



NATIVE PLANTS!

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Native Plants 101



What is a native?



Why use native plants?



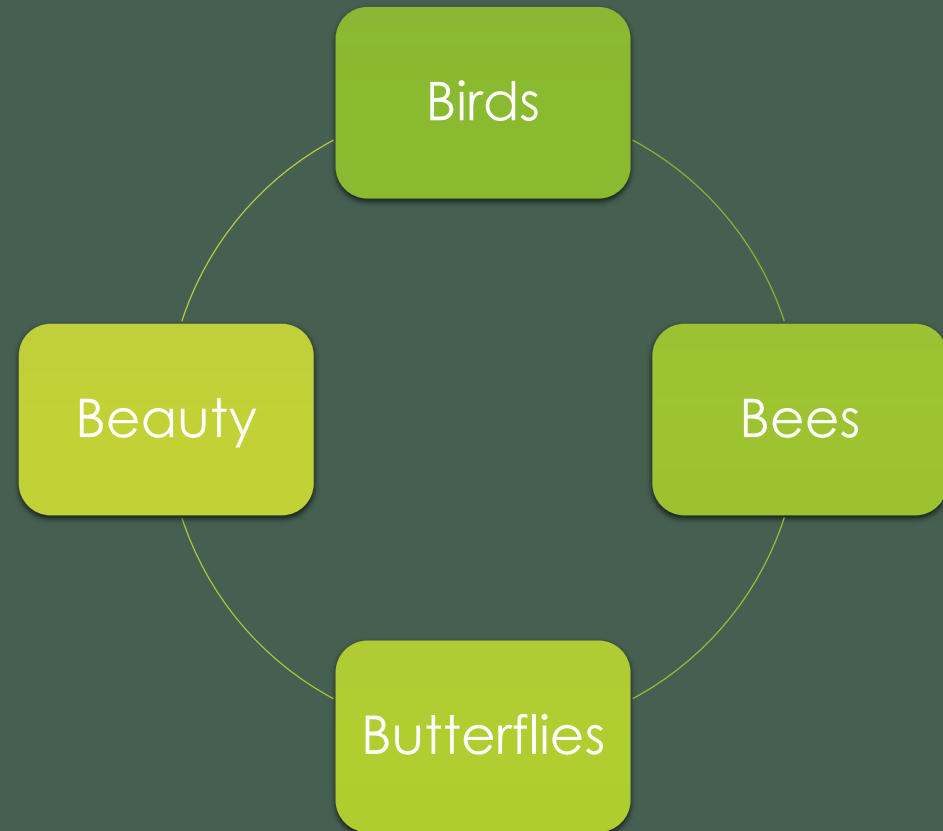
Garden Lessons and Learnings

- “Native plants are those that occur naturally in a region in which they evolved.
- They are the ecological basis upon which life depends, including birds and people.
- Without them and the insects that co-evolved with them, local birds cannot survive.”

- <https://www.audubon.org/content/why-native-plants-matter>

What is a
native
plant?

Why? 4 B's





Birds

Eastern Goldfinch – NJ state bird. Among thistle.

1. Local food source.
2. Caterpillars rely on native plants source of food.
3. Birds need hundreds of caterpillars to feed their young to survive....let alone thrive.

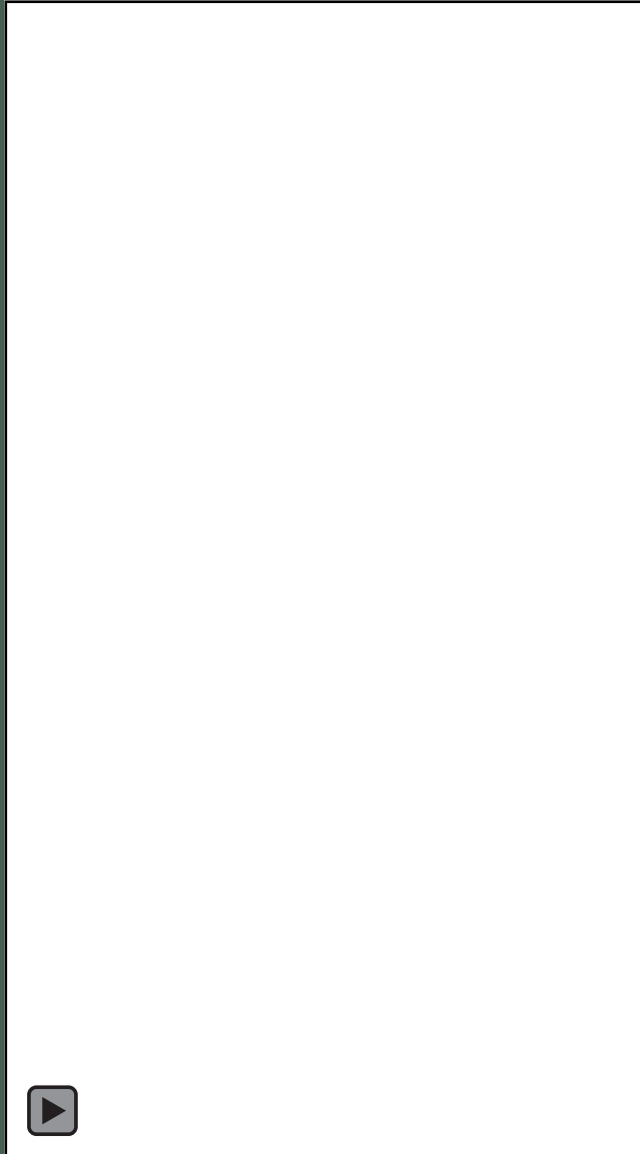
Photo credit:
<https://www.statesymbolsusa.org/symbol-official-item/new-jersey/state-bird/eastern-goldfinch>



