

FOUNTAIN ROCK
NATURE CENTER
2ND

ANNUAL
NATIVE
PLANT
SALE
FALL 2023



planting guide



“Our environmental boat has sprung a leak. Many of us are trying to repair the leak; others are bailing to keep us afloat until the leak is plugged. What is baffling, though, is that far too many of us are dumping new buckets of water into our boat, as if sinking it will not be a problem for them. At this point, each of us must decide what role we will play in the future: Will you be a bailer or a dumper? Your choice of plants in your yard will determine what role you have chosen.”

Douglas Tallamy, *Nature's Best Hope*



Written and illustrated by Julia Rasnake
Maryland Master Naturalist 2021



Hello and welcome to our second annual native plant sale! We're so glad you're here. Our group of volunteers has been busy as the bees we are planting these flowers for, working to pull this event together. Why the excitement? What's the buzz about native plants?

In the following pages, we'll share some thoughts and ideas about what makes planting native flora so special, alongside tips and tricks for getting the most out of the plants we're offering this season. We want you to know how much we appreciate you—by participating in this sale, you're healing the ecosystem, protecting wildlife, and fighting climate change, not to mention supporting local environmental advocacy, nature education, and community gardens. When you buy a plant here, you affirm you're a part of this community of volunteers, neighbors, and friends. We're proud to have you!

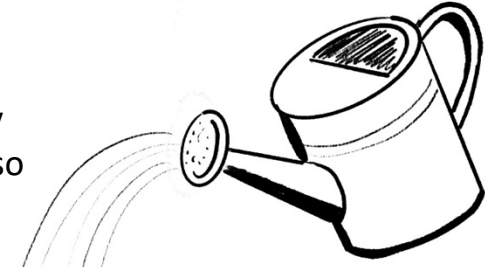
What brings us together is our love of nature. We all want to live in a universe with butterflies, and birdsong, and want to care for the planet that sustains us. Sometimes, in the face of the dismal parade of bad news we hear about the environment, it can seem hopeless— but we don't buy that. No matter how much cement gets poured, grass is faithfully waiting to push up through the tiniest crack. Wildness will come striding into any space we cede to it. Alone, we can transform our own spaces into vibrant, wild spaces. Together, we can do a whole lot more. It's a big deal to put these native species in your garden. Identifying small action steps reminds us that we are powerful, and what we do makes a difference. It's as simple—and joyful—as planting a flower.

Thank you for being here!



Planting Tips

Remember to **water your plants in their starter pots**. The day before you transplant them, **set them out** in their new spots so they can start to **acclimate**, and **water the ground** where you plan to plant.



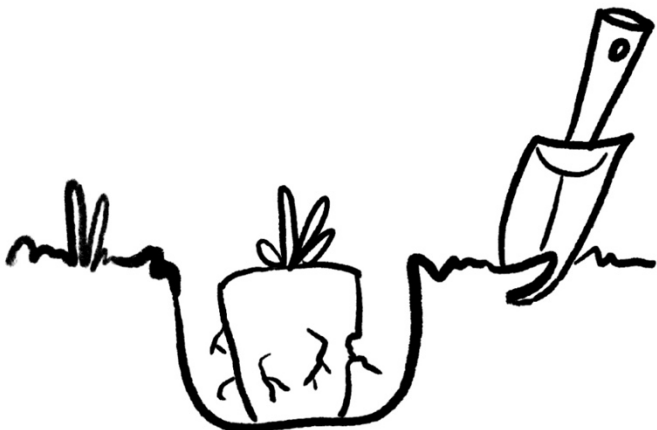
Dig a hole about the depth of the pot, but twice as wide. If needed, enrich the soil with compost and break up clay and rocks to promote good root development. Make sure you are digging the holes with adequate distance between them to accommodate the size of the plant when it is fully grown—usually **at least two feet apart**.

Gently **remove the plant from the pot**, squeezing the sides to loosen the dirt or cutting off any roots growing out of the bottom of the pot if they are in the way. If the roots are packed in tightly, you can gently loosen them to help them spread out when planted.

