

SEVERN SOUND
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSOCIATION
www.severnsound.ca

NATIVE POLLINATOR PLANTS IN THE SEVERN SOUND AREA

A GUIDE TO POLLINATOR-FRIENDLY
PLANTS FOR YOUR PROPERTY



Native Pollinator Plants in the Severn Sound Area

Produced by the
Severn Sound Environmental Association
October 2022

Funding support for this booklet
was generously provided by:



**TD Friends of the
Environment Foundation**

Photo credits:

All photos are property of Severn Sound Environmental Association, or are provided courtesy of SSEA staff.

© 2022 Severn Sound Environmental Association. All rights reserved.



The contents of this booklet have been printed on FSC certified stock.
The material comes from verified and responsible sources that have met FSC's strict environmental and social requirements.



The Severn Sound Environmental Association would like to thank Midland Printers for their significant contribution in this document's design and production.



Tiny
Township of Tiny



**Township of
Springwater**



INTRODUCTION TO NATIVE PLANTS

The Severn Sound watershed area is home to many diverse landscapes that host a wealth of native plant species. The term **native plants** refers to species that occur naturally in the region they evolved in. Native plants are a key component of healthy functioning ecosystems and offer a range of benefits to insect and animal communities, as well as Indigenous peoples as medicine.



Native wildflower garden with Black-eyed Susan, Purple Coneflower, and Wild Bergamot

Some of the benefits of including native plants around your property:

Habitat and Food for Wildlife

Incorporating native plants into gardens and naturalized areas promotes biodiversity, creates valuable habitat and encourages beneficial pollinators, such as birds, bats, butterflies, bees and other insects. Native plants produce flowers, nectar, fruits, seeds and nuts that are important food sources for wildlife and insects.

Did you know that some pollinators are specialists that only feed on specific plants? For example, Monarch (*Danaus plexippus*) caterpillars depend entirely on milkweed plants (*Asclepias spp.*) for food. Similarly, certain plants are very dependent on specific pollinators to move their pollen around. For example, the long tubular flowers of Cardinal Flower (*Lobelia cardinalis*) are pollinated primarily by hummingbirds, and squash bees (*Peponapis pruinosa*) are important for pollinating plants in the squash family, like pumpkins.

Low Maintenance Landscaping

Native plant species generally require minimal water and fertilizer inputs as they are hardy and well-adapted to local conditions. For example, wildflowers like Purple Coneflower (*Echinacea purpurea*) or Common Milkweed (*Asclepias syriaca*) can tolerate a variety of soil types, moisture levels, and sunlight conditions. Maintenance of pollinator gardens generally involves simply managing the spread of new growth beyond desired boundaries, particularly in small areas.



Monarch caterpillar feeding on Common Milkweed

Healthy Soils - Preserving Soil Structure

Native plants help to anchor the soil and reduce water runoff; deep-rooted trees like Sugar Maple (*Acer saccharum*) or strong rooted shrubs such as Red-Osier Dogwood (*Cornus stolonifera*) help to hold the soil together and prevent erosion of slopes and shorelines.

Native plants can help stabilize soft or sandy soils and prevent topsoil from being blown or washed away. Native plants have evolved to live in the habitat types found in our local region, so they are much better suited to preserving local soil formations and preventing erosion compared to non-native species. When non-native or invasive species are introduced to an area, they can change the landscape in various ways. This includes impacting soil structure and function through the formation of large monocultures that can alter the natural drainage patterns of the land.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Planting native species is one way that you can contribute to healthy ecosystems and support native pollinators and wildlife in the Severn Sound area. This guide provides an introduction to a variety of locally native flowers, shrubs, trees and grasses that can be used instead of non-native, exotic or cultivated plant species within landscaped areas and gardens. The guide is intended to be used as a primer by property owners - the list of native plants is not exhaustive and is not a comprehensive identification guide. See link to resource list at the end of this guide for suggested further reading.

Each species page has photographs to help with identification and garden planning, as well as the following descriptive categories:

SEASONALITY

Refers to approximate flower blooming time and subsequent fruit and seed production, if applicable. This section also indicates the colour of flowers and fruits. A plant's life cycle can vary from year-to-year depending on climate factors such as precipitation and temperature, soil conditions, and nutrient availability. Bloom timing may also differ depending on location across the watershed area, and microclimates on a given property (e.g., sunny versus shaded area).



Scarlet Bee Balm
blooms July to August
and produces a red
flower



Bottle Gentian
blooms from August
to September and
produces a blue flower



Purple Coneflower
blooms June to August
and produces a purple
flower

ATTRACTS

Indicates which groups of pollinators and other wildlife use the plant, and which species are required to pollinate it. Examples include bees, birds, butterflies, caterpillars, other insects and mammals. Some plants in the list support the larvae (caterpillars) or adult stages of specific species of butterflies and moths.



Monarch caterpillar feeding on
Common Milkweed



Bee pollinating Spotted
Joe Pye Weed

HEIGHT

Describes the upper height range of mature plant.

