

GETTING STARTED WITH NATIVES
Sherrie Snyder, Founding Member Illinois Prairie Chapter of Wild Ones
ilprairiewo@gmail.com

Why Natives

- Improve the soil
- Improve water quality
- Less mowing
- Low maintenance (once established)
 - Do not require watering, fertilizing, pruning, dividing, deadheading, moving indoors, etc.
- Provide habitat for wildlife - food, shelter, nesting materials
- Support pollinators
- Are not invasive

Planning your Landscape

- It's ok to mix natives and non-natives
- Be sure to avoid Non-native Invasives
 - Rose of Sharon
 - Vinca
 - Japanese barberry
 - English Ivy
 - Moneywort
 - Burning bush
 - Butterfly bush (not to be confused with butterfly milkweed)
 - Bradford Pear
- Know your property
 - Sun (determine levels of direct sun by direct observation; document your hourly findings in a sun chart or use a purchased sunlight meter)
 - Full Sun - 6 or more hours of direct sun
 - Part Sun - 4-6 hours of direct sun
 - Part Shade - 2-4 hours - no mid-day sun
 - Shade - fewer than 2 hours direct sun
 - Soil
 - Fertility (have your soil analyzed by a soil testing company)
 - Drainage - Dig a hole 1' deep and 1' wide; fill with water; Wait an hour
 - <1" drained = poorly drained, wet (clay)
 - 3-6" drained = well drained, mesic (loam)
 - > 6" drained = dry (sand)
 - Moisture - also affected by the "lay of the land"
 - Dry - upland, south-facing
 - Mesic - average soil
 - Wet - low lying areas, soil around ponds, north-facing

Selecting the Right Natives

- Determine Your Goals
 - Attract Butterflies
 - Attract Birds
 - Attract Hummingbirds
 - Retain Rain Water
 - Provide Winter Appeal
 - Block a View
 - Deer Resistant
 - Other
- Know the plant's characteristics
 - Height
 - Width - spread or spacing
 - Color
 - Bloom season
- Match plant's sun and moisture needs to the characteristics of planting bed
- Determine which natives grow together in nature

Design Your Landscape - using the plant information that you collected, create a scale-sized drawing of each planting bed, using appropriate-sized circles to indicate the spread of the plants you have selected

Adding Natives to Your Yard

- Plant plants anytime after first frost into the fall
- Find the right location - sun, moisture needs
- Water regularly for the first season
- Do not fertilize
- Plant bare root in the fall
- Plant seeds in late fall or winter (or indoors Feb 1st)

Planting Tips

- Plant plants close together
- Plant like plants in clumps to attract pollinators
- Make sure there's something in bloom throughout the growing season
- Plant a little at a time
- Label what you plant
- Take pictures - before and after

Caveats

- Native plants ...
 - support insects - expect to see insects on your plants; that's ok
 - re-seed - will fill in empty spaces
 - may fall over (intersperse grasses to provide support and root competition, or cut back to 12" in June and again before blooming for fall bloomers)
 - are perennials, so they have a shorter bloom time - plan accordingly with plants in your garden that will bloom at different times
- Don't buy "Wildflowers in a Can" - many contain invasive plants
- Neighbors
 - Create neighbor-friendly plantings
 - Be an ambassador for natives

Great Natives for Landscaping

- Prairie Blazing Star (*Liatris pycnostachya*)
- Wild Petunia (*Ruella humilis*)
- Fire Pink (*Silene virginica*)
- Royal Catchfly (*Silene regia*)
- Pale Purple Coneflower (*Echinacea pallida*)
- Butterfly Milkweed (*Asclepias tuberosa*)
- Lance-leaf Coreopsis (*Coreopsis lanceolata*)
- Columbine (*Aquilegia canadensis*)
- Wild Ginger (*Asarum canadense*)
- Prairie Dropseed (*Sporobolus heterolepis*)
- Little Bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*)
- New Jersey Tea (*Ceanothus americanus*)
- Serviceberry (*Amelanchier arborea*)
- Christmas Fern (*Polystichum acrostichoides*)
- Marginal Wood Fern (*Dryopteris marginalis*)

Where to Find Natives

- For sale (see handout)
 - Native Plant Sales
 - Nurseries
- Plant rescues
- Grow your own
 - Buy seeds
 - Collect seeds (with owner's permission)

A Note on Native Cultivars

- “Nativars” are the result of artificial selections made by humans
- Result in the loss of genetic diversity
- May not function in the ecosystem as the true native

Resources

<http://illinoisprairie.wildones.org> (Local Wild Ones chapter)
www.illinoiswildflowers.info (Information on native IL plants)
http://plants.usda.gov/about_plants.html (maps showing where a plant occurs natively)
www.mortonarb.org/ (Morton Arboretum in Lisle, IL - lots of general information)
www.missouribotanicalgarden.org/gardens-gardening/your-garden/plant-finder.aspx
(Missouri Botanical Garden - Once you've determined that a plant is native to Central IL, this website offers landscaping advice and general information for each plant.)

Bringing Nature Home; Douglas W. Tallamy
Native Plants in the Home Landscape; Keith Gerard Nowakowski
Go Native!; Carolyn Harstad
Birdscaping in the Midwest; Mariette Nowak
Design your Natural Midwest Garden; Patricia Hill
Wildflowers in Your Garden; Viki Ferreniea
The Midwestern Native Garden: Native Alternatives to Non-native Flowers and Plants;
Charlotte Adelman & Bernard L. Schwartz

Soil Testing

United Soils, Inc.-- P.O. Box 226 -- 108 S Crystal Lane -- Fairbury, IL 61839 -- 815-692-4483
Check the phone book for other labs in the area.

Sources for Native Plants

- **Grow your own** from locally collected seeds
- **Illinois Native Plant Society Sale** -(usually the last Saturday in April, Illinois State Fairgrounds Commodities Building) www.ill-inps.org/index.php/
- **Fell Arboretum Plant Sale** at ISU (usually the weekend before ISU graduation at School and Beaufort Streets in Normal) <http://arboretum.illinoisstate.edu/events/>
- **Grand Prairie Friends Native Plant Sale** www.grandprairiefriends.com
(usually the second Saturday in May at 201 Lincoln Square, Urbana, IL)
- **Illinois Prairie Wild Ones Native Plant Sale** - 3rd Saturday in May check the website for specifics and a tentative list of plants for sale)
<http://illinoisprairie.wildones.org/nativeplantsale/>
- **Simply Native Nursery** 681 State Hwy 135 -- Alexis, IL 61412
www.simplynativenursery.com (online catalog available)
- **Possibility Place** (Specializes in native trees and shrubs - has some perennials)
www.possibilityplace.com - informative website
- **Prairie Moon Nursery** -www.prairiemoon.com (great website and free catalog)
- **Prairie Nursery** - www.prairienursery.com (great website and free catalog)
- **Local Nurseries** - several are starting to carry natives - Casey's, Niepagen's, Owen's in Bloomington/Normal