

America's Anniversary Garden:TM Native Plants

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The Commemoration

In 2007, Virginia marks the 400th anniversary of Jamestown, the first permanent English settlement in the Americas. The 18-month-long commemoration began in May 2006 and features educational programs, cultural events, fairs, and various live and broadcast entertainments sponsored by the Commonwealth of Virginia and many of its counties, cities, and towns. See the America's 400th Anniversary website at www.americasanniversary.com for information about this salute to America's birthplace. Communities and citizens will be improving their streets, parks, schools, businesses, and gardens as part of the commemoration.



A Statewide Garden Theme

Virginia Cooperative Extension (VCE) developed the **America's Anniversary GardenTM** program to help individuals, communities, and groups mark America's 400th anniversary with a signature landscape, garden, or container planting. These signature gardens have red, white, and blue color schemes and are being promoted throughout Virginia and beyond. This is the fourth in a series of VCE publications on garden design, plant installation, and maintenance for an **America's Anniversary GardenTM**. Previous publications and additional information are available on the America's Anniversary GardenTM website, www.ext.vt.edu/americasgarden.

What Are Native Plants?

Native plants are those that are indigenous to a region and possess traits that make them uniquely adapted to local conditions. They have evolved over time, adapting to factors specific to their region such as climate, moisture, soils, and interactions with other plants, animals, and insects. They can match the finest cultivated plants in beauty, and tend to be hardier and better able to resist drought, insects, and disease if used in locations that approximate their native environments. Native plants are also well suited for the current trend in "low-maintenance" gardening and landscaping.

Plant Natives: A Celebration of America's Natural Heritage

Utilizing native plants in the landscape is a way to respect the natural heritage and cultural interests. Some plants played a significant role in Native American culture or in European exploration and settlement. English colonists brought with them seeds, bulbs, and roots of their favorite plants so their gardens became a blend of Old World favorites and the native plants they found in the New World. Native species such as dogwood (*Cornus florida*) and fringetree (*Chionanthus*



Fringetree (*Chionanthus virginicus*)



Flowering Dogwood (*Cornus florida*)

virginicus) were documented by early 18th century plantmen and were noted for their beauty and interest, not unlike their appeal to gardeners today.

Native vs. Non-native Species

Non-natives are species that have been introduced to an area and did not evolve and naturally adapt to the specific ecological conditions of a region. Some non-native or alien species have difficulty thriving without extra maintenance such as irrigation, fertilization, and pest control. Other non-native species can get out of control and create an unhealthy monoculture with little space remaining for native species. Non-native species that grow in this manner are called “invasive species.” Unlike some plants introduced from other areas, native species rarely become invasive.

Native Plants for Wildlife

Native butterflies, hummingbirds, songbirds, beneficial insects, and small mammals are accustomed to the food and habitat provided by plants native to a region. Native plants provide familiar sources of food and shelter, especially important in urban and suburban settings as natural habitats are replaced with development. Native plants have qualities and adaptive traits that make them aesthetically pleasing, practical, and ecologically valuable for landscaping. Even small gardens and container plantings can attract wildlife. A variety of native plants will attract different species of wildlife and contribute to a healthy ecosystem.

Locating Native Plants

The native plant suggestions chosen for the **America’s Anniversary Garden™** program exhibit the signature red, white, and blue color scheme. The plants were selected in cooperation with the Virginia Native Plant Society. Although there are numerous websites and specialty nurseries that cater to native plant enthusiasts, the recommended selections were chosen for their availability at local garden centers, nurseries, specialty growers, and retailers of plants that offer nursery-propagated species.

Site Assessment, Planning, and Design

A benefit of designing with native plants is their ability to grow under a wide variety of conditions. Assess your site for sun, shade, soil type, and drainage. Understand the minimum and maximum light and moisture requirements for each species and be sure to group them according to their cultural requirements. You can integrate a few of the suggested native plants into an existing **America’s Anniversary Garden™** design or choose to plant an all-native design. Natives will add a naturalistic design element to your landscape and can be added in stages. Also assess your weed population prior to planting. Eliminating weeds prior to planting is easier and less time consuming than trying to control them in a newly planted site.

Soil Preparation

Native plants are adapted to a variety of native soils. If you choose a plant that is adapted to your existing soil, little or no soil amendment is needed. If your original topsoil has been removed, either purchase similar topsoil or add some amendments to improve the subsoil. Simulate your own native soils by incorporating minimal amounts of manure and organic matter such as composted leaves.

