

## Why are natives so important?

**Butterflies, bees, hummingbirds and moths depend on native plants** for their rich nectar and pollen. While going about their daily business, pollinators transfer pollen between flowers of the same species. These pollinated plants will then produce fertile seed. Unfortunately, native plants are becoming displaced by non-native species.

**Pollinators are critical to our food supply** and are responsible for the pollination of the vast majority of all flowering plants. Foods and beverages produced with the help of pollinators include: apples, blueberries, chocolate, coffee, melons, peaches, potatoes, pumpkins, vanilla, almonds and tequila. **Over 150 food crops in the US depend on pollinators!**

**Native plants also are beneficial to song birds.** These plants support native insects, most of which are specialists rather than generalists and will not feed on non-natives. **Insects are a critical food source** for a variety of birds and other animals, particularly those raising young. **Baby birds depend on a steady diet of insects for survival.** Native plants support 35% more caterpillar biomass than nonnatives do. **Less insects mean less birds!**

In addition, **birds depend on berries and seeds** of shrubs, grasses, and flowers in the **fall and winter.**

**Native require less care!** They are adapted to the local climate and soil conditions. Native plants work well for landscaping, and once established they rarely need watering or mowing. **Less time working on the garden means more time relaxing and enjoying it!**



## Gardening for wildlife tips

**Choose plants that bloom from early spring to late fall,** with at least three species that bloom each season. This provides food throughout the growing season.

**Provide both “host” and “nectar” plants.** Monarch butterflies are especially vulnerable due to problems in their wintering grounds as well as a decrease in milkweed and other host plants. Help monarchs by planting milkweed in your garden and fields.

**Plant with diversity in mind.** Different flower shapes, colors, sizes and heights. Plant species in bunches, rather than singly, which makes it easier for pollinators to locate them.

**Plant in layers.** Think from the tree canopies down to the ground. Map out your yard to make sure that what you have in mind will work.

Before choosing your plants, make sure they are **suitable for the sun, shade and water availability for your garden,** as well as the soil type.

Make sure the plants you are purchasing will fit in your garden when mature. **Check online for their “spread”.**

Because even “organic” pesticides can harm wildlife, **please don’t use pesticides!**

**Some insect damage on your plants is a good thing,** it means the plant is being utilized by wildlife as it should be.

**Provide water sources for wildlife.** This includes birdbaths, ponds, water features and puddling areas for butterflies.

**Leave snags if they don’t pose a hazard.** Over 85 bird species rely on dead tree snags to nest, feed or seek cover.

**Don’t remove that brush pile or rake up leaf litter.** Many animals need dense cover to nest, shelter, sleep and hide from predators. Place brush piles in an area of the property that will not create complaints from your neighbors, or better yet, explain to them how they too can help wildlife! Leave a layer of leaves: **many moths and butterflies spend their winter months hibernating as pupae in leaf litter,** which is also habitat for chipmunks, shrews, box turtles, and other wildlife.

## For more information:

**Long Island Natives:**  
<http://longislandnatives.com/>

**Long Island Native Plant Initiative:**  
<http://www.linpi.org/>

**Glover’s Perennials:**  
<http://gloverperennials.com/>

**Native Plant List for LI:**  
<http://www.plantnative.org/rpl-denjny.htm>

## Other Beneficial Plants

### Trees and shrubs

Native oaks, birches, cherries and maples  
Sassafras  
Flowering dogwood  
Redbud  
Eastern red cedar  
American holly  
Buttonbush  
American witch hazel  
Serviceberry  
Inkberry  
Bearberry

### Vines

Trumpet honeysuckle  
Virginia creeper  
Wild grape

### Grasses

Switchgrass, Blue oat grass, Pennsylvania sedge

Check our resources above for more natives!

Huntington-Oyster Bay Audubon works to protect wildlife and preserve habitat through conservation action, education, public advocacy and responsible and ethical nature exploration

[www.hobaudubon.org](http://www.hobaudubon.org)

### Photos:

Long Island Natives  
Lloyd Spitalnik  
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Stella Miller  
Stock Photos

# Landscaping with Native Plants

## Creating backyard habitats for wildlife



Huntington-Oyster Bay Audubon

Whether you have a container garden, a small yard, or a property with many acres, you can help protect wildlife. Conservation isn't just about protecting wildlife habitat in parks, preserves and wilderness areas. It's also about creating a network of pocket habitats and refuges for wildlife that provide food, water, shelter and a place to rear young, right in our own backyards!

