

Native Plants in a Suburban Garden



Rose Mallow
Hibiscus moscheutos



Cardinal Flower
Lobelia cardinalis



Rattlesnake Master
Eryngium yuccifolium



Phlox
Phlox maculata



Mountain Mint
Pycnanthemum



Purple Coneflower
Echinacea purpurea

Animating Principles

Planting native plants are driven by animating principles:

- Harmony and Balance:** Using native plants reflects a desire to maintain balance within the ecosystem, recognizing the interconnectedness of nature.
- Stewardship of the Earth:** Acting as stewards to preserve the natural heritage and ensuring the well-being of the local ecosystem.
- Education and Connection:** Urban gardens with native plants have educational value, allowing others to reconnect with the natural world and learn about local ecosystems.
- Aesthetic Value:** Finding unique beauty through seasonal variations in color, texture, and form that resonate with the local landscape's natural aesthetics.
- Connection and Reverence:** Native plants deepen our connection to the land and its history fostering a sense of belonging, grounding, and reverence for the wonders of the natural world.

Benefits of Native Plants

- Ecological Balance:** Native plants have co-evolved with local wildlife and other plants, creating a balanced and harmonious ecosystem.
- Water Conservation:** Native plants are adapted to local rainfall patterns and soil conditions often requiring less supplemental watering.
- Low Maintenance:** Native plants require less maintenance and are more resistant to local pests and diseases, reducing the need for pesticides and fertilizers.
- Soil Health:** Native plants often have deep root systems that hold the soil together, prevent erosion, and help enhance soil health by supporting a diverse range of microbes and fungi.
- Biodiversity:** Native gardens contribute to biodiversity by providing a haven for local wildlife and preventing the spread of invasive species.
- Carbon Sequestration:** Native plants capture and store carbon dioxide, playing a role in combating climate change. Their reduced need for fertilizers, pesticides, and frequent watering also reduces the overall carbon footprint.



Black-eyed Susan
Rudbeckia hirta



Butterfly Milkweed
Asclepias tuberosa



Wood Oats
Chasmanthium



Blue Mist Flower
Conoclinium coelestinum



Golden Ragwort
Packera aurea



Swamp Milkweed
Asclepias incarnata

Experience to Date

Our use of native plants has evolved over time as we have learned more about the benefits of native plants and their commercial availability improved.

2019 Fall: Bed #1 & #2	We created these beds to manage intense stormwater runoff from the streets and erosion. Plants were selected largely for their deer resistance and ability to stabilize the soil quickly.
2020 Spring: Bed #3 & #4	We created these beds to further slow stormwater runoff from the sloping front yard and plants were selected based on deer resistance.
2021 Spring: Bed #5 Fall: Bed #6	Our experience in the Master Gardener program shifted our focus to planting more native plants. We also shifted our thinking about the lawn, moving to a lawn as pathways to garden beds thereby joining the "unlawned" movement.
2022 Fall: Bed #6	We widened bed #6 to add more native plants and added a concrete biomorphic sculpture we made. We also prepped Bed #7 in the Fall.
2023 Spring: Bed #7 & #8	We prepped Bed #8 in the late Winter and planted Bed #7 and #8 in the Spring