


Using Native Plants to Improve the Productivity and Health of your Vegetable and Fruit Gardens


5/11/2021

Recommended Plant Species (NW Ohio and SE Michigan)



Spring Flowering

| Image | Common Name (<i>scientific name</i>) | Notes |
|--|---|---|
|  | Foxglove Beardtongue (<i>Penstemon digitalis</i>) | 18" to 3' tall; white trumpet-shaped flowers with purple lines in throat for bees; blooms May, June, July; of special value for native bees; attracts hummingbirds, bumblebees and other valuable pollinators. More information at: https://www.wildflower.org/plants/result.php?id_plant=PEDI and https://www.illinoiswildflowers.info/prairie/plant_x/fx_penstemonx.htm |



Summer Flowering

| Image | Common Name (<i>scientific name</i>) | Notes |
|---|---|--|
|  | Swamp Milkweed (<i>Asclepias incarnata</i>) | In June and July, showy deep pink flower clusters attract numerous butterflies and insects. This grows from 2 - 4 feet tall, preferring moist soil but thriving in drier conditions as well. Belonging to the Milkweed group, it is critical for the Monarch butterfly caterpillar. More information at: https://www.wildflower.org/plants/result.php?id_plant=ASIN and https://www.illinoiswildflowers.info/wetland/plants/sw_milkweed.htm |

Summer Flowering

| Image | Common Name (<i>scientific name</i>) | Notes |
|--|--|---|
|  | <p>Virginia Mountain Mint (<i>Pycnanthemum virginianum</i>)</p> | <p>3 – 4 feet tall with white to light lavender blooms. Another deep-rooted prairie plant native to northwest Ohio. Also benefits a large number of native pollinators. (photo by Diane DeYonker). More information at: https://www.wildflower.org/plants/result.php?id_plant=PYVI and https://www.illinoiswildflowers.info/prairie/plantx/cmt_mintx.htm</p> |
|  | <p>Dense Blazing Star (<i>Liatris spicata</i>)</p> | <p>2 – 5 feet tall; this prairie species provides bright lavender blooms in midsummer. This is a showy plant and often used as an ornamental. It is one of the deep-rooted prairie plants that the early settlers would see as they road into the tall grass prairies of our area. This has huge value for butterflies and other pollinators. More info at: https://www.wildflower.org/plants/result.php?id_plant=LISP https://www.illinoiswildflowers.info/wetland/plants/msh_blazingstar.htm</p> |

Fall Flowering

| Image | Common Name (scientific name) | Notes |
|--|---|---|
|  | New England Aster (<i>Symphyotrichum novae-angliae</i>) | Fall flowering with striking, abundant purple blossoms. Height is 3 – 6 feet. Many people cut it back in mid summer to keep it shorter and producing more numerous flowers. The nectar is important for the fall migration of the Monarch butterfly. It is also important critical nutrition for the overwintering pollinators. Planted in combination with Goldenrods presents a pleasing color combination of purple and gold. More information at: https://www.wildflower.org/plants/result.php?id_plant=SYNO2 and https://www.illinoiswildflowers.info/prairie/planx/ne_asterx.htm |
|  | Stiff Goldenrod (<i>Oligoneuron rigidum</i>) | The 3 - 4 foot stalks produce striking yellow flowers. Easy to grow in all types of soil conditions. The nectar provides critical nutrition for the fall migrating Monarch butterflies and overwintering pollinators. (photo by RW Smith – Wildflower.org). More info at: https://www.wildflower.org/plants/result.php?id_plant=OLRI and https://www.illinoiswildflowers.info/prairie/planx/stf_goldenrodx.htm |

Not recommended for small gardens (aggressive native)

| Image | Common Name (scientific name) | Notes |
|---|---|---|
|  | Canada Goldenrod (<i>Solidago canadensis</i>) | Valuable native plant for pollinators and other wildlife but spreads aggressively by seed and rhizomes. Tough to manage when not controlled by other aggressive native plants. (photo by RW Smith – Wildflower.org) More info at: https://www.wildflower.org/plants/result.php?id_plant=SOCA6 and https://www.illinoiswildflowers.info/prairie/planx/cn_goldenrodx.htm |

Where to get Native Plants:

See native plant sources for NW Ohio and SE Michigan at <https://wildonesoakopenings.org/native-plant-sources-2021/>

Landowners on the Oak Openings registry can apply for seed through GRI in exchange for volunteer hours. This is usually for lawn-to-prairie projects. Here is a link with more information: <https://www.oakopenings.org/native-plant-materials-distribution-project/>

Native Bee Nest Box – plans - <https://www.xerces.org/publications/fact-sheets/nests-for-native-bees>

Making a Difference:

Pledge and record your native plantings and pins will show on map where you'll see how much progress is being made:

Clear Choices: Greater Toledo / Lake Erie - ToledoLakeErie.ClearChoicesCleanWater.org.

Home Grown National Park - <https://homegrownnationalpark.org/about-us>

Resources:

Pollinators of Native Plants by Heather Holm - <https://www.pollinationpress.com/>

Bees: An Identification and Native Plant Forage Guide by Heather Holm - <https://www.pollinationpress.com/>

Farming with Beneficial Insects – Xerces Society - <http://xerces.org/>

Attracting Native Pollinators – Xerces Society - <http://xerces.org/>

Beyond Pesticides – Advocacy organization to help lead the transition to a world free of toxic pesticides. You can look up any chemical pesticide and see the pros and cons and alternatives. Beyond <https://www.beyondpesticides.org/>

Wild Ones Oak Openings Region Chapter –

Web: <https://wildonesoakopenings.org/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/wildonesoakopenings>

Other Recommended Readings:

Bringing Nature Home: How You Can Sustain Wildlife with Native Plants, by Doug Tallamy

Nature's Best Hope: A New Approach to Conservation that Starts in Your Yard, by Doug Tallamy

The Nature of Oaks: The Rich Ecology of Our Most Essential Native Trees, by Doug Tallamy

Wasps: Their Biology, Diversity, and Role as Beneficial Insects and Pollinators of Native Plants, by Heather Holm