Inside you'll find some beautiful native plants to add to your landscaping as well as tips that will help you protect wildlife

**Swamp Milkweed***Asclepias incarnate*

Height: 4-6'

Blooms May-June

Light: full sun to part shade

Soil: Medium to wet but can tolerate drought

Important nectar and host plant for Monarch butterflies  
Hummingbirds have been known to feast on milkweed!**Butterfly Weed***Asclepias tuberosa*

Height: 1-1.5'

Blooms May-July

Light: full sun to part shade

Soil: Moist to dry

Important nectar and host plant for Monarch butterflies

**Common Milkweed***Asclepias syriaca*

Height: 2-3'

Blooms June-August

Light: Full sun

Soil: Dry to medium

Can be aggressive

Important nectar and host plant for Monarch butterflies  
Some birds will use milkweed fluff for nesting material**Joe Pye Weed***A eupatorium fistulosum*

Height: 5-7'

Blooms July-October

Light: Full sun to part shade

Soil: Medium

A large plant that needs space

Nectar plant, provides seeds for birds

**New England Aster***Aster novae-angliae*

Height: 3-6'

Blooms August-September

Light: Full to part sun

Soil: Medium

Nectar and host plant

**Purple coneflower***Echinacea purpurea*

Height: 2-5'

Blooms July-August

Light: Full sun to part shade

Soil: Dry to medium

Attracts both birds and butterflies. Goldfinches love its seeds!

**Cardinal Flower***Lobelia cardinalis*

Height: 2-4'

Blooms July-October

Light: Full to partial sun

Soil: Medium to wet

Hummingbirds love this!

**Bee Balm***Monarda fistulosa*

Height: 1.5-5'

Blooms June-September

Light: Full sun to part shade

Soil: Dry to medium

Nectar for hummingbirds and butterflies

**Wild Columbine***Aquilegia canadensis*

Height: 2-3'

Blooms April-May

Light: Part shade to shade

Soil: Medium

Butterflies, bees and hummingbirds love this!

**Black-eyed Susan***Rudbeckia fulgida*

Height: 1-3.5'

Blooms June-October

Light Full sun to part sun

Soil: Dry to medium

Nectar and host plant  
House finches, chickadees and American goldfinches will feed on seed heads**Wild Geranium***Geranium maculatum*

Height: 1.5-2'

Blooms April-May

Light: Full sun to part shade

Soil: Medium

Nectar for early pollinators

Best in shady areas but will tolerate sun

**Blue False Indigo***Baptisia australis*

Height: 3-6'

Blooms May-June

Light: Full sun to part shade

Soil: Dry to medium

Nectar and host plant

**Blazing Star***Liatris spicata*

Height: 2-4'

Blooms July-August

Light: Full sun

Soil: Medium (drought tolerant)

Nectar plant for hummingbirds, bees and butterflies

**Seaside Goldenrod***Solidago sempervirens*

Height: 2-8'

Blooms July-October

Light: full sun to part sun

Soil: Dry to medium

Tolerates drought

Attracts birds in addition to pollinators

**New Jersey Tea***Ceanothus Americanus*

Height: 3-4'

Blooms May-July

Light: Full sun to part shade

Soil: Dry to medium

Nectar and host plant

**Spicebush***Lindera benzoin*

Height: 6-12'

Blooms March

Light: Full sun to part shade

Soil: Medium

Host plant for Spicebush swallowtail, birds eat the berries

**Winterberry***Ilex verticillata*

Height 3-12'

Blooms June-July

Full sun to part shade

Soil: Medium to wet

Berries are an important food for birds through winter

Make sure to purchase both male and female plants

**Lowbush blueberry***Vaccinium angustifolium*

Height 1-2'

Blooms May

Light: Full sun to part shade

Soil: Medium

Mid-summer berries are relished by humans and birds

**Pagoda Dogwood***Cornus alternifolia*

Height 15-25"

Flowers May-June

Light: Full sun to part shade

Soil: Medium

Many birds love the fruits of this tree

**Little Bluestem***Schizachyrium scoparium*

Height 2-4'

Blooms August-October

Light: Full sun

Soil: Dry to medium

Great seed source for birds, also acts as a host plant

**Note: These plants do not establish as quickly as traditional perennials as native plants are not generally available in large sizes. During the first year, plants establish their root systems rather than above-ground biomass.**