North American Plants for New England Gardens

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There is a continuing trend in horticulture towards the increased use of plants of North American origin in the garden. This continent has a great diversity of plant life, much of which lends itself to residential and commercial landscapes. North America is divided into many ecologically distinct regions. Here in New England, we live in the eastern deciduous forest but within this region there are many different plant habitats such as meadows, marshes, mountains, uplands, and sand plains, among others. Many plants that are native to other areas of the country are adaptable to a much larger area than where they are growing wild. White fir (Abies concolor), while native to Colorado, is one of the best firs for eastern gardens, and Fringetree (Chionanthus virginicus), found from New Jersey south, is an exceptional ornamental plant for much of New England. The term "native" is often defined as those plants that have been documented to occur in an area before the arrival of the colonists. Sometimes "native" is used to mean "native to the United States". This is the definition used for this fact sheet. In most cases, the listed plants will be selected for ornamental purposes and this broader definition is applicable. However, when re-vegetating wetlands, restoring natural areas or landscaping coastal properties, use plant species that are naturally found within those habitats.

While most indigenous plants are adaptable to various growing conditions, some have distinct requirements for light, soil type, or moisture levels. Though many of the plants listed here will produce more flowers and/or fruit if grown in full sun; they will also grow well under shaded conditions, but typically develop a more open growth habit. Examine a site where a particular plant is growing naturally in order to understand what its growing requirements are. This is particularly important for wetland species. New England also encompasses a range of cold-hardiness zones, from zone 7 on Cape Cod to zone 3 in northern Maine. Some native plants occur throughout this range while others are restricted to the warmer zones. Refer to reference books for the specific hardiness of the species of native plants listed.

Many native trees and shrubs blend well with the introduced plants that are already in our landscapes. They may produce impressive displays of flowers, colorful clusters of fruit or have spectacular foliage color or interesting bark. They can be part of a fragrance garden or attract hummingbirds to an area. Whatever the niche, there is plant from the North American palette to fill it. Many of these plants are available from nurseries and garden centers in Massachusetts and other New England states.

Several reference books are available that provide more detailed information on native plants. Among them are Michael Dirr's "Manual of Woody Landscape Plants", 5th Ed., and Gary
Hightshoe's "Native Trees, Shrubs, and Vines for Urban and Rural America".

**Sun, droughty soil**

- *Arctostaphylos uva-ursi* - Bearberry
- *Comptonia peregrina* - Sweet fern
- *Hypericum prolificum* - Shrubby St. Johnswort
- *Juniperus communis* - Pasture juniper
- *Juniperus horizontalis* - Creeping juniper
- *Juniperus virginiana* - Eastern red cedar
- *Myrica pensylvanica* - Bayberry
- *Ostrya virginiana* - Ironwood
- *Physocarpus opulifolius* - Eastern ninebark
- *Pinus banksiana* - Jack pine
- *Pinus rigida* - Pitch pine
- *Prunus maritima* - Beach plum
- *Rhus aromatica* - Fragrant sumac
- *Rhus copallina* - Shining sumac
- *Rhus typhina* - Staghorn sumac
- *Viburnum dentatum* – Arrow wood

**Sun, well drained soil**

- *Abies concolor* - Concolor fir
- *Acer rubrum* - Red maple
- *Acer saccharum* - Sugar maple
- *Aesculus parviflora* - Bottlebrush buckeye
- *Aesculus pavia* - Red buckeye
- *Amelanchier spp.* - Shadbush
- *Arctostaphylos uva-ursi* - Bearberry
- *Betula nigra* - River birch
- *Carpinus caroliniana* - American hornbeam
- *Ceanothus americanus* - New Jersey tea
- *Cercis canadensis* - Eastern redbud
- *Chionanthus virginicus* - Fringetree
- *Cladrastis kentuckea* - Yellowwood
- *Clethra alnifolia* - Sweet pepperbush
- *Comptonia peregrina* - Sweet fern
- *Cornus racemosa* - Grey dogwood
- *Crataegus viridis* - Green hawthorn
- *Fothergilla gardenii, F. major* - Fothergilla
- *Fraxinus americana* - White ash
- *Fraxinus pennsylvanica* - Green ash
- *Halesia tetraptera* - Carolina silverbell
- *Hamamelis virginiana* - Common witch hazel
- *Hydrangea quercifolia* - Oakleaf hydrangea
- *Hypericum prolificum* - Shrubby St. Johnswort
- *Ilex glabra* - Inkberry
- *Ilex opaca* - American holly
- *Itea virginica* - Sweetspire
- *Juniperus communis* - Pasture juniper
- *Juniperus horizontalis* - Creeping juniper
- *Juniperus virginiana* - Eastern red cedar
- *Kalmia latifolia* - Mt. laurel
- *Liquidambar styraciflua* - Sweetgum
- *Liriodendron tulipifera* - Tuliptree/tulip poplar
- *Magnolia acuminata* - Cucumber magnolia
- *Magnolia virginiana* - Sweetbay magnolia
- *Myrica pensylvanica* - Bayberry
- *Ostrya virginiana* - Ironwood
- *Oxydendrum arboreum* - Sourwood
- *Physocarpus opulifolius* - Eastern ninebark
- *Picea glauca* - White spruce
- *Pieris floribunda* - Mt. pieris
- *Pinus banksiana* - Jack pine
- *Pinus strobus* - White pine
- *Pinus resinosa* - Red pine
- *Prunus maritima* - Beach plum
- *Ptelea trifoliata* - Hoptree
- *Quercus spp.* - Oak, various species
- *Rhododendron calandulaceum* - Flame azalea
- *Rhododendron periclymenoides-* Pinxterbloom azalea
- *Rhus aromatica* - Fragrant sumac
- *Rhus copallina* - Shining sumac
- *Rhus typhina* - Staghorn sumac
- *Rosa carolina* - Carolina rose
- *Rosa virginiana* - Virginia rose
- *Thuja occidentalis* - eastern arborvitae
- *Tilia americana* - Basswood
- *Vaccinium spp.* - Blueberry
- *Viburnum cassinoides* - Northern wild raisin
- *Viburnum dentatum* - Arrow-wood
- *Viburnum lentago* - Nannyberry
- *Viburnum prunifolium* - Blackhaw viburnum
#### Viburnum trilobum – American cranberrybush viburnum