GROWING CONDITIONS

Indicates a plant's soil moisture and light requirements or preferences. This section can help guide selection of plant species that are appropriate for particular habitats and conditions. For example, sandy dunes will support different species than an upland forest or rocky shoreline on Georgian Bay.



Sandy dune (left) and alvar shoreline (right)
landscapes in the Severn Sound area

NOTES

Additional information on specific characteristics or special considerations.

CATEGORIES

HERBACEOUS PLANTS

PAGE 8

This group includes wildflowers, which do not have a woody stem, and can be annual, biennial or perennial. Annual plants grow for one season and typically have a longer blooming period, whereas biennials grow for two seasons and will not bloom until the second season, and perennials last for three or more seasons.

Annuals can add colour to a garden in the first year of planting/seeding. The herbaceous plant group also includes ferns, which do not produce flowers but rather reproduce by rhizomes and/or spores. Ferns add a lush and textured look to gardens, and have wildlife value as a food source.



SHRUBS

PAGE 40

Shrubs are woody plants, usually multi-stemmed, that are generally shorter than trees. Shrubs can be deciduous or evergreen; deciduous refers to plants that shed leaves in the fall and evergreen refers to plants that keep their needles/leaves through the winter. Flowering and fruit producing shrubs have high pollinator and wildlife value as a food source.



TREES

PAGE 52

Trees are tall, woody plants with outward extending branches and can be deciduous (grow leaves and flowers) or coniferous (grow needles and cones). Many trees produce flowers, pollen, fruit or nuts, and are important for pollinators and other wildlife. Trees also provide other important ecosystem services such as clean air, carbon storage, and nutrient and water cycling.



GRASSES

PAGE 62

Grasses are herbaceous plants that have hollow stems and long narrow leaves. Although grasses do not contain showy flowers, tall unmown grasses provide food and shelter for many pollinator species. Tall native grasses tend to have strong fibrous root systems that help to stabilize the soil and help to support tall, top-heavy wildflowers, unlike short turf grass.



Blue Vervain (*Verbena hastata*)



Blue Vervain (*Verbena hastata*)

Seasonality

Perennial; blooms from June to September, produces blue or purple flowers

Attracts

Bees, birds, butterflies, caterpillars, and other insects; larval host to Common Buckeye (*Junonia coenia*) and Verbena Moth (*Crambodes talidiformis*)

