
The Best Native Perennials, Annuals, and Grasses for the Northeast

The Goldenrods and their cultivars – *Solidago caesia*, *flexicaulis*, *rigida*, *rugosa*, *sphacelata*, etc

Most goldenrods tend to be invasive, but there is no better native perennial for wildlife. They generate lots of insect protein for birds, as the blooms attract many species of pollinators, plus many species' seeds are eaten by birds and small mammals. *Caesia* and *flexicaulis* are not invasive and are for shadier areas. The others can be kept in control by planting in a bottomless container dug into the ground with the lip above the soil line. 2-4' Sun to part shade - Well-drained to dry soil

New York and New England Asters and their cultivars – *Aster* (*Symphotrichum novi-belgii* and *novae angliae*) Native asters are a great nectar source for late summer. Finches and other small songbirds also enjoy the seeds and there are many insects that use it as a larval food source. 2-5' Full Sun - Moist well-drained soil

Purple Coneflowers and their cultivars – *Echinacea purpurea* and *pallida*

Pretty blooms in late summer with interesting seedheads that Goldfinches and other birds love, plus the flowers attract butterflies and other pollinators and the leaves are host to quite a few insects...what more could you ask for? 18" - 4'. Sun to part shade - Moist well-drained to dry soil

Pyeweed, Boneset, Perennial Ageratum and their cultivars – *Eupatorium/Eutrochium*/. *dubium*, *fistulosum*, *maculatum*, *perfoliatum*, *purpureum* and *Conoclinium coelestinum*

Pyeweed has white to lilac fuzzy-topped clusters of blooms that bees and other beneficial insects love, and the leaves are used by quite a few insects, too. During winter, chickadees and woodpeckers pick at the hollow stems looking for insects. 18" - 6' Sun to part shade - Moist well-drained to wet soil

Black-eyed Susans and their cultivars – *Rudbeckia fulgida*, *hirta*(annual), *laciniata* and *triloba*

Black-eyed Susans attract insects to their leaves and sunny golden blooms (*R. hirta* has many cultivars in yellow, orange, and red blooms) and birds for their seeds. 1'-6'. Sun to part shade-well-drained soil, some tolerate extremes

Tickseeds and their cultivars – *Coreopsis lanceolata* (Lance-leaf), *verticillata* (Threadleaf) and *grandiflora* (Large Flower) Tickseeds are long-blooming yellow, orange and red daisy-like blooms. The foliage on *verticillata* is feathery and the others are more lance-like. Beneficial insects love the flowers and birds enjoy the seeds. 8"-24" Sun to part shade - Moist well-drained to dry soil

Virginia Creeper and cultivars – *Parthenocissus quinquefolia* Virginia Creeper is a fantastic native vine with deep purple fall berries, produced just in time for migrating birds, and fabulous bright red fall color. It's host to quite a few butterflies and moths and is a good nesting spot for many songbirds. 20'-30'. Sun to Full Shade - Moist well-drained to wet soil

Moss and other low Phloxes and cultivars – *Phlox subulata*, *divaricata* and *stolonifera* The groundcover phloxes are creeping mounding blankets of green. *Subulata* is evergreen. In early spring they provide nectar for the early pollinators with their blooms in shades of white, pink, rose, blue and purple, and because of their ground-hugging habit, they are good hiding spots for many types of arthropods. Garden Phlox, another native, is a much taller version with similar flowers but since creeping phlox provides more wildlife value, I chose them instead. 2" - 6" Part Shade - Evenly moist well-drained soil

Trumpet Honeysuckle and their cultivars – *Lonicera sempervirens* Trumpet Honeysuckles are wonderful semi-evergreen vines with slender tubular blooms in shades of yellow, gold, orange and scarlet which are beloved by hummingbirds and have multiple flushes of bloom throughout the summer. The berries are eaten by many types of small wildlife. 8-12'. Sun to part shade - Well-drained soil

Milkweed, Butterflyweed and cultivars – *Asclepias incarnata*, *verticillata*, *syriaca*, and *tuberosa*

White to lavender or gold to orange clusters of blooms. Most important plant for the Monarch butterfly, whose caterpillars rely on the leaves for food. Pollinators nectar on the blooms. *Tuberosa*, 2' and *verticillata* 3-4', prefer sun and drier soils, *incarnata*, 3-5' prefers sun to part shade and moist soils. *Syriaca* can become invasive.

Bee Balms and cultivars – *Monarda bradburiana*, *didyma*, and *fistulosa* Bee balms have aromatic leaves and upright clusters of tubular blooms in shades of pinks, red, and purples which hummingbirds and bees love but deer don't. 2'-4'. Sun to part shade - Evenly moist well-drained soil the leaves and field birds will nest in larger clumps. 3'-4'. Full Sun (glauca tolerates light shade) - Well-drained soil

Little Bluestem and cultivars – *Schizachyrium scoparium* Little Bluestem is a very attractive clumping native grass with narrow blue-green blades and an upright habit. In fall, it turns reddish gold and the color persists throughout winter. It's a good butterfly and moth host plant and other insects enjoy it, too. Grassland birds like the seeds and nest in larger clumps. 2'-3'. Sun to part shade - Evenly moist well-drained soil

Cransbill Geranium- *Geranium maculatum*, mid to late spring

Cardinal Flower - *Lobelia cardinalis*- , sun to partial shade, needs moist soil

Wild Columbine - *Aquilegia canadensis* -spring flowering

Muhly Grass - *Muhlenbergia*,

