



North American Plants for New England Gardens

Roberta A. Clark, Extension Educator
UMass Extension Landscape, Nursery & Urban Forestry
Cape Cod Extension
PO Box 367
Barnstable, MA 02639

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 calendulaceum - 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 - E astern 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

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
Rhododendron vaseyi - 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

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

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

Part Shade/Shade

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 alata - 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

Kalmia angustifolia - Sheep Laurel
Kalmia latifolia - Mt. laurel
Leucothoe axillaris - Coast leucothoe
Leucothoe fontanesiana - Drooping leucothoe
Magnolia virginiana - Sweetbay magnolia
Pieris floribunda - Mt. pieris
Ptelea trifoliata - Hoptree
Rhododendron arborescens - Sweet azalea
Rhododendron maximum - Rosebay
 rhododendron
Stewartia ovata - Mountain stewartia
Vaccinium corymbosum - Highbush blueberry
Viburnum acerifolium - Mapleleaf viburnum
Viburnum alnifolium - Hobblebush
Viburnum cassinoides - Northern wild raisin
Viburnum dentatum - Arrowwood
Viburnum lentago - Nannyberry
Viburnum prunifolium - Blackhaw viburnum

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

*Limonium nashii** - Sea Lavender
Panicum virgatum - Panic Grass
*Parthenocissus quinquefolia** - Virginia
Schizachyrium scoparium - Little Bluestem
creeper

Solidago sempervirens – Seaside goldenrod
Spartina alterniflora – Smooth cordgrass
Spartina patens – Saltmarsh cordgrass

Shrubs

*Amelanchier canadensis** - Shadbush
Aronia arbutifolia - Chokeberry, Red
Aronia melanocarpa - Chokeberry, Black
Baccharis halimifolia - Groundsel Bush
Clethra alnifolia - Sweet Pepperbush
*Comptonia peregrina** - Sweet Fern
Ilex glabra - Inkberry
Ilex verticillata - Winterberry
Itea virginica - Sweetspire
Iva frutescens – Marsh elder
Leucothoe axillaris - Coast Leucothoe
*Myrica pennsylvanicum** - Bayberry
Physocarpus opulifolius - Eastern Ninebark

*Prunus maritima** - Beach Plum
Rhus aromatica - Sumac, Fragrant
Rhus copallina - Sumac, Shining
Rhus glabra - Sumac, Smooth
Rhus typhina - Sumac, Staghorn
Rosa virginiana - Virginia Rose
Sambucus canadensis - Elderberry
Vaccinium corymbosum - Highbush
Blueberry
Viburnum cassinoides - Northern Wild
Raisin
Viburnum dentatum - Arrow-wood

Trees

Acer rubrum - Red Maple
Chamaecyparis thyoides - Atlantic White
Cedar
Fraxinus pennsylvanica - Green Ash
Ilex opaca - American Holly
*Juniperus virginiana** - Eastern Red Cedar
Magnolia virginiana - Sweet Bay Magnolia
Nyssa sylvatica - Tupelo

Picea glauca - White Spruce
Picea pungens - Colorado Spruce
*Pinus rigida** - Pitch Pine
*Prunus serotina** - Black Cherry
*Quercus spp.** - Oak, various species
Thuja occidentalis - Eastern Arborvitae