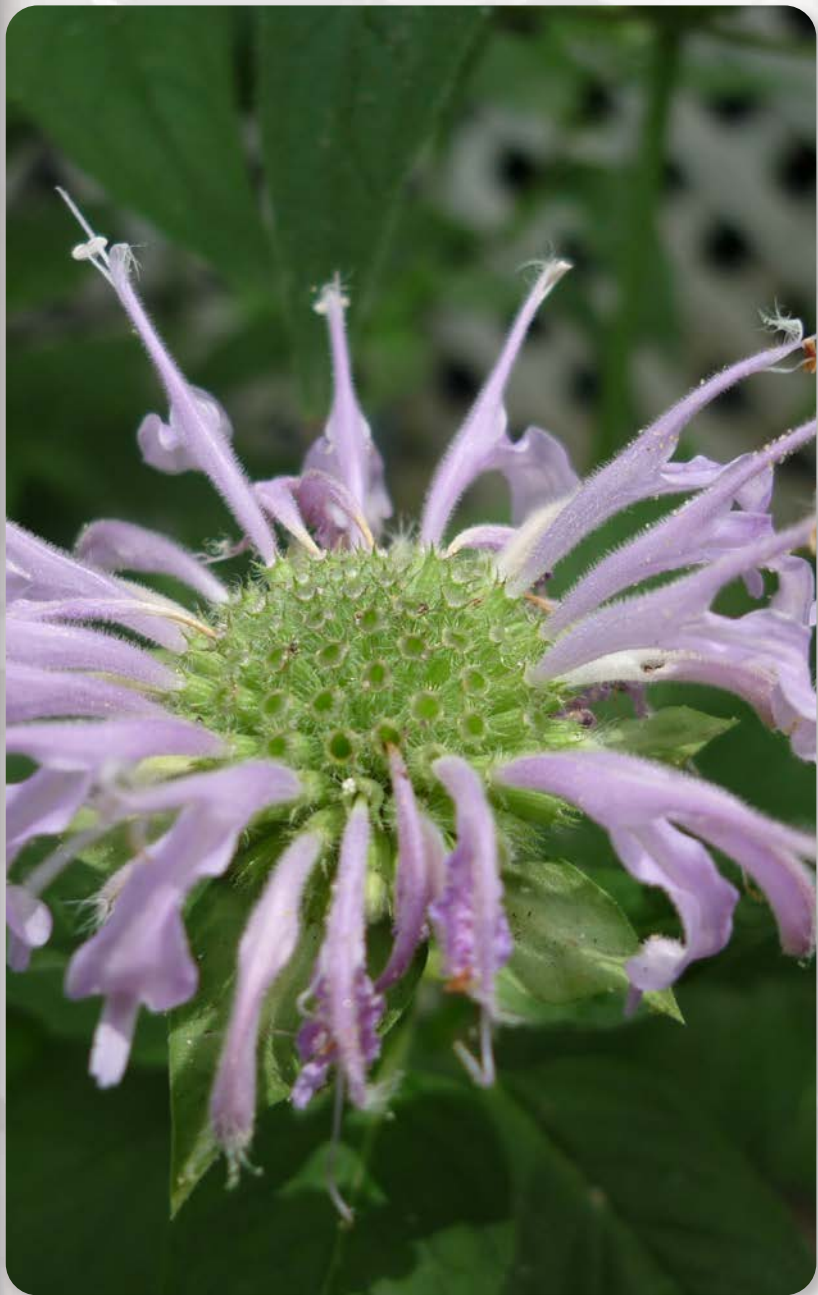
Height

Up to 1.8 meters

Growing Conditions

Sun to partial shade, normal to wet soil including clay, sand, and loam

Bee Balm/Wild Bergamot
(*Monarda fistulosa*)



Bee Balm/Wild Bergamot *(Monarda fistulosa)*

Seasonality

Perennial; blooms from June to August, produces purple, pink or white flowers

Attracts

Bees, butterflies, hummingbirds

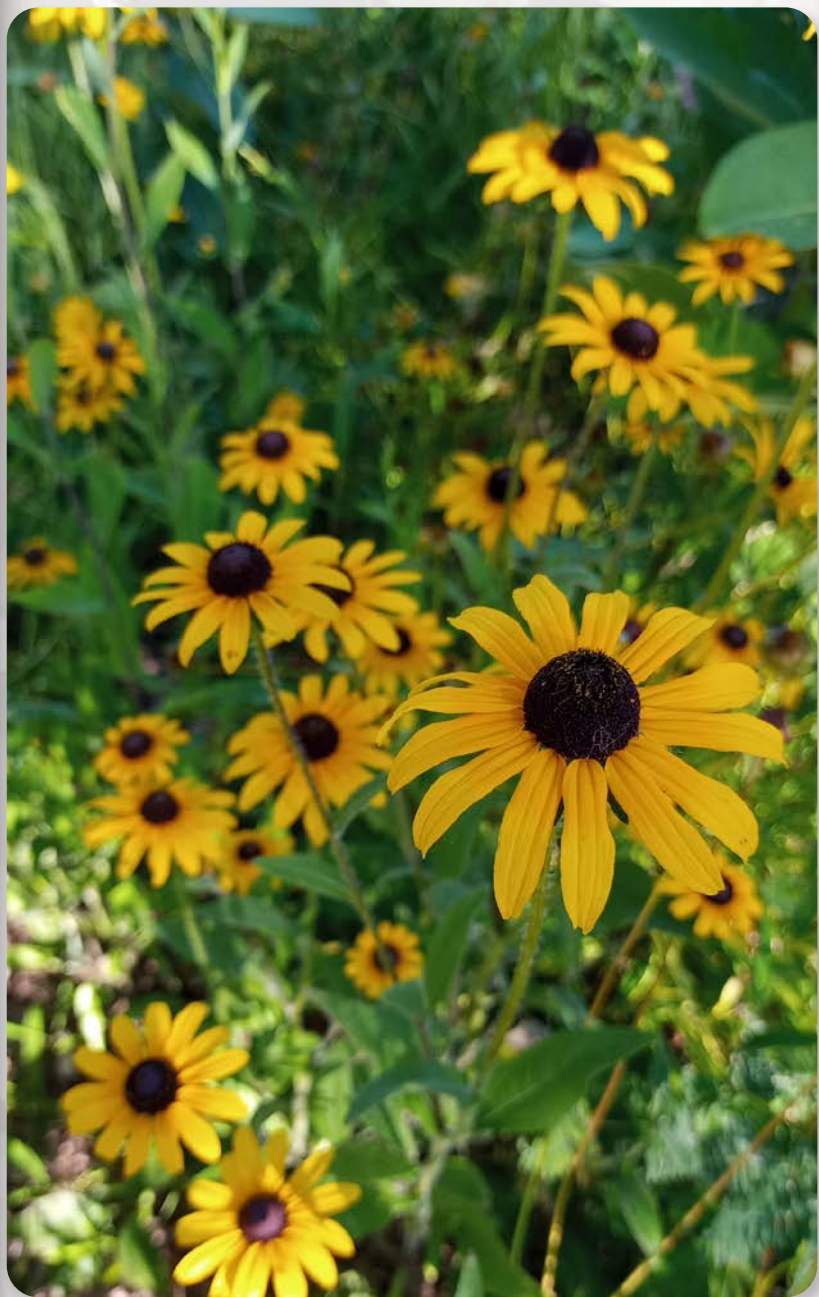
Height

Up to 1.2 meters

Growing Conditions

Sun to partial shade, moist to dry soil including clay, sand, loam and organic

Black-Eyed Susan
(*Rudbeckia hirta*)