Bird Food
Black-eyed Susan
keystone plants.
Birds eat the seed

Photo: ETalmon

Bees



- Bees on the bee balm!
 - at Chateau Talmont

1. Bees look for and eat what they know. Greatest nutritional value.

2. The benefit of multiple native blooming times is having a consistent food source.

<https://njnativeplantmap.com/index.php/why-grow-natives/>

Etalmont – garden 2023



For most plants,
the right pollinator is
a bee.

Douglas W. Tallamy

Nature's Best Hope: How You Can Save the World in Your Own Yard (2023)



Butterflies



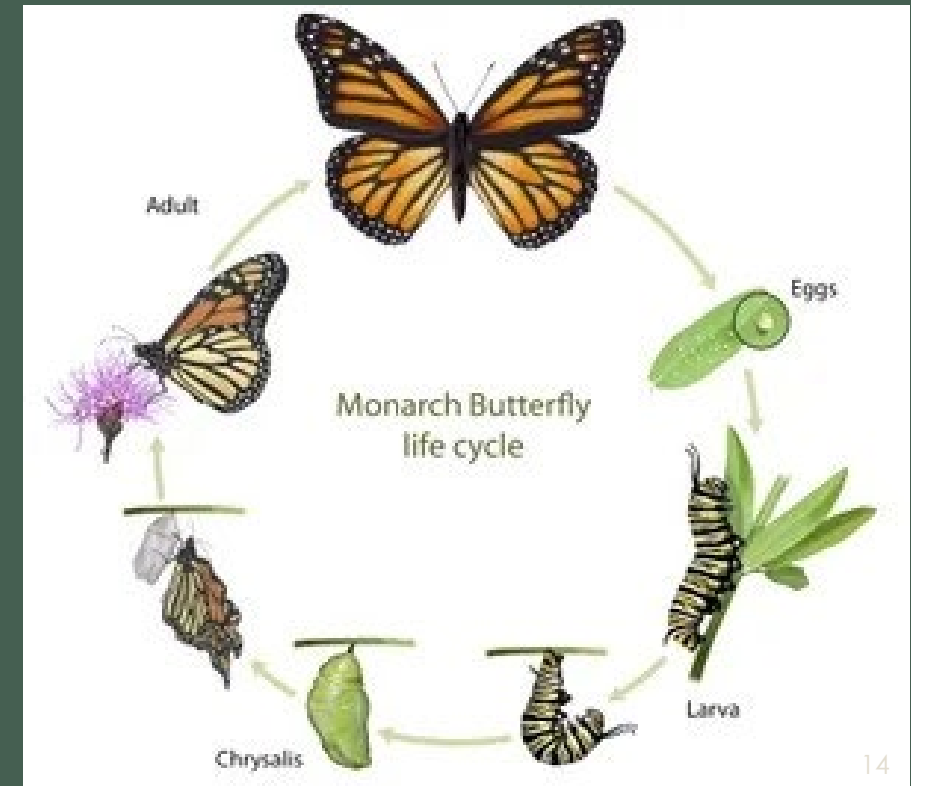
- Monarch butterfly on an obedient plant
- Caterpillars become butterflies.
- Native plants grow, mature, and have the habitat that caterpillars like.
- “Farm to table” concept. Eat local, Local food and habitat
- Photo Chateau Talmont

The Monarch and the Milkweed... *and asters and golden rods*

Monarchs are endangered

Milkweed – where caterpillars lay eggs and caterpillars eat.

Asters & goldenrods – butterflies need nectar to eat



Swamp Milkweed – Care Card

Sunlight

- full sun but can tolerate partial shade. Optimal with at least 6-8 hours of [sunlight per day](#)

Soil Conditions

- thrives in moist to wet soil conditions. Can also tolerate well-drained soils.

