NATIVE PLANTS IN YOUR GARDEN: Lessons from Nature and Culture

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SITES:
Minimize soil disturbance
Preserve site vegetation
Use native plants
Restore plant communities
Use plants for climate modification

What is a native plant?
Medicine
Ornament
Regenerative agent
Endangered species
Host
Structural and functional ecosystem

Our Goals in Promoting Native Plants
Foster an appreciation of native plants in the wild
Promote the beauty and versatility of native plants in gardens
Promote native habitat preservation

Accomplishments in Promoting Native Plants
Native Plant Societies flourishing
Native Plant Conferences widespread and well attended
Nursery Trade selling hundreds of natives
People are growing natives in gardens
Habitat restoration is common
Federal Highway advocated 1/10 of 1% of money for wildflower plantings

Down Side of Promotion
Meadow in a can
Beauty or color beds on highways
Misconceptions abound

So, What Is Native?
Native is a buzzword, like organic
Is it native-Continent, Country, Region, State, Site?
Are cultivars native?
What about provenance?

Are Native Better Adapted?
What about invasive exotics
Cultural vs. Habitat availability
Vegetation Dynamics
   Succession: Primary vs Secondary
   Young communities are homogeneous in diversity and age
   Communities gain species diversity and complexity with time
   Older communities are heterogeneous in species diversity, structural complexity and age
   Late successional communities may lose species diversity

Habitat Diversity
   Habitat for what?
   Raupp Study, University of Maryland

Disturbance
   Natural forces
   Fire
   Invasive species
   Deer

Vegetation Layers – Vertical Stratification
   Rhizosphere
   Ground layer
   Shrub layer
   Understory
   Canopy

Framing Nature
   Natural process
   Cultural filters
   The garden

When Using Native Plants in the Garden
   Think regionally
   Tailor use to goals
   Think ecologically and sustainably
   Think habitat
   Design with nature and culture