Black-Eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia hirta*)

Seasonality

Annual; blooms from June to October; produces yellow flowers

Attracts

Bees, birds, butterflies, caterpillars, and other insects

Height

Up to 1.5 meters

Growing Conditions

Full sun to partial shade, well-drained sandy loam, clay, and rocky soil

Butterfly Milkweed
(*Asclepias tuberosa*)



Butterfly Milkweed (*Asclepias tuberosa*)

Seasonality

Perennial; blooms from June to September, produces orange flowers and long green to reddish seed pods with silky seeds

Attracts

Bees, birds, butterflies, caterpillars, other insects; larval host to the Monarch butterfly (*Danaus plexippus*)

Height

Up to 75 centimeters

Growing Conditions

Full sun, does best in well-drained sandy or loam soil

Notes

Establishes a deep taproot that makes the plant very drought resistant, but also intolerant to being moved

Cardinal Flower
(*Lobelia cardinalis*)



Cardinal Flower (*Lobelia cardinalis*)

Seasonality

Perennial; blooms from July to September, produces red flowers

Attracts

Bees, butterflies, and hummingbirds

Height

Up to 1.2 meters

Growing Conditions

Shade to full sun; needs rich organic soil, including moist to wet sandy, clay, limestone and medium loam soils

Flat-topped Aster
(*Doellingeria umbellata*)



Flat-topped Aster (*Doellingeria umbellata*)

Seasonality

Perennial; blooms from August to September, produces white flowers

Attracts

Bees, butterflies, and caterpillars; larval host to Pearl Crescent (*Phyciodes tharos*) and Harris Checkerspot (*Chlosyne harrisii*) butterflies

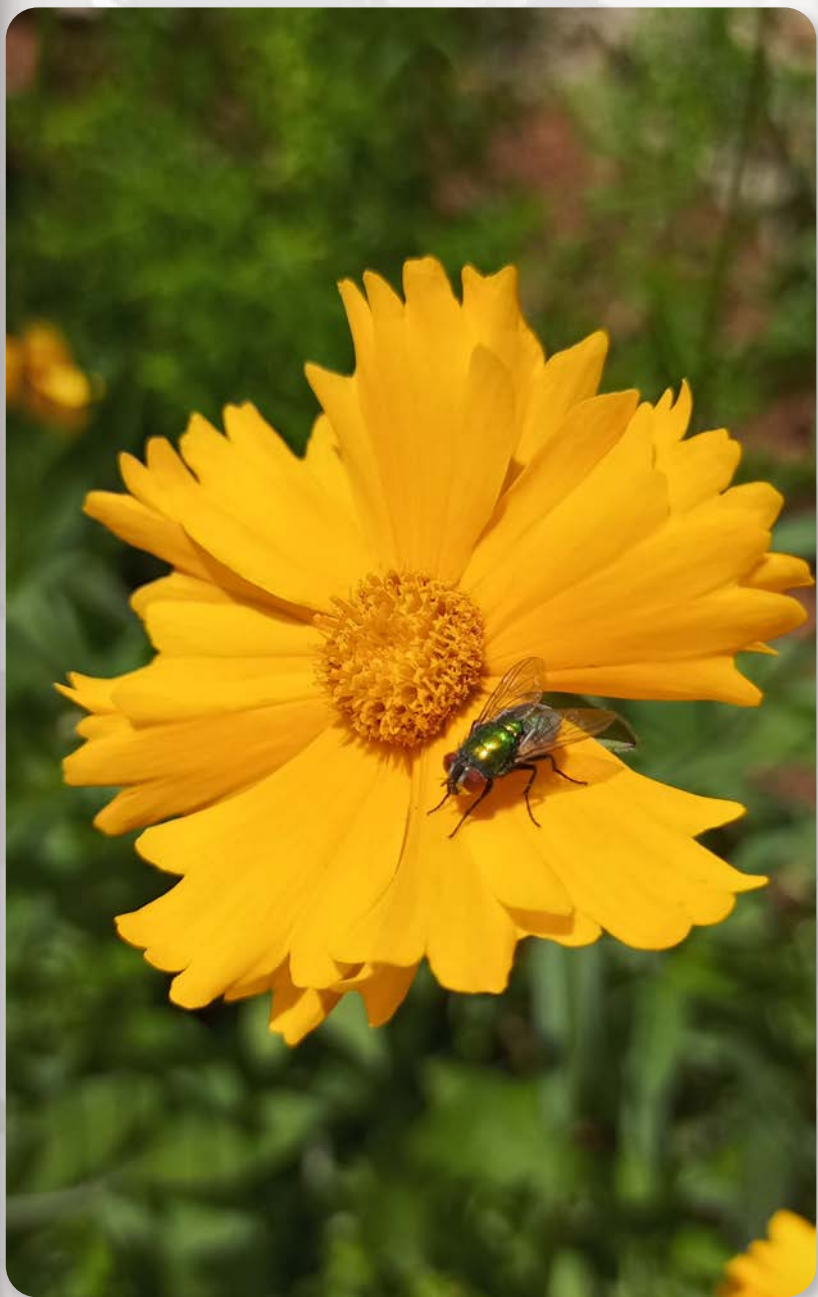
Height

Up to 2 meters

Growing Conditions

Full sun; normal to wet soils

Lance-leaved Coreopsis
(*Coreopsis lanceolata*)