If the plant is rootbound, with many roots twisted into a knot at the bottom of the pot, you can slice off that portion before planting with a soil knife or shears.

Place the plant into the hole you've dug, making sure the plant emerges from the hole **at the same level** as the surrounding ground, not too deep. Continue filling in around it with soil and **press firmly**. After planting, **water the roots well**.

New plants should be checked on and watered frequently according to their needs to help them get a good start. This may be labor intensive at first, but that will change. The great thing about a native wildflower garden is that, once the plants get established, they won't be much work to tend. They are adapted to local temperatures and rainfall and will come up year after year.



Where to Plant?

Planting by Microclimate

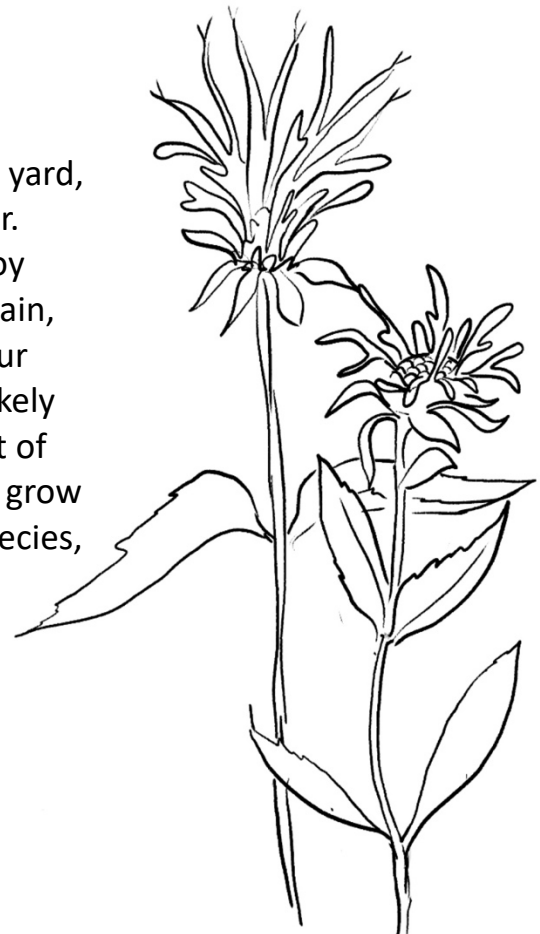
All the plants we sell are native to our region, and that means they are adapted to survive and thrive in your yard. However, we need to pick the best spot for each plant according to its needs. So how do we choose?

The good news is, there are a variety of microclimates in almost everyone's yard. There's a big difference between the flat, sunny spot by the driveway and the shady, damp area along the edge of the house, for example. Every odd corner is the perfect spot for one plant or another, meaning we can turn areas that would never be considered 'prime gardening spots' into beautiful, natural gardens that support our local ecosystem.

When we plant by microclimate, not only do the plants thrive, but we receive some benefits as well. Water-loving plants can soak up a poorly drained area that always collects standing water after rain. Some native grasses and flowers can help prevent erosion in steep areas and grow in very poor soil where those exotic flowers from the garden supply store cannot. Some plants may even be able to grow and spread in a variety of different conditions. Let's match up our plants to their preferred habitats.

Meadow Plants

These sun-loving plants like to be out in the middle of the yard, receiving at least six hours of sunlight a day in the summer. They drink a medium amount of water, so they won't enjoy being planted in an area where big puddles appear after rain, but they also shouldn't be planted in the driest spot in your yard. However, they can tolerate some dry weather and likely won't need to be watered once they are established. A lot of our favorite wildflowers are meadow plants. These plants grow anywhere from two to eight feet tall depending on the species, reaching up to the sun with lots of blooms.



Forest Plants

These shade-tolerant plants enjoy living in the filtered gentle light beneath trees or along the edge of wooded areas. They can also be planted in shady areas around the outside of the house, as long as they still receive some light throughout the day. Preferred habitat includes soil rich in organic matter from fallen leaves, along with cooler temperatures and higher moisture due to the shade. Flowers in this category can create a beautiful border to a wooded area of the yard and provide groundcover that promotes tree-living beneficial insects throughout the larval stage of their life cycle.