Care and Maintenance

It will take time for your native-plant garden to become well established. Irrigation is critical for the two to three weeks after planting or longer, depending on season and rainfall. A good rule of thumb for the first growing season after planting is for plants to receive an inch of water a week. You can measure this with a rain gauge or any straight-sided container. Pruning will be necessary for fast growing species and to maintain the visual quality you desire. Clipping spent flowers and branch tips will encourage plant fullness and longer bloom times for perennials. Some plants have very ornamental seed heads that you may want to leave for winter interest. Native plants typically do not need fertilization and many actually prefer poor soils.



Virginia Sweetspire (*Itea virginica*)

A Final Word

The **America's Anniversary Garden™** program provides publications and information to assist gardeners in achieving confidence, success, beauty, and enjoyment as they compose their gardens and landscapes. Planting an **American's Anniversary Garden™** will provide personal satisfaction, an opportunity to showcase Virginia's proud heritage, and a visual pleasure for all to see.



Virginia Bluebells (*Mertensia virginica*)

Resources

Annuals: Culture and Maintenance, Virginia Cooperative Extension publication 426-200, <http://www.ext.vt.edu/pubs/envirohort/426-200/426-200.html>

Perennials: Culture, Maintenance and Propagation, Virginia Cooperative Extension publication 426-203, <http://www.ext.vt.edu/pubs/envirohort/426-203/426-203.html>

Tree and Shrub Planting Guidelines, Virginia Cooperative Extension publication 430-295, <http://www.ext.vt.edu/pubs/trees/430-295/430-295.html>

Backyard Wildlife Habitats, Virginia Cooperative Extension publication 426-070, <http://www.ext.vt.edu/pubs/wildlife/426-070/426-070.html>

Virginia Native Plant Society: <http://www.vnps.org>

Native Plants for Conservation, Restoration, and Landscaping, Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation, <http://www.dcr.state.va.us/dnh/native.htm>

Native Plant Information Network, Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center, <http://www.wildflower2.org/>

Gardens of Colonial Williamsburg, Gardening, Colonial Williamsburg, <http://www.history.org/history/CWLand/index.cfm>

Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, <http://www.history.org/>

America's Anniversary Garden™, <http://www.ext.vt.edu/americasgarden/>

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Wild Stonecrop (*Sedum ternatum*)

Disclaimer: Commercial products, bulbs, and planting techniques are named and described in this publication for informational purposes only. Virginia Cooperative Extension does not endorse these products and techniques and does not intend discrimination against other products and techniques which also may be suitable.