Lance-leaved Coreopsis (*Coreopsis lanceolata*)

Seasonality

Perennial; blooms from May to June, produces yellow flowers

Attracts

Birds, butterflies, and other insects

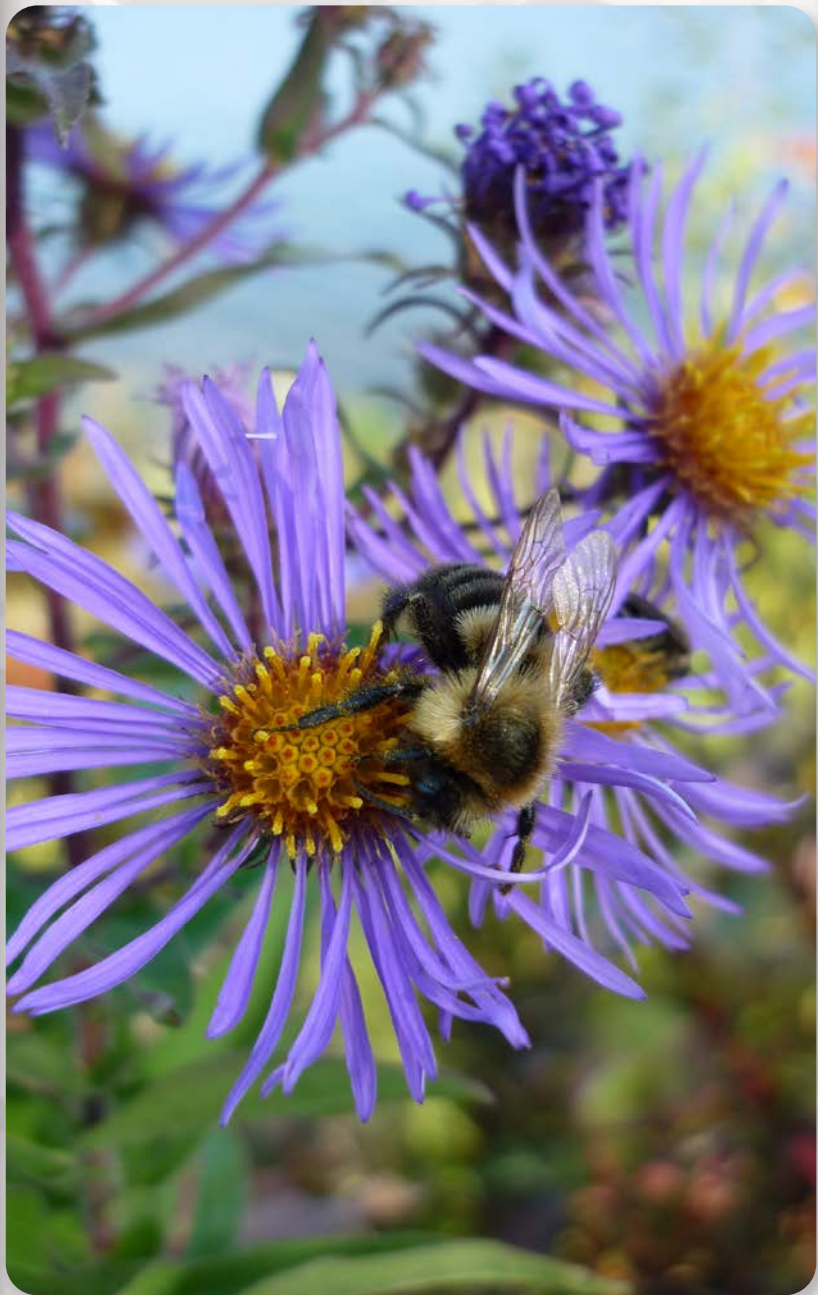
Height

Up to 60 centimeters

Growing Conditions

Full sun to partial shade, in dry soil; can be grown in clay, rocky and sandy soil

New England Aster
(*Symphyotrichum novae-angliae*)



New England Aster (*Symphyotrichum novae-angliae*)

Seasonality

Perennial; blooms from August to October, produces light blue to light purple flowers

Attracts

Bees, butterflies and caterpillars; larval host for Pearl Crescent (*Phyciodes tharos*) butterfly, and food source for adult Monarch butterfly (*Danaus plexippus*)