Raingarden Plants

Joyfully soaking up puddles, raingarden plants are an essential part of any pollinator garden. In landscaping, these water-tolerant plants can transform a drainage ditch into a butterfly paradise. They also work to prevent flooding by slowing down the speed of water run-off. Their well-developed root systems can filter pollutants from the water as they hold it in place, allowing the rain to soak into the ground and return to the water table. These plants tend to enjoy full sun to partial shade and do well in parts of your yard where rainwater accumulates.

Hillside Plants

Hillside plants do well on a slope because they don't need a lot of water. When it rains, their roots are well adapted to hanging on despite the water quickly rushing over them and draining away. This helps keep the soil in place, preventing erosion and improving conditions for other plants. Species that tolerate clay or rocky conditions also fall into this category. Sunlight needs may vary with these plants. Many native grasses do well in these conditions, which can provide a great alternative to turf grass in spots where flowers may struggle to take hold.



Planning Your Garden

Now that we've selected plants according to their microclimate, they can go right into your garden! For the true garden geek, though, we have a few more garden planning ideas.

Thinking of your garden as an ecosystem

The garden is an ecological community of plants, animals, and fungi, where the characteristics of each species can benefit other species growing nearby. How can we support this interconnected, wild harmony in our garden designs?

Roots and Soil Structure

Having plants with different types of roots growing near each other helps hold the soil together, fighting compaction and erosion, allowing for good water drainage, and creating ideal habitat for a greater diversity of insects and fungi. Also, the plants aren't in direct competition for nutrients as they are drawing from different layers of the soil.

Butterfly and **Swamp Milkweed** have taproots, which reaches deep into the earth. These can do well planted nearby plants with fibrous roots, like **Cutleaf Coneflower**, and rhizome roots, like **White Turtlehead**.



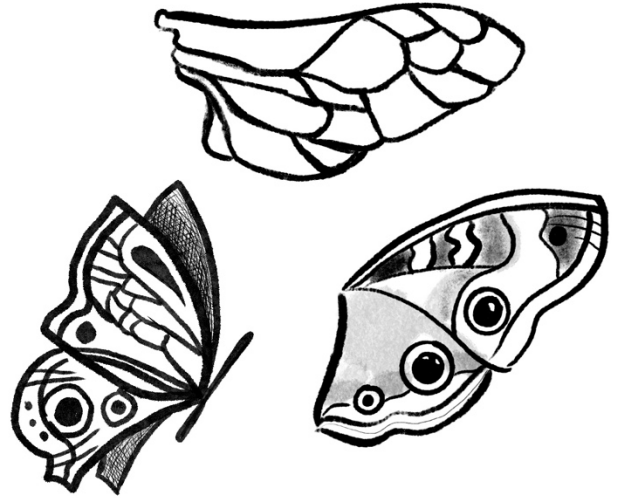
Blooming Seasons

Pollinators are visiting the garden throughout the warm season (and so are the humans!). Many springtime plant sales focus on early-blooming varieties, but our autumn catalog includes mostly midsummer to fall-blooming plants. This can fill in blooming-season gaps, supporting pollinators well into Autumn.

Protecting Pollinators

One of the most important things we can do to protect and promote pollinators is to stop using pesticides in the garden. While some pesticides may be advertised as only killing mosquitos, they are still toxic to other insects.

The best way to deal with mosquitos is reduce standing water trapped in containers, tarps, gutters, and other areas around the yard. A weekly rinsing of your birdbaths (also good for bird health!) will allow you to maintain those important water features without breeding mosquitos.



For pesky or hard to reach locations which trap water and can't be eliminated, Mosquito Dunks are often recommended as a safer option. These can be purchased at any garden supply store. Attracting mosquito predators is another idea—building bat or bird houses can reduce the mosquito population. Lastly, plants with strong odors such as **Mountain Mint** (offered in our catalog this year) can also help repel mosquitos.



Winter in the Garden

Don't cut down the dead plant stalks! These statuesque winter forms are winter high-rises for pollinators. Bee larvae are nesting in hollow stems, and butterfly cocoons are hidden under the dry fallen leaves. Leaving the garden in its wild state until April gives pollinators the best chance to survive.