**Moist soils**

- *Acer rubrum* - Red maple
- *Aesculus parviflora* - Bottlebrush buckeye
- *Aesculus pavia* - Red buckeye
- *Aronia spp.* - Chokeberry
- *Betula alleghaniensis* - Yellow birch
- *Betula nigra* - River birch
- *Calycanthus floridus* - Carolina allspice
- *Carpinus caroliniana* - American hornbeam
- *Cercis canadensis* - Eastern redbud
- *Chamaecyparis thyoides* - Atlantic white cedar
- *Chionanthus virginicus* - Fringetree
- *Cladrastis kentuckea* - Yellowwood
- *Clethra alnifolia* - Sweet pepperbush
- *Cornus alternifolia* - Alternate leaf dogwood
- *Cornus amomum* - Silky dogwood
- *Cornus racemosa* - Grey dogwood
- *Fagus grandifolia* - American beech
- *Fothergilla major, F. gardenii* - Fothergilla
- *Franklinia alatamaha* - Franklinia
- *Hamamelis virginiana* - Common witch hazel
- *Halesia tetraptera* - Carolina silverbells
- *Hydrangea arborescens* - Smooth hydrangea
- *Hydrangea quercifolia* - Oakleaf hydrangea
- *Ilex glabra* - Inkberry
- *Ilex verticillata* – Winterberry

**Wetlands**

- *Acer rubrum* - Red maple
- *Cephalanthus occidentalis* - Buttonbush
- *Chamaedaphne calyculata* - Leatherleaf
- *Clethra alnifolia* - Sweet Pepperbush
- *Cornus racemosa* - Grey dogwood
- *Ilex glabra* - Inkberry
- *Ilex verticillata* - Winterberry
- *Kalmia angustifolia* - Sheep laurel

**Part Shade/Shade**

- *Itea virginica* - Virginia sweetspire
- *Kalmia angustifolia* - Sheep laurel
- *Kalmia latifolia* - Mt. laurel
- *Lindera benzoin* - Spicebush
- *Liquidambar styraciflua* - Sweet gum
- *Liriodendron tulipifera* - Tulip tree
- *Magnolia acuminata* - Cucumber magnolia
- *Magnolia virginiana* - Sweetbay magnolia
- *Nyssa sylvatica* - Tupelo
- *Pieris floribunda* - Mt. pieris
- *Rhododendron calendulaceum* - Flame azalea
- *Rhododendron maximum* - Rosebay
- *Rhododendron vasyei* - Pinkshell azalea
- *Rhododendron viscosum* - Swamp azalea
- *Rosa carolina* - Carolina rose
- *Salix discolor* - Pussy willow
- *Sambucus canadensis* - Elderberry
- *Spirea latifolia* - Broadleaf meadowsweet
- *Spirea tomentosa* - Steeplebush
- *Stewartia ovata* - Mountain stewartia
- *Styrax americanus* - American snowbell
- *Thuja occidentalis* -Eastern arborvitae
- *Tilia americana* - Basswood
- *Vaccinium corymbosum* - Highbush blueberry

