Make sure that the plants you purchase have been nursery-propagated. Never dig plants from the wild – damaging a natural area to obtain plants is not acceptable. Many commercial sources of native plants are becoming available. Native plants are also available at the annual plant sales at the Guelph Arboretum (519 824-4120, ext.52113) and the Royal Botanical Gardens (905-527-1158 Toll free: 1-800-694-4769) .

Some Native Plants of the Stratford Region

There are *many* more! For complete lists, refer to the Stratford Public Library, the internet, Stratford Community Services Department (Parks) and the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority.



Purple Coneflower and Canada Anemone

EVERGREEN TREES:

Eastern Red Cedar (*Juniperus virginiana*)

Eastern Hemlock (*Tsuga canadensis*)

– tolerant of shade, sensitive to wind

White Cedar (*Thuja occidentalis*)

– tolerates wide range of conditions

White Pine (*Pinus strobus*)

– tree of Ontario, fast-growing

White Spruce (*Picea glauca*)

– hardy, drought-tolerant tree



Eastern Red Cedar

Tamarack (*Larix laricina*)

- tolerant of damp soil (drops leaves in the fall, but is a conifer)

DECIDUOUS TREES

Basswood (*Tilia americana*)

– fast growing, shade tolerant

Black Cherry (*Prunus serotina*)

– great wildlife tree, now uncommon

Bur Oak (*Quercus macrocarpa*)

– excellent city tree

Red Maple (*Acer rubrum*)

– prefers acidic soil



Bur Oak

Red Oak (*Quercus rubra*)

– prefers acidic soil

Silver Maple (*Acer saccharinum*)

– fast growing, tolerates damp soil

Sugar Maple (*Acer saccharum*)

– not tolerant of pollution

White Ash (*Fraxinus americana*)

– excellent city tree, but susceptible to ash borer.

White Birch (*Betula papyrifera*)

– fast growing, hardy tree

VINES

Virginia Creeper (*Parthenocissus quinquefolia*)

– birds love berries, shade tolerant

Virgin's Bower (*Clematis virginiana*)

– fluffy, decorative seed heads

Wild Grape (*Vitis riparia*)

- clusters of sour, edible berries



Virgin's Bower

SHRUBS

Alternate-leaf Dogwood (*Cornus alternifolia*)

– shade tolerant woodland shrub

Choke Cherry (*Prunus virginiana*)

– very hardy, sour edible cherries

Common Elderberry (*Sambucus canadensis*)

– fast growing, birds love berries

Common Juniper (*Juniperus communis*)

– very drought tolerant

Fragrant Sumac (*Rhus aromatica*)

- low shrub, drought tolerant

Grey Dogwood (*Cornus racemosa*)

– drought-tolerant shrub, berries for birds (key nesting bush)

Highbush Cranberry (*Viburnum trilobum*)

– tolerant of damp soil, berries for birds



Grey Dogwood

Nannyberry (*Viburnum lentago*)
– dry or wet soil, berries for birds

Red Osier Dogwood (*Cornus stolonifera*)
– red branches, great shoreline shrub

Serviceberry (*Amelanchier sp.*)
– birds love berries, drought-tolerant

Silky Dogwood (*Cornus amomum*)
– similar to Red Osier, blooms later

Staghorn Sumac (*Rhus typhina*)
– fast growing, grows from root suckers, full sun

Swamp Rose (*Rosa palustris*)
– small single flowers, dry or wet soil

GRASSES

Big Bluestem (*Andropogon gerardii*)
– indicator of tallgrass prairie ecosystem, full sun

Indian Grass (*Sorghastrum nutans*)
– beautiful golden seed heads

Little Bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*)
– low grass, reddish in fall

Switchgrass (*Panicum virgatum*)
– tall, decorative airy seed heads

Canadian Wild Rye (*Elymus canadensis*)
– tall, bushy head of bristly seeds



Indian Grass

FORBS (Wildflowers)

Anemone (*Anemone canadensis*)
– creeping shoreline groundcover

Blackeyed Susan (*Rudbeckia hirta*)
– drought-tolerant, orange flowers

Bloodroot (*Sanguinaria canadensis*)
– early blooming woodland plant

Blue Iris (*Iris versicolor*)
- common shoreline plant

Boneset (*Eupatorium Perfoliatum*)
-wet meadows, shorelines

Butterfly Milkweed (*Asclepias tuberosa*)
– brilliant orange blossoms, dry soil

Cardinal Flower (*Lobelia cardinalis*)
– red blooms, damp soil or shade

Foamflower (*Tiarella cordifolia*)
– needs shade, white blossoms early spring

Goldenrod (*Solidago sp.*)
– common fall bloomer, many species

Great Blue Lobelia (*Lobelia siphilitica*)
– damp soil or shade, blue blossoms

Heath Aster (*Aster ericoides*)
– white blossoms, drought-tolerant

Helen's Flower (*Helenium autumnale*)
– tall, fall bloomer, wet or dry soil

Jack in the Pulpit (*Arisaema triphyllum*)
– woodland plant

Joe-Pye Weed (*Eupatorium maculatum*)
– wetland plant, pink/purple blooms

Marsh Marigold (*Caltha palustris*)
– early spring, wetland plant



Butterfly Milkweed

New England Aster (*Aster novae-angliae*)

– fall bloomer, purple flowers

Purple Coneflower (*Echinacea purpurea*)

- purple flower, drought-resistant, sun

Swamp Milkweed (*Asclepias incarnata*)

– pink blooms, wetland plant

White Beardtongue (*Penstemon digitalis*)

– drought tolerant, June bloomer

White Trillium (*Trillium grandiflorum*)

– familiar woodland plant

Wild Bergamot (*Monarda fistulosa*)

– pale mauve blossoms, drought tolerant

Wild Columbine (*Aquilegia canadensis*)

- woodland wildflower, June blooms

See [Gardening for Wildlife](#) and [Wildflowers](#)

Books on native plants may be found at the Stratford Public Library!

19 St. Andrew Street (519-271-0220) (www.stratford.library.on.ca)

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