



# GET STARTED WITH NATIVE GARDENING

Presented by Mark Napier and Natali Meytin  
with Healthy Yards New Rochelle

## Resources:

[NativeGardenGuide.org](http://NativeGardenGuide.org)

[HealthyYardsNR.org](http://HealthyYardsNR.org)



## What is a Healthy yard?

An environment that is beneficial for people and for wildlife. Limit the use of pesticides and herbicides, and include plants that support wildlife.

See [Healthy Yards New Rochelle \(healthyyardsnr.org\)](https://healthyyardsnr.org)



## How we got started

Our new house had a very bare yard with common non-native plants: Hostas, Rose of Sharon, Hydrangea, Periwinkle, English Ivy, Privet, Euonymus



## 5 years later

80% of our garden is native, and is alive with insects and birds



# WHY NATIVE PLANTS?

## Value for the environment

Native plants have evolved in step with insects and wildlife in our region. They support insect life, including pollinators, which in turn support the food web.

[Read about insect population decline](#)

## Value for people

Native plants are well adapted to our environment. They grow in a wide range of conditions, from wet to dry and sun to shade. Wildflowers bring color and beauty to our homes.

# What are invasive plants

Invasives are plants that have been introduced to our region by human activity. They provide little value to insect life, compete with native plants, take over and damage local ecosystems.

*NOTE: most plants sold in nurseries are non-native and some are invasive*



Japanese Honeysuckle



Pachysandra



English Ivy



Periwinkle

# Where do I start?

You can start a native plant garden with a single plant in one square foot of your yard.

*This monarch found a single milkweed plant while I was digging the hole to plant it.*

# How to choose native plants

There are many to choose from - break it down by:

Your garden biome

Sunlight

Soil moisture





## Observe your garden conditions

Grassland. Forest. Wetland. Dry/rock.

Is your garden mostly sunny? Or shaded?

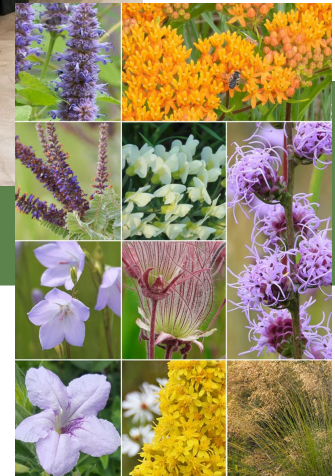
Is it dry, or does rainwater puddle and linger?

# Search in PrairieNursery.com

Online nurseries are an excellent resource to find plants. Filter by your garden conditions (sun/shade, wet/dry) to narrow down your choices. Check out their pre-planned gardens to get ideas.

[prairienursery.com/plants-seeds/native-plants.html](http://prairienursery.com/plants-seeds/native-plants.html)

*Order in January to plant in the spring.*



# Think of 3 layers of plants: **Groundcover**

Shade:



Dwarf Crested Iris



Foamflower



Wild Ginger

Sun:



Wild Strawberry

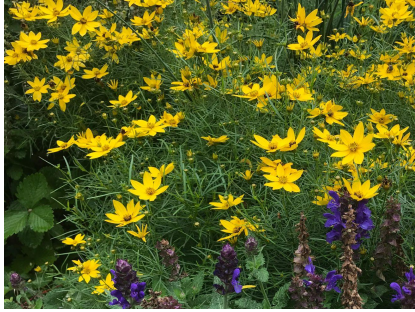


Prairie Smoke

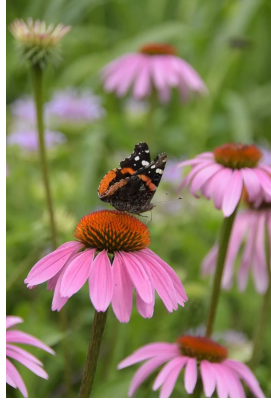


Violets

# Think of 3 layers of plants: **Medium height**



Coreopsis



Purple Coneflower



Butterfly Weed



Mountain Mint



Foxglove



Swamp Milkweed

# Think of 3 layers of plants: **Taller / Shrubs**



Goldenrod



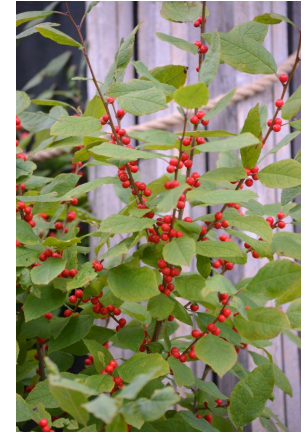
False Sunflower



Ironweed



Blue false indigo



Winterberry

# Buy seedlings online

Order in January-February to plant in the spring, or July-August to plant in the fall. Seedlings cost less and will establish themselves in your garden conditions.



## Plugs

Loosen the roots  
Plant at soil level

## Bare roots

They're not dead!  
They're dormant.



# Prepare a spot

If you don't have a flower bed then remove some lawn. You can dig out a small area of grass with a spade. For a larger area smother the grass with brown paper covered with mulch.

Here's [an excellent article on removing lawn](#) to make room for wildflowers

*In most cases there's no need to augment the soil - choose plants that match the conditions in your yard.*

# Plant them



If you smothered grass with paper and mulch, poke holes through the paper to plant seedlings.

- Plant seedlings even with the soil level
- Give them plenty of water after planting
- Mulch helps to reduce weeds and hold moisture
- Put in markers (you will forget where you planted them!)
- Don't let soil dry out for the first year! Keep the plants watered
- ***Follow instructions on the nursery site***





LESS  
IS  
MORE

## Let nature be natural

The easiest thing is to not interfere. **Leave the leaves** in your garden and don't cut down plant stems. Leaves and stems **provide homes for insects**, which **feed birds** and other **wildlife**

# CASE STUDY

## The Stone Ring Garden





**What kind of environment?  
How much sun does it get?  
How wet is it?**



## Plants used:

- *Packera aurea*
- *Coreopsis lanceolata*
- *Echinacea purpurea*
- *Liatris spicata*
- *Solidago speciosa*

# More resources for ideas and plants

- Go to [Nativegardenguide.org](https://www.nativegardenguide.org) for tips and resources
- Other resources to find ideas for plants
  - [Amanda's Native Garden](#)
  - [Audubon Society native plant database](#)
  - [Xerces Society - Native Plants for the Northeast](#)
- Sources of plants
  - Online sellers - get plugs (seedlings cost less, grow better)
  - Westchester Community College Native Plant Sale
  - Follow our Facebook group for tips about plant sales and giveaways
  - Winter sowing (planting from seeds)
- Nurseries carry not native plants (mostly)
  - [Nature's Cradle Nursery](#) can source natives by request
- Email Mark and Natali with questions: [napiernapier@gmail.com](mailto:napiernapier@gmail.com)



**THANK YOU!**