Aesthetic borders and levels

How can we make a wild garden attractive to those members of our community who are still out there snipping their turf grass lawn with nail scissors on a Saturday morning? Planting tall plants toward the middle or back of the bed, medium plants in front, and shorter plants at the border creates a harmonious display of blooms that anyone will enjoy.

Filling in around or under trees may be another aesthetic goal. **White wood aster** and **Golden Ragwort** are blooming shade groundcovers, and make good borders along forest-edge areas. In moist shady locations, **Ostrich Fern** and **Christmas Fern** are also great groundcover choices.

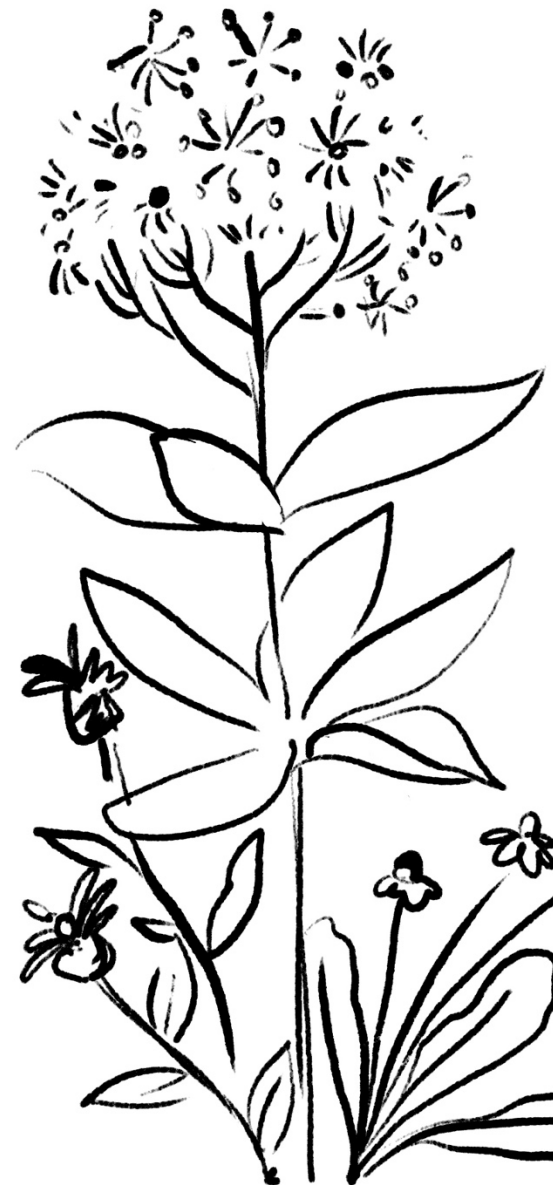
Thinking Vertically

Native grasses and wildflowers grow to a variety of different heights. Taller plants can create shade for others growing nearby, creating ideal conditions for smaller, partial-sun plants. **Cutleaf Coneflower**, and **New York Ironweed** are some of the tallest plants in our catalog this year, and **Heartleaf Foamflower**, **Small Beardtongue**, and **Creeping Phlox** are some shorter blooms on offer.

A note about deer resistance:

Many of the plants we sell are considered deer-resistant. This means they aren't a deer's first choice for a meal, and are pretty unpalatable. If you live in a neighborhood with only a few deer, it's unlikely a deer will eat your plants. But... if you live in a place that's overpopulated with deer, and every deer is out there fighting for its next mouthful... it's probably best to plant your beautiful new flowers behind fencing.

A deer will often still prefer a familiar, native plant to an unrecognizable invasive or exotic bloom with similar properties, and somebody who's really hungry will consider eating just about anything. There's nothing more heartbreaking than finding those neatly clipped stems where a beautiful flower was about to open up—so we encourage fencing and wish you best of luck!





Thanks again for supporting the first annual native plant sale at Fountain Rock Nature Center with The Frederick County Nature Council.

Want to get involved? Reach out to fountainrockplantsale@gmail.com or find us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/fountainrockplantsale.