

Native plants

Native plants are adapted to local climate, soil conditions and diseases. Since they have evolved surviving on rainfall alone, they are good choices for low maintenance, low water consumption gardens. They are also excellent choices for wildlife, providing food and shelter for many local pollinators and other species!

Check with your local nursery or garden supply store for more information on native plants such as the ones suggested below. Local sources of native plants include the [Ferguson Tree Nursery \(link is external\)](#) in Kemptville and [Beaux Arbres Native Plants \(link is external\)](#) in Bristol (Québec), as well as the Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club's annual native plant sale at the Fletcher Wildlife Garden (Experimental Farm).

Make sure that the plants you choose are actually native to eastern Ontario, not just to North America in general. The City of Ottawa has a list of all known plant species occurring here, with notations on which ones are not native to our area. There are several organisations that provide great resources as well; for more information on native plants, please refer to the following:

- [Grow Me Instead Guide \(link is external\) PDF opens in a new tab or window](#)
- [Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club \(link is external\)](#) (wildlife garden recommendations)
- [Ottawa Native Trees and Shrubs Database \(link is external\)](#)
- [Selecting Plants for Pollinators guides \(link is external\)](#)
- [Native Plant Encyclopedia \(Canadian Wildlife Federation\) \(link is external\)](#)

Groundcovers



Bearberry

In areas that are not used much, grass can be replaced by one or more groundcovers. Many of the following species will thrive in shady areas, unlike most turf grasses. They are also much better for pollinators than turf!

- Bearberry (white-pink flowers in early spring; red berries in summer) – *Arctostaphylos uva-ursi*
- Bloodroot (beautiful white flowers in early spring) – *Sanguinaria canadensis*
- Bunchberry (white flowers followed by red berries) – *Cornus canadensis*
- Canada Mayflower (white flowers in spring) – *Maianthemum canadense*
- Foamflower (clusters of white flowers in spring) – *Tiarella cordifolia*
- Partridgeberry (very low-growing, evergreen with red berries) – *Mitchella repens*
- Violets, including Sweet White, Canada, Northern White, Yellow or Common Blue – *Viola blanda*, *V. canadensis*, *V. macloskeyi*, *V. pubescens* or *V. sororia*
- Wild Ginger (interesting flowers in spring) – *Asarum canadense*

- Wild Strawberry (white flowers in late spring, edible berries in summer) – *Fragaria virginiana*
- Wintergreen (low-growing, aromatic evergreen leaves and red berries) – *Gaultheria procumbens*

Wildflowers



Goldenrod

Many commercially prepared wildflower seed mixes contain species that are not native to our area. Some mixes even include invasive species that should not be planted near natural areas! The following species are recommended, especially for pollinator-friendly gardens:

- Asters, such as Panicked, Calico, New England or Purple-stemmed – *Symphotrichum* (formerly *Aster*) *lanceolatum*, *S. lateriflorum*, *S. novae-angliae* or *S. puniceum*
- Blue Flag – *Iris versicolor*
- Canada Anemone – *Anemone canadensis*
- Cardinal Flower – *Lobelia cardinalis*
- Goldenrods, including Tall, Canada, Zigzag, Early or Rough – *Solidago altissima*, *S. canadensis*, *S. flexicaulis*, *S. juncea* or *S. rugosa*
- Milkweeds, such as Common, Swamp, and the increasingly popular Butterfly-weed – *Asclepias syriaca*, *A. incarnata*, and *A. tuberosa*
- Mints, such as Wild Bergamot, Wild Mint, or Northern Bugleweed – *Monarda fistulosa*, *Mentha canadensis*, *Lycopus uniflorus*
- Spring-beauty – *Claytonia caroliniana*
- Trilliums, including White or Red – *Trillium grandiflorum* or *T. erectum*
- Wild Columbine – *Aquilegia canadensis*

Shrubs



Highbush Cranberry

The deciduous shrubs listed below have beautiful flowers that attract pollinators, and fruits that are eaten by birds and other wildlife. The evergreens also provide food and shelter for wildlife.

- Canada Yew (evergreen) – *Taxus canadensis*
- Chokeberry – *Aronia melanocarpa* (also known as *Photinia melanocarpa*)
- Common Juniper (evergreen) – *Juniperus communis*
- Dogwood, such as Grey (Panicked) or Red-osier – *Cornus racemosa* or *C. sericea*
- Elderberry, either Common or Red – *Sambucus canadensis* or *S. pubens* (also known as *S. racemosa* ssp. *pubens*)
- High bush Cranberry, Maple-leaved Viburnum or Nannyberry – *Viburnum opulus* var. *americanum* (also known as *V. trilobum*), *V. acerifolium*, or *V. lentago*
- Northern Bush-honeysuckle – *Diervilla lonicera*
- Purple-flowered Raspberry (large, showy flowers and leaves) – *Rubus odoratus*
- Staghorn Sumac (large shrub/small tree; spreads by roots) – *Rhus typhina*
- Winterberry (bright red berries in fall and winter) – *Ilex verticillata*

Trees (small)



Alternate-leaved Dogwood

Many of these trees have flowers that attract pollinators, and fruits that are eaten by birds and other wildlife. White cedar provides food and shelter for wildlife such as birds, squirrels and deer.

- Alternate-leaved Dogwood – *Cornus alternifolia*
- Blue-beech – *Carpinus caroliniana*
- Hawthorn – *Crataegus chrysocarpa*, *C. flabellata* or *C. submollis*
- Pin Cherry – *Prunus pensylvanica*
- Maple, either Mountain or Striped – *Acer spicatum* or *A. pensylvanicum*
- Serviceberry – *Amelanchier arborea*
- White Cedar (evergreen) – *Thuja occidentalis*

Trees (large)



Black Cherry

Large trees provide food and shelter to many species of birds and other wildlife. They also provide us with great benefits such as shade, cleaner air, and higher property values!

- American Beech – *Fagus grandifolia*
- Balsam Fir (evergreen) – *Abies balsamea*
- Birch, either White or Yellow – *Betula papyrifera* or *B. alleghaniensis*
- Bitternut Hickory – *Carya cordiformis*
- Black Cherry – *Prunus serotina*
- Maple, either Red, Silver, United (hybrid) or Sugar – *Acer rubrum*, *A. saccharinum*, *A. x freemanii* or *A. saccharum*
- Oak, either Red or Bur – *Quercus rubra* or *Q. macrocarpa*
- Tamarack – *Larix laricina*
- White Pine (evergreen) – *Pinus strobus*
- White Spruce (evergreen) – *Picea glauca*