Planting

- space the plants about 18-24 inches apart (okay to plant closer when young, can divide later)
- They are tallplant in the back of the garden bed.
- Keep watered and mulched first year, once established, just monitor. Water during heat spell or drought.
- <https://content.gardenforwildlife.com/learn/everything-to-know-about-swamp-milkweed>

Beauty...even in cities!



<https://www.thehighline.org/>



New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station
Clifford E. & Melda C. Snyder Research &
Extension Farm



Pix by Etalmont 8/28/24 at Master Gardener event at Snyder Research and Extension Farm

[Clifford E. & Melda C. Snyder Research & Extension Farm \(rutgers.edu\)](https://rutgers.edu)



GIVE NATIVES A TRY



Benefits

Plants native to NJ, thrive
in NJ soil and NJ climate

So.....

1. Less water = less costly and time-consuming
2. There is less need for fertilizers and pesticides
3. Less wear and tear (on you, environment, equipment, everything)
4. The benefit of learning something new
AND
5. Bragging rights for helping the birds, bees, and butterflies...so say nothing of making things beautiful

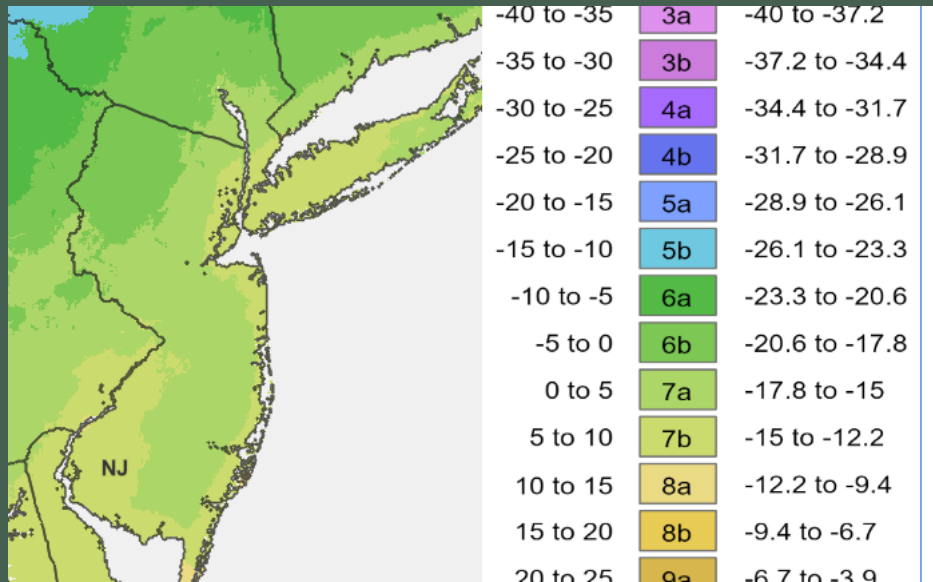
6. Less work!



NOW WHAT?

Online and nurseries.

Right Plant, Right Place



The screenshot shows the homepage of the Native Plant Finder website. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for 'LEARN MORE', 'REGISTER', 'LOGIN', and a location pin icon showing '07090'. A search bar is also present. Below the navigation bar, the website title 'Native Plant Finder [BETA]' is displayed. There are three main navigation buttons: 'FIND NATIVE PLANTS', 'FIND BUTTERFLIES', and 'MY LIST'. The main content area features a section titled 'Native Plants (By Category) - Trees and Shrubs'. This section includes three bullet points: 'Discover native plants, ranked by the number of butterfly and moth species that use them as host plants for their caterpillars.', 'Save plants to My List.', and 'Learn more about why native plants are important and how to choose the best plants for you.' Below this section, there is a heading for 'TREES AND SHRUBS' with a small icon of a tree and shrubs.

- 2023 Plant Hardiness Map

<https://nativeplantfinder.nwf.org/Plants>

Keystone Plants

<https://www.nwf.org/Garden-for-Wildlife/About/Native-Plants/keystone-plants-by-ecoregion>



Keystone Native Plants Eastern Temperate Forests – Ecoregion 8

Native plants have tight relationships with wildlife, formed over many thousands of years, providing natural sources of food, cover and places to raise young. Without healthy native plant communities, wildlife cannot survive. Every ecoregion has different native plant communities.

Keystone plants are native plants critical to the food web and necessary for many wildlife species to complete their life cycle. Without keystone plants in the landscape, butterflies, native bees, and birds will not thrive. 96% of our terrestrial birds rely on insects supported by keystone plants.

There are two types of keystone plants:



Host plants that feed the young caterpillars of approximately 90% of butterflies and moths (Lepidoptera).



