



Native Plant Guide of Kentucky

What are native plants?

Native plants are species that are indigenous to a given region by natural process, with no human intervention. Native plants are adapted to local climate and soil conditions where they naturally occur. These important plant species also provide nectar, pollen, and seeds that serve as food for native butterflies, insects, birds, and other animals.

Benefits of Native Species

- Their deep root systems require less water than lawns and help prevent erosion.
- Native plants do not require fertilizers to sustain growth.
- Provide shelter and food for wildlife.
- Promote biodiversity.

How to help our streams with native plants

Native plants play a major role in improving water quality, which is one reason why it is important to control invasive plant species. Healthy native plants and trees break up heavy soils, retain and infiltrate water, and filter out pollutants before they can reach our waterways. Even the plants found in your home's and work's landscape can make a huge difference.

The native species in this pocket guide are some of the most common native plants in our county. These plants can be purchased at local nurseries, in catalogs, and on the internet.

How you can help

To protect the health of Kentucky's stream corridors and waterways, here are a few ways you can help:

- Learn which plants are native in your area. This pocket guide is a great start!
- Purchase and grow noninvasive, native plants.
- Don't grow invasive plants (See our Invasive Plant Guide of Kentucky to learn more!)
- Take a class on invasive versus native plants.
- Volunteer to plant native species in your area. Inform your neighbors and community about native plants.
- Visit <https://louisvillemsd.org/WaterQuality>

Big Bluestem

Andropogon gerardii



Fox Sedge

Carex vulpinoidea



Indiangrass

Sorghastrum nutans



Little Bluestem

Schizachyrium scoparium



Prairie Dropseed

Sporobolus heterolepis



River Oats

Chasmanthium latifolium



Soft Rush

Juncus effusus



Virginia Wild Rye

Elymus virginicus



Arrowwood
Viburnum dentatum



Wild Hydrangea
Hydrangea arborescens



Black-eyed Susan
Rudbeckia hirta



Cut-leaf Prairie Dock
Silphium pinnatifidum



Buttonbush
Cephalanthus occidentalis



Winterberry
Ilex verticillata



Blue False Indigo
Baptisia australis



Foxglove Beardtongue
Penstemon digitalis



River Birch
Betula nigra



Christmas Fern
Polystichum acrostichoides



Blue Vervain
Verbena hastata



Goldenrod
Solidago speciosa



Serviceberry
Amelanchier laevis



Lady Fern
Athyrium filix-femina



Cardinal Flower
Lobelia cardinalis



Jacob's Ladder
Polemonium reptans