- Lindera benzoin - Spicebush
- *Nyssa sylvatica* - Tupelo
- *Quercus bicolor* - Swamp white oak
- *Rhododendron viscosum* - Swamp azalea
- *Salix discolor* - Pussy willow
- *Nyssa sylvatica* - Tupelo
- *Vaccinium corymbosum* - Highbush blueberry
- *Viburnum dentatum* - Arrowwood
Aesculus parviflora - Bottlebrush buckeye
Aesculus pavia - Red buckeye
Amelanchier spp. - Shadbush
Aronia spp. - Chokeberry
Carpinus caroliniana - American hornbeam
Cercis canadensis - Redbud
Chionanthus virginicus - Fringetree
Clethra alnifolia - Sweet pepperbush
Cornus alternifolia - Alternate leaf dogwood
Cornus amomum - Silky dogwood
Cornus racemosa - Grey dogwood
Franklinia alatamaha - Franklinia
Halesia tetraptera - Carolina silverbell
Hamamelis vernalis - Vernal witch hazel
Hamamelis virginiana - Common witch hazel
Hydrangea quercifolia - Oakleaf hydrangea
Ilex glabra - Inkberry
Ilex opaca - American holly

Trees & shrubs to attract birds

Amelanchier spp. - Shadbush
Arctostaphylos uva-ursi - Bearberry
Aronia spp. - Chokeberry
Cornus alternifolia - Alternate leaf dogwood
Cornus amomum - Silky dogwood
Cornus racemosa - Grey dogwood
Crataegus phaenopyrum - Washington hawthorn
Fraxinus americana - White ash
Gaylussacia spp. – Huckleberry
Ilex glabra - Inkberry
Ilex opaca - American holly
Juniperus virginiana - Eastern red cedar
Myrica pensylvanica - Bayberry
Prunus maritima - Beach plum
Prunus serotina - Black cherry
Sambucus canadensis - Elderberry
Vaccinium spp. - Blueberry
Viburnum spp. - Viburnum, various species

Coastal Planting

*suitable for exposed conditions

Ground covers, grasses and forbs

Ammophila breviligulata* - American Beach grass
Arctostaphylos uva-ursi* - Bearberry
Carex pennsylvanicum - Pennsylvania Sedge
Coreopsis lanceolata - Lance-leaf Coreopsis
Coreopsis verticillata - Thread-leaf Coreopsis
Deschampsia flexuosa - Tufted Hairgrass
Festuca ovina - Sheep Fescue
Festuca ovina var. longifolia - Hard Fescue
Festuca rubra - Red Fescue
Hibiscus moscheutos - Marsh Hibiscus
Hudsonia tomentosa* - False Heather
Juniperus horizontalis* - Creeping Juniper
Kosteletzkya virginica - Seashore Mallow
**Plants**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Common Name</th>
<th>Scientific Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sea Lavender</td>
<td><em>Limonium nashii</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Panic Grass</td>
<td><em>Panicum virgatum</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virginia Creeper</td>
<td><em>Parthenocissus quinquefolia</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Little Bluestem</td>
<td><em>Schizachyrium scoparius</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seaside Goldenrod</td>
<td><em>Solidago sempervirens</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Smooth Cordgrass</td>
<td><em>Spartina alterniflora</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Saltmarsh Cordgrass</td>
<td><em>Spartina patens</em></td>
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**Shrubs**

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<tr>
<th>Common Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shadbush</td>
<td><em>Amelanchier canadensis</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red Chokeberry</td>
<td><em>Aronia arbutifolia</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Chokeberry</td>
<td><em>Aronia melanocarpa</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Groundsel Bush</td>
<td><em>Baccharis halimifolia</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweet Pepperbush</td>
<td><em>Clethra alnifolia</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweet Fern</td>
<td><em>Comptonia peregrina</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inkberry</td>
<td><em>Ilex glabra</em></td>
</tr>
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<td>Winterberry</td>
<td><em>Ilex verticillata</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Sweetspire</td>
<td><em>Itea virginica</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marsh elder</td>
<td><em>Iva frutescens</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bayberry</td>
<td><em>Myrica pensylvanica</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Eastern Ninebark</td>
<td><em>Physocarpus opulifolius</em></td>
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<td>Beach Plum</td>
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<td>Staghorn Sumac</td>
<td><em>Rhus typhina</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Virginia Rose</td>
<td><em>Rosa virginiana</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Elderberry</td>
<td><em>Sambucus canadensis</em></td>
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<td>Highbush Blueberry</td>
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<td>Northern Wild Raisin</td>
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<td>Arrow-wood</td>
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**Trees**

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<tr>
<td>Red Maple</td>
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<tr>
<td>Atlantic White Cedar</td>
<td><em>Chamaecyparis thyoides</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green Ash</td>
<td><em>Fraxinus pennsylvanica</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Holly</td>
<td><em>Ilex opaca</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern Red Cedar</td>
<td><em>Juniperus virginiana</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweet Bay Magnolia</td>
<td><em>Magnolia virginiana</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tupelo</td>
<td><em>Nyssa sylvatica</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White Spruce</td>
<td><em>Picea glauca</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Colorado Spruce</td>
<td><em>Picea pungens</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Pitch Pine</td>
<td><em>Pinus rigida</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Black Cherry</td>
<td><em>Prunus serotina</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Oak</td>
<td><em>Quercus spp.</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Eastern Arborvitae</td>
<td><em>Thuja occidentalis</em></td>
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