Height

Up to 2.1 meters

Growing Conditions

Full sun to partial shade, grows in moist to well-drained soil, including clay sand and loamy soil

Northern Blue Flag Iris
(*Iris versicolor*)



Northern Blue Flag Iris (*Iris versicolor*)

Seasonality

Perennial; blooms May to August, produces blue/purple flowers

Attracts

Bees and hummingbirds

Height

Up to 90 centimeters

Growing Conditions

Full sun to partial shade, moist to wet soil; can be planted in very shallow ponds and used in rain gardens

Pearly Everlasting
(Anaphalis margaritacea)



Pearly Everlasting (*Anaphalis margaritacea*)

Seasonality

Perennial; blooms from July to September, produces white flowers

Attracts

Butterflies and caterpillars; larval host for skipper butterflies, American and Painted Lady (*Vanessa cardui*) butterflies

Height

Up to 90 centimeters

Growing Conditions

Partial shade to full sun, prefers dry sandy and gravel soils

Purple Coneflower
(*Echinacea purpurea*)



Purple Coneflower (*Echinacea purpurea*)

Seasonality

Perennial; blooms from June to August, produces pink/purple flowers

Attracts

Bees, butterflies, and hummingbirds

Height

Up to 60 centimeters

Growing Conditions

Full sun, dry to normal moisture soils; not suitable in very moist soil where water is likely to accumulate

Red/Canada/Wild Columbine
(Aquilegia canadensis)



Red/Canada/Wild Columbine (*Aquilegia canadensis*)

Seasonality

Perennial; blooms from April to July, produces red bell-shaped flowers

Attracts

Bees, birds (especially hummingbirds), butterflies, and caterpillars; larval host to Columbine Duskywing (*Erynnis lucilius*)

Height

Up to 90 centimeters

Growing Conditions

Partial to full shade; wide range of soil conditions from dry to well-drained, including sandy, loam and limestone soil

Notes

Good option for rain gardens

Sensitive Fern
(*Onoclea sensibilis*)



Sensitive Fern (*Onoclea sensibilis*)

Seasonality

Perennial

Attracts

Birds and caterpillars; larval host to Olive Angle Shades (*Phlogophora iris*) and Silver-spotted Fern moths (*Calloplistria cordata*), which feed on stems and rhizomes

Height

Up to 60 centimeters

Growing Conditions

Partial to full shade, moist to wet soil, including sand or loam soils

Notes

Named for its sensitivity to frost; can form large colonies

Smooth Blue Aster
(Symphyotrichum laeve)



Smooth Blue Aster (*Symphotrichum laeve*)

Seasonality

Perennial; blooms August to November, produces blue/purple flowers

Attracts

Birds, butterflies, caterpillars, and white-tailed deer; larval host of Pearl Crescent (*Phyciodes tharos*) butterfly

Height

Up to 1.2 meters

Growing Conditions

Partial shade to full sun, dry to medium moisture in sandy loam to clay loam soils

Smooth Solomon's Seal
(Polygonatum biflorum)



Smooth Solomon's Seal (*Polygonatum biflorum*)

Seasonality

Perennial; blooms from May to June, produces white-green or yellow drooping flowers followed by blue/black fruit

Attracts

Bees, birds, and butterflies

Height

Up to 90 centimeters

Growing Conditions

Partial to full shade, grows well in dry to moist soil, including sandy soil

Spotted Joe-Pye Weed
(*Eutrochium maculatum*)



Spotted Joe-Pye Weed (*Eutrochium maculatum*)

Seasonality

Perennial; blooms from July to September, produces pink to purple flowers

Attracts

Bees, birds, butterflies, caterpillars, and other insects

Height

Up to 3 meters

Growing Conditions

Partial shade to full sun, grows well in normal to wet soil, including clay, sand, loam or organic soil

Notes

Works well in rain gardens

Alternate-Leaf Dogwood
(*Cornus alternifolia*)



Alternate-Leaf Dogwood (*Cornus alternifolia*)

Seasonality

Blooms from May to June, produces white flowers in the spring, followed by dark blue fruit

Attracts

Bees, birds, butterflies, caterpillars, and squirrels; larval host to Spring Azure (*Celastrina ladon*) and gossamer-winged butterflies

Height

Up to 8 meters

Growing Conditions

Partial to full shade, moist organic soil

Chokecherry
(*Prunus virginiana*)



Chokecherry (*Prunus virginiana*)

Seasonality

Blooms from May to June, produces clusters of white flowers, followed by black/red/purple fruit

Attracts

Bees, birds, butterflies, caterpillars, squirrels and other insects; larval host to Columbia Silkmoth (*Hyalophora columbia*), and Swallowtail, gossamer-winged, and hairstreak butterflies

Height

Up to 8 meters

Growing Conditions

Full sun to partial shade; grows in a range of soil moisture levels and types

Common Ninebark
(*Physocarpus opulifolius*)



