

# NATIVE PLANTS

## WHAT IS A NATIVE PLANT?

A plant is native if it has **occurred naturally for thousands of years in a region, ecosystem, or habitat without human introduction**. These plants have formed symbiotic relationships with native wildlife over thousands of years, meaning that **many native animals are dependent on these particular species to survive**. Native plants are always the best bet when it comes to supporting their local wildlife.

## WHY PLANT NATIVE?

- Native plants are the **foundation of the entire food web** that all animal life relies on.
- **Essential host plants for many insects**, including the caterpillars of butterflies and moths which themselves are an extremely important part of web as well as pollinators.
- **Thrive in the soils, moisture, and weather of your region**, which means less supplemental watering and fertilizing.
- Often have **deeper root systems** which help reduce watering needs, manage rainwater runoff, and maintain a healthy soil structure.
- Can **sequester more carbon** by taking it out of our atmosphere and storing it in the soil through their deep root systems than many non-native ornamental garden plants do.
- **Less prone to pest problems** that may require toxic chemicals that can enter our ecosystems and waterways.
- Provide a sense of place and space that **ties our gardens to the unique regional natural history of the land where we live** and honors the importance of these species in Indigenous culture.
- Support birds, pollinators and other wildlife that are under increasing stress from climate change. Native plants **provide the best possible habitat for native wildlife**.

## WHY PRIORITIZE NATIVE OVER NON-NATIVE?

Non-native plants are species that evolved in other parts of the world or were cultivated by humans into forms that don't exist in nature. These plants **do not support native wildlife as well as native species** and can occasionally even escape into the wild and become **invasive species** that destroy natural habitat.

## SOURCES + MORE INFO:



Georgia Native  
Plant Society



National  
Wildlife  
Federation



Audubon

