

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