Plants that feed specialist bees who only eat pollen from specific plants. Keystone plants for native bees feed both specialist and generalist bees.



Top 30 Native Host Plants for Pollen Specialist Bees

Genus	Common Plant Name	# of Pollen Specialist Bee Species Relying on this Plant
<i>Helianthus</i>	sunflower	50
<i>Solidago</i>	goldenrod	42
<i>Symphotrichum</i>	aster	33
<i>Grindelia</i>	gumweed	31
<i>Rudbeckia</i>	black eyed susan	29
<i>Heterotheca</i>	goldenaster	24
<i>Coreopsis</i>	tickseed	22
<i>Chrysopsis</i>	goldenaster	20
<i>Verbesina</i>	wingstem	17
<i>Bidens</i>	beggartick	15
<i>Cirsium</i>	thistle	15
<i>Salix</i>	willow	14

What to buy



Natives are popping up everywhere!

R RUTGERS UNIVERSITY
New Jersey Agricultural
Experiment Station

MIDDLESEX
COUNTY • NJ



Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Middlesex County's

Fall 2024 Online Native Plant Sale



go.rutgers.edu/nativeplantsale

Our native plant sale is open! Online only. Limited supply available. Plant pickup will be Saturday, September 7th and the sale will end on September 6 or while supplies last.

Fall is a great time to get started on native plant gardening and give them a head start on next year. These preplanned gardens are designed to provide flowers from spring through fall and to attract butterflies and birds. "You pick" options also available.

"Gardens" contain 8 plants in 3.5" square pots and cover 32 square feet.

PAYMENT
Gardens: \$30 plus tax

Credit card or digital checks only. Payment must be made online before pickup. All sales are final. To make your purchase, you must first create an account or login to your existing account with the Division of Continuing Studies.

PLANT PICKUP
Saturday, September 7th from 9:30 am to noon at
Davidson Mill Pond Park,
42 Riva Avenue in North Brunswick, New Jersey.

NOTE: No plant replacements. For questions please contact
Michele Bakacs at bakacs@njaes.rutgers.edu.



Scan here
for the sale



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Plants



St. Johns Wort



Coneflower



Turtlehead



LESSONS LEARNED

Planting Tips!

- Dig hole. Water if soil is super dry. Put a little compost in bottom.
- Loosen roots and place in hole.
- Top dress with a little compost if you need. Tamp down.
- WATER! Gets the soil and root touching. Decreases stress on plant
- **Native plants need to be watered regularly in 1st year.** Most do not need much water after they are established.
- NAME TAGS! So you remember what you planted!

Learnings:

- Plugs! Small but mighty
- Benefit is that they are deeply rooted, water well till established.
- Less water, less weeding, and less work!

- ONLINE resources and retail sites:

1. PollenNation (plugs, excellent resource)

<https://www.thepollennation.com/>
BRIDGETON, NJ

2. Toadshade Gardens. Excellent resources <https://toadshade.com/>

Local nurseries – look for native cultivars.

Many are advertising now!

3. *The Native Plant Society of New Jersey – has list but you can find them anywhere now!*



Springtime plug to fall growth

Obedient Plant

Curly Wood sedge

Hairy petunia

Coneflower

Longsepal Beardtong

Tall Anemone

Blue Wood Aster

Witchazel

And yes, a non-native
grass in the middle!



Lessons

Be Patient

Water well in 1st year

You will be rewarded for
your efforts

1st year sleeper, 2nd year
creeper, 3rd year Ka-Pow!

70:30 – native/non-native

Investing in our future

**Small things with big
impact.**

Resources

- Local Library – many now have free Seed Libraries
- **Master Gardener Program – Union County**
Madeline Flahive DiNardo, County Agent
908-654-9854 ext.4, flahive@njaes.rutgers.edu
- **Garden Helpline**
908-654-9852
mastergardeners@ucnj.org
- Nature's Best Hope by Douglas W. Tallamy – University of Delaware professor
- Incorporating Native Plants in Your Residential Landscape. Rutgers Extension.
<https://njaes.rutgers.edu/fs1140/>
- <https://www.jerseyyards.org/jersey-friendly-plants/native-plants-public-gardens/>
- NJ Native Plant Society -<https://npsnj.org/>
- [Homegrown National Park - Directory - Homegrown National Park](https://homegrownnationalpark.org/)
<https://homegrownnationalpark.org/>
- World Wildlife Fund <https://www.nwf.org/Garden-for-Wildlife/About/Native-Plants/keystone-plants-by-ecoregions>
- U.S. Forest Service.
https://www.fs.usda.gov/wildflowers/Native_Plant_Materials/Native_Gardening/index.shtml



THANK YOU

- photo credit: Izzy Julio
- Master Gardener Spring Sale 2024