Common Ninebark *(Physocarpus opulifolius)*

Seasonality

Blooms June to July, produces white to pink flowers that turn to red/brown fruit

Attracts

Bees, birds, and other insects

Height

Up to 3 meters

Growing Conditions

Full sun to partial shade, does well in clay to sandy loam soil

Elderberry (*Sambucus canadensis*)



Elderberry *(Sambucus canadensis)*

Seasonality

Blooms from June to July, produces white flowers that turn into black/purple berries

Attracts

Bumble bees, ground bees, beetles, birds, and butterflies

Height

Up to 4 meters

Growing Conditions

Partial shade to full sun in moist to wet soils

Nannyberry
(*Viburnum lentago*)



Nannyberry (*Viburnum lentago*)

Seasonality

Blooms from May to June, produces white flowers followed by black, red, or blue fruit

Attracts

Bees, birds, butterflies, caterpillars, squirrels, and other insects; larval host to Spring Azure (*Celastrina ladon*) and gossamer-winged butterflies

Height

Up to 7 meters

Growing Conditions

Partial shade to full sun, in a range of soil moistures and types

Red Osier Dogwood
(*Cornus sericea*)



Red Osier Dogwood (*Cornus sericea*)

Seasonality

Blooms from May to June, produces white flowers that turn into whitish berries

Attracts

Bees, birds, butterflies, caterpillars and squirrels; larval host for Spring Azure (*Celastrina ladon*) and gossamer-winged butterflies

Height

Up to 7 meters

Growing Conditions

Partial shade to sun; requires moist and well-drained soil

American Basswood (*Tilia americana*)



American Basswood (*Tilia americana*)

Seasonality

Blooms in July, produces yellow flowers followed by brown fruit

Attracts

Bees, birds, butterflies and squirrels

Height

Up to 22 meters

Growing Conditions

Partial shade to full sun in well-drained sandy or loam soil

Black Cherry
(*Prunus serotina*)



Black Cherry (*Prunus serotina*)

Seasonality

Blooms from May to June, produces white flowers followed by black/red fruit

Attracts

Bees, birds, butterflies, caterpillars, small mammals and other insects; larval host to many butterflies, including Eastern Tiger Swallowtail (*Papilio glaucus*)

Height

Up to 30 meters

Growing Conditions

Full sun to partial shade, in dry to moist well-drained sand or loam soil

Paper Birch/White Birch
(Betula papyrifera)



Paper Birch/White Birch (*Betula papyrifera*)

Seasonality

Blooms from April to May, produces yellow/green/brown clustered drooping flowers (catkins)

Attracts

Birds, caterpillars, and small mammals; larval host to Canadian Tiger Swallowtail (*Papilio canadensis*) butterfly and Luna Moth (*Actias luna*)

Height

Up to 25 meters

Growing Conditions

Full sun to partial shade, found in a variety of soil types

Sugar Maple
(*Acer saccharum*)



Sugar Maple (*Acer saccharum*)

Seasonality

Blooms from April to May, produces yellow/green/brown flowers followed by green fruit (samara)

Attracts

Bees, birds, butterflies, caterpillars, squirrels and other insects; larval host to Rosy Maple Moth (*Dryocampa rubicunda*)