Red, White, and Blue Native Plants For Virginia Gardens - All Regions

Sponsored by John Clayton Chapter, Virginia Native Plant Society

Botanical Name	Common Name	Wildlife		Height	Dry/ Wet	Light	Color
		Value	Blooms				
Trees							
<i>Amelanchier canadensis</i>	Serviceberry	F, N, S	Apr-May	10' - 20'	W-D	LS-SU	White blooms, red fall foliage, red fruit
<i>Chionanthus virginicus</i>	Fringetree	S	May-Jun	12' - 20'	W-D	LS-SU	White blooms, blue fruit
<i>Cornus florida</i>	Flowering Dogwood	F, L	Apr-May	15' - 30'	M	LS-SU	White blooms, red fruit
<i>Ilex opaca</i>	American Holly	F	May-Jun	15' - 40'	M	SU-LS	White flowers, red fruit
<i>Nyssa sylvatica</i>	Black Gum	F, S	Apr-Jun	30' - 60'	M-W	SU-LS	White blooms, red fall foliage, blue fruit
<i>Oxydendron arboreum</i>	Sourwood	N	June-July	15' - 30'	M-D	SU-LS	White blooms, red fall foliage
<i>Juniperus virginiana</i>	Eastern Red Cedar	F, L, S		15' - 35'	M-D	SU-LS	Evergreen, blue fruit
<i>Magnolia virginiana</i>	Sweetbay	F	May-Jun	10' - 60'	M-W	SU-PS	White flowers, red fruit
Shrubs							
<i>Aronia arbutifolia</i>	Red Chokeberry	F	Mar-May	5' - 10'	W-D	SU-PS	White blooms, red fall foliage
<i>Cephalanthus occidentalis</i>	Buttonbush	F, N	Jul-Aug	6' - 12'	M-W	SU-SH	White blooms
<i>Cornus amomum</i>	Silky Dogwood	F, L, N	Apr-May	3' - 10'	M-W	SU-LS	White blooms, blue fruit
<i>Ilex verticillata</i>	Winterberry	F	Jun-Jul	6' - 10'	M-W	SU-LS	White blooms, red fruit
<i>Itea virginica</i>	Virginia Sweetspire	N	Apr - June	3' - 6'	W-D	SU-LS	White blooms, red fall foliage
<i>Viburnum dentatum</i>	Arrowwood	F, N	May-Jun	6' - 12'	M-D	SU-LS	White blooms
<i>Viburnum nudum</i>	Witherod	F, N	Apr-May	6' - 12'	W-D	SU-LS	White blooms, red fall foliage, red and blue fruit
<i>Vaccinium corymbosum</i>	Highbush Blueberry	F, N, L, S	Mar-May	3' - 10'	W-D	SU-LS	Red fall foliage, blue fruit
Vines							
<i>Clematis virginiana</i>	Virgin's Bower		Jul-Sep	5' - 18'	M-D	SU-LS	White blooms
<i>Lonicera sempervirens</i>	Trumpet Honeysuckle	F, H	Apr-Oct	4' - 15'	M	SU-PS	Red blooms, red fruit
<i>Parthenocissus quinquefolia</i>	Virginia Creeper	F, L		4' - 40'	W-D	SU-SH	Red fall foliage, blue fruit
<i>Passiflora incarnata</i>	Passionvine	F, L, N	Jun-Jul	6' - 10'	W-D	SU-PS	Blue blooms
<i>Wisteria frutescens</i>	American Wisteria	N	May-Jun	10' - 25'	M-W	SU-PS	Blue blooms
Perennials							
<i>Aquilegia canadensis</i>	Columbine	H, N	Apr-Jul	1' - 2'	M	PS	Red blooms
<i>Arunco dioicus</i>	Goat's Beard	N	Apr-June	3' - 6'	M-D	PS-SH	White blooms
<i>Asclepias verticillata</i>	Whorled Milkweed	D, H	Jun-Sep	1' - 2'	M-D	SU	White blooms
<i>Hibiscus moscheutos</i>	Common Rose Mallow	N	Jul-Aug	4' - 7'	W-D	SU	White and red blooms
<i>Iris virginica</i>	Blue Flag		May-June	2' - 3'	M-W	SU-PS	Blue blooms
<i>Lobelia cardinalis</i>	Cardinal Flower	D, H	Jul-Oct	3' - 4'	W	SU-SH	Red blooms
<i>Lupinus perennis</i>	Sundial Lupine	N	Apr-June	1' - 2'	D-M	SU-PS	Blue blooms
<i>Mertensia virginica</i>	Virginia Bluebells	D	Mar-May	1' - 2'	M-W	PS-SH	Blue blooms
<i>Parthenium integrifolium</i>	Wild Quinine		June-Sept	3' - 4'	M-D	SU	White blooms
<i>Phlox divaricata</i>	Wild Blue Phlox	N	Mar-May	12" - 14"	M	PS-SH	Blue blooms
<i>Polemonium reptans</i>	Jacob's Ladder		Mar-May	10" - 15"	M	PS-LS	Blue blooms
<i>Scutellaria integrifolia</i>	Hyssop Skullcap		May-July	15" - 20"	M-D	SU	Blue blooms
<i>Sedum ternatum</i> (groundcover)	Wild Stonecrop		Apr-June	6"	M	SU-PS	White blooms
<i>Sisyrinchium angustifolium</i>	Blue-eyed Grass		Apr-June	10" - 15"	M	SU-PS	Blue blooms
<i>Symphyotrichum lateriflorum</i>	Calico Aster	N, L	Sept-Oct	2' - 3'	M-D	SU	White blooms
<i>Symphyotrichum leave</i>	Smooth Aster	N, L	Sept-Oct	2' - 3'	M-D	SU-PS	Blue blooms
<i>Thalictrum pubescens</i>	Meadow Rue		Jun-Aug	1' - 6'	M-W	SU-SH	White blooms
<i>Verbena hastata</i>	Blue Vervain	N, S	Jun-Oct	2' - 4'	M-W	S-PS	Blue blooms
Ornamental Grasses							
<i>Panicum virgatum</i>	Switchgrass	D, N, S	Jul-Oct	3'	M-W	SU	'Shenandoah' red blooms, foliage; 'Dallas Blues', blue foliage
<i>Schizachyrium scoparium</i>	Little Bluestem	D, cover	Aug-Oct	2'	D-M	SU	Blue foliage, red fall foliage

¹Wildlife Value: D=deer resistant; F=fruit; H=attracts hummingbirds; L=larvae host; N=butterfly nectar; S=attracts songbirds

²Soil: D=dry; M=moist; W=wet

³Light: LS=light shade; PS=part sun; SH=shade; SU=sun