



A Citizen's Guide to Native Landscaping

Many of the grasses planted most often for lawns aren't the best for protecting water quality. Native plants—those naturally found in Michigan landscapes—actually help improve water quality, and they're an attractive alternative to turfgrass. Natives generally have deeper roots, which absorb runoff and break down pollutants that would otherwise go straight into storm drains and rivers. Native trees, shrubs, grasses and wildflowers encourage a healthy yard, and require much less maintenance than non-natives or turfgrass!



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What are some other reasons to plant natives?



While many non-native plants, such as purple loosestrife, are colorful and attractive, they are considered “invasive” because they out-compete native species and disrupt wildlife habitat. Native plants, on the other hand, offer nesting sites and food for wildlife. A garden of prairie wildflowers, for instance, will attract butterflies and hummingbirds to your backyard. Best of all, natives are adapted to our local soils and climate, so they do not need watering and require very little fertilizer or pesticides, which can pollute our waterways. Find out more about native plants through MSU Master Gardener Hotline, or get a copy of "Landscaping for Water Quality", a series of booklets available through your local MDEQ office or from the Center for Environmental Study @ 616-988-2854.



Some nurseries specialize in native plants, and local conservation districts offer free site assessments to determine what plants will work best in your yard!



Call Michigan State University Extension Offices in to get a list of nurseries in your area.



What plants are native to Michigan?

Here's just a small sampling of plants that are native to our area and easy to find.

Ferns

Christmas
Cinnamon
Lady

Maidenhair
Ostrich
Royal

Grasses

Big bluestem grass
Cordgrass
Indian grass

Junegrass
Purple lovegrass
Wool-grass

Shrubs

Blueberry
Buttonbush
Dogwood
Fragrant sumac
Elderberry

Michigan holly
(Winterberry)
Serviceberry
Spicebush
Raspberry

Trees

American beech
Ash (Red, Green)
Blackgum
Black walnut
Canada hemlock
Douglas fir
Flowering dogwood
Hawthorn

Hickory
Maple (Red, Sugar)
Oak (Red, White)
Ohio buckeye
Paw paw
Sycamore
Tuliptree
White pine

Wildflowers

Anemone
Black-eyed Susan
Blazing star
Butterfly weed

Columbine
Coral bells
Purple coneflower
Woodland poppy