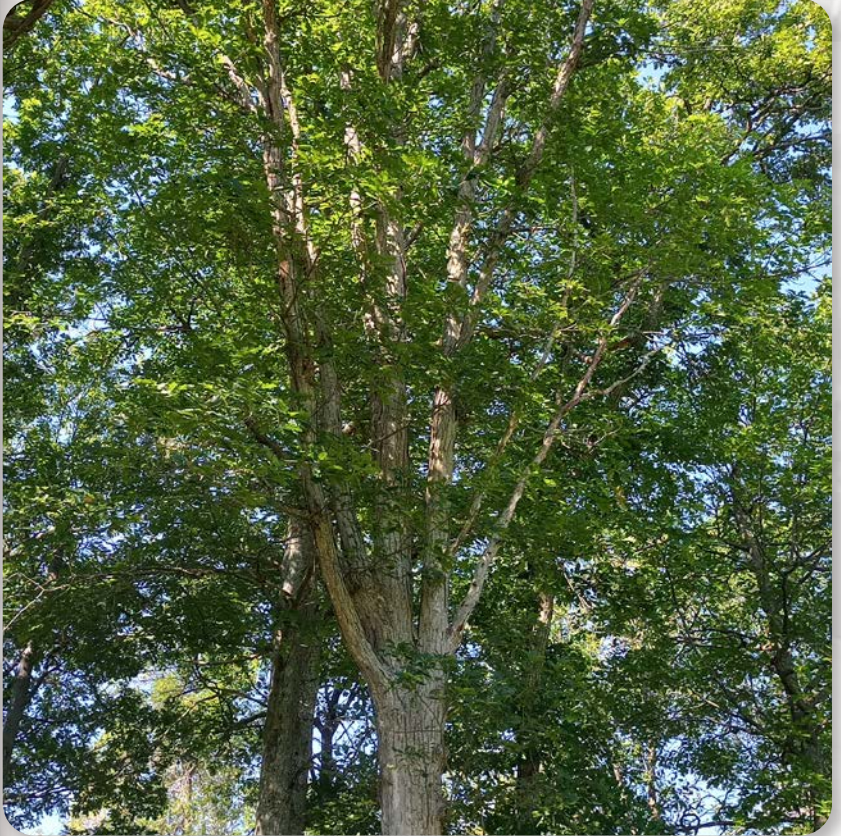
Height

Up to 35 meters

Growing Conditions

Partial shade to full sun, average to moist sandy, loam or organic soil

White Oak
(*Quercus alba*)



White Oak (*Quercus alba*)

Seasonality

Blooms from April to May, produces green/brown flowers followed by green/brown fruit (acorn)

Attracts

Butterflies, caterpillars and small mammals; larval host to Edwards' Hairstreak (*Satyrium edwardsii*) butterfly

Height

Up to 35 meters

Growing Conditions

Partial shade to full sun; can tolerate a variety of soil but must be well drained

Big Bluestem
(*Andropogon gerardii*)



Big Bluestem *(Andropogon gerardii)*

Seasonality

Blooms from July to September, produces blue, red, or green/brown flowers

Attracts

Birds, butterflies, caterpillars, insects and small mammals; larval host to skipper butterflies

Height

Up to 2.5 meters

Growing Conditions

Partial shade to full sun, in moist sandy or loam soil

Bottlebrush Grass
(*Elymus hystrix*)



Bottlebrush Grass *(Elymus hystrix)*

Seasonality

Blooms from June to August, produces white and green/brown flowers followed by red fruit

Attracts

Birds, butterflies and caterpillars; larval host to Northern-Pearly Eye (*Enodia anthedon*) butterfly

Height

Up to 1.5 meters

Growing Conditions

Partial shade to full sun, in dry to moist loam soil

Canadian Wild Rye
(*Elymus canadensis*)



Canadian Wild Rye (*Elymus canadensis*)

Seasonality

Blooms from July to August, produces green/brown flowers followed by purple, red and brown fruit

Attracts

Birds and insects

Height

Up to 1.5 meters

Growing Conditions

Shade to full sun, in dry to moist clay or sandy soil

Little Bluestem
(*Schizachyrium scoparium*)



Little Bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*)

Seasonality

Blooms from August to October, produces white and green flowers followed by purple fruit

Attracts

Birds and caterpillars; larval host to skipper butterflies

Height

Up to 1.2 meters

Growing Conditions

Full sun, in dry to average soil

Switchgrass
(*Panicum virgatum*)



Switchgrass (*Panicum virgatum*)

Seasonality

Blooms from July to September, produces purple, green pink flowers

Attracts

Birds, caterpillars, other insects, and small mammals; larval host to Delaware Skipper (*Anatrytone logan*) butterfly

Height

Up to 2 meters

Growing Conditions

Full sun, range of dry to moist soils

PLANT PAIRINGS

Here are some examples of pollinator plant pairings for various growing conditions:

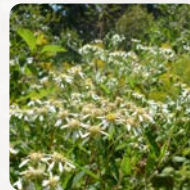
EXAMPLE 1: Drought Tolerant Garden

- Black-eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia hirta*)
- Purple Coneflower (*Echinacea purpurea*)
- Wild Bergamot (*Monarda fistulosa*)
- Butterfly Milkweed (*Asclepias tuberosa*)



EXAMPLE 2: Rain Garden

- Cardinal Flower (*Lobelia cardinalis*)
- Blue Flag Iris (*Iris versicolor*)
- Flat-topped Aster (*Doellingeria umbellata*)
- Sensitive Fern (*Onoclea sensibilis*)
- Spotted Joe Pye Weed (*Eutrochium maculatum*)



EXAMPLE 3: Rocky Shoreline

- Blue Vervain (*Verbena hastata*)
- Lance-leaf Coreopsis (*Coreopsis lanceolata*)
- Cardinal Flower (*Lobelia cardinalis*)
- Bottlebrush Grass (*Elymus hystrix*)
- Alternate Leaved Dogwood (*Cornus alternifolia*)



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Visit SSEA's Pollinator Habitat webpage by using your smart device to scan the QR code below:



Or visit:

<https://www.severnsound.ca/programs-projects/wildlife-habitat/pollinator-habitat>

Included is a list of resources for further reading, such as native plant identification guides, resources on managing invasive species, and detailed information on establishing native gardens.



SEVERN SOUND
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSOCIATION
489 Finlayson St., Port McNicoll, ON L0K 1R0
www.severnsound.ca
sseainfo@severnsound.ca
705-534-7283



"TWITTER, TWEET, RETWEET" and the Twitter Bird logo are trademarks of Twitter Inc. or its affiliates.