

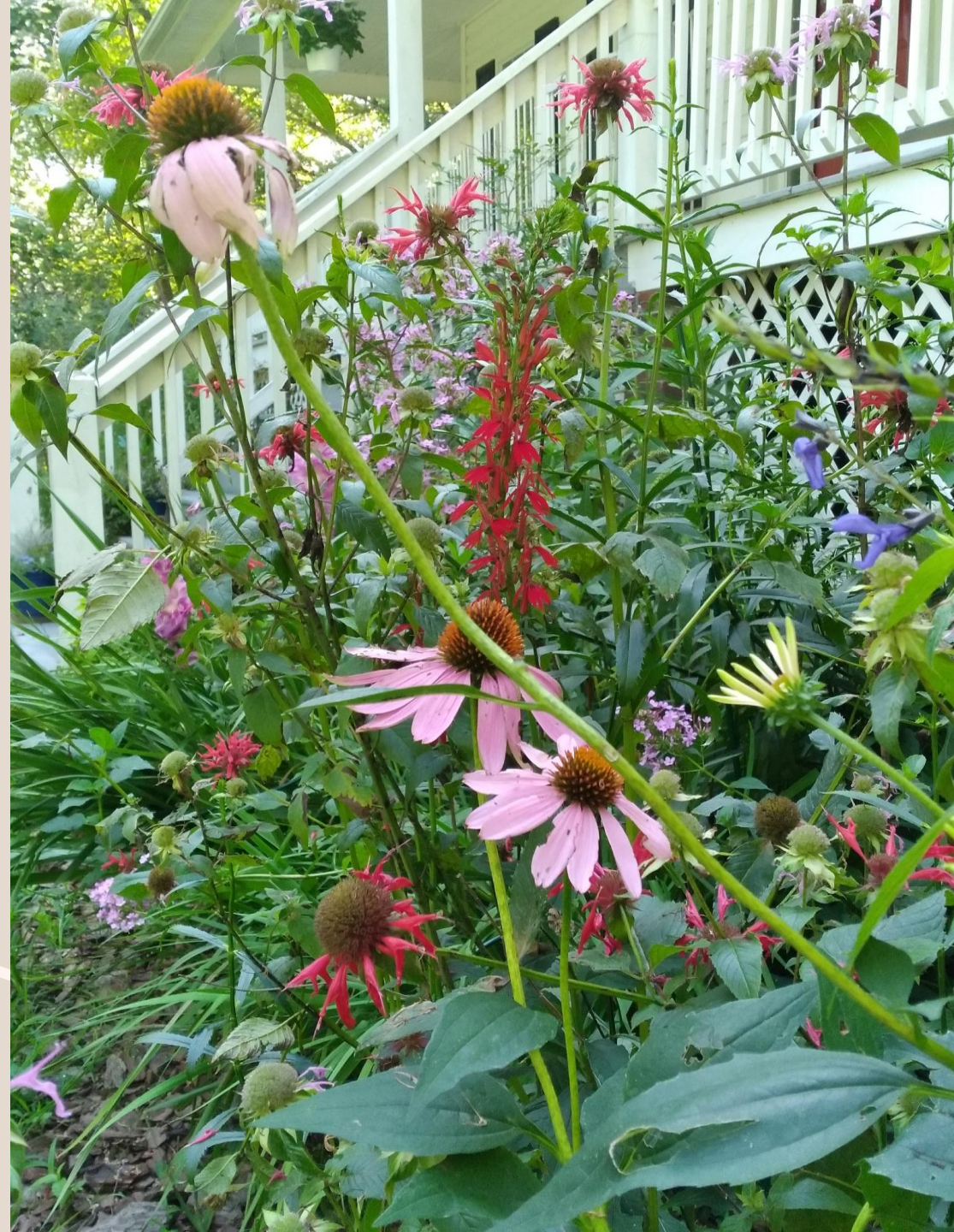
Native Plants for Our Gardens

Gardening 101 / March 10, 2026

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GPMGA.org





Agenda

WHY PLANT NATIVES?

KEYSTONE PLANTS

WHO HAS PURPLE
CONEFLOWERS?

MORE PLANTS

SOME RESOURCES

Why Plant Native Plants?



Why Plant Native Plants?

- NATIVE PLANTS HAVE EVOLVED WITH OTHER FLORA AND FAUNA OF THE AREA.
- THEY SUPPORT A GREATER DIVERSITY OF WILDLIFE BY PROVIDING FOOD AND SHELTER.
- REQUIRE LESS MAINTENANCE WHEN CORRECTLY SITED. “RIGHT PLANT, RIGHT PLACE”
- BUILDS A HEALTHIER ENVIRONMENT AND A MORE RESILIENT LANDSCAPE.



How You Can Help: Keystone Plants

Without keystone plants in the landscape, butterflies, native bees, and birds will not thrive. Over 90% of our local bird population relies on insects supported by keystone plants, especially caterpillars.

Trees - Cherry or Plum, Oak, and Willow native to your area.

Flowering Plants - Aster, Goldenrod, and Sunflower native to your area.



Asters

New England Aster (shown)

Aster novae-angliae

White Wood Aster

Eurybia divaricatus

Calico Aster

Symphotrichum lateriflorum

Grow to 1-4 feet tall

Most like moist conditions

Summer to frost blooms, depending on species



Goldenrod

Wrinkle-Leaf Goldenrod (shown)

Solidago rugosa

Blue-Stemmed Goldenrod

Solidago caesia

Showy Goldenrod

Solidago erecta

Grow to 1-6 feet tall

Sunny to shade conditions

Summer to Fall blooms



Wrinkle-Leaf Goldenrod at the
Powhatan Historic Garden

Helianthus

Swamp Sunflower (Shown)

Helianthus augustifolius

Grows to 8 feet tall

Average to moist conditions

Summer to frost blooms, depending on species

Related to annual sunflowers





Laura's Woodland Sunflower Fan Page

Woodland Sunflower
Helianthus divaricatus

Grows to 5 feet tall
Average conditions, will grow in
shade or part shade or part sun
Summer blooms



So, Who Has Purple Coneflower?

Echinacea purpurea actually is not considered native to Virginia. The Digital Atlas of the Flora of Virginia indicates it as introduced.



Our Native(Rare) Echinacea

Smooth Purple Coneflower

Echinacea laevigata

Can grow over 3 feet tall

Blooms early Summer

Designated a federally threatened plant in 2022, Smooth Purple Coneflower is found in the Piedmont and Western regions of Virginia in small populations in disturbed soil.



Alumroot / Coral Bells

American Alumroot (Shown)

Heuchera americana

Rock Alumroot

Heuchera villosa

Can grow to 3 feet tall

Prefers loamy soil and part shade

Blooms in Spring

Note: Coral Bells are widely hybridized for leaf color.



Phlox

Garden Phlox

Phlox paniculata (Shown)

Phlox paniculata 'Jeana'

Will grow to 5 feet with ample watering

Prefers moist conditions

Blooms July to September (or later)

Note: The hybrid 'Jeana' attracts more pollinators than the straight species, per a 2-year study from the Mt. Cuba Center in Delaware.



Columbine

Eastern Columbine

Aquilegia canadensis

Grows to 1-3 feet tall

Woodland conditions

Early blooms

Note: Has been widely hybridized



What About Nativars and Cultivars?

- Alum Root, Phlox, Columbine, Coneflowers, and other native plants are frequently hybridized, with many colors and shapes available through nurseries.
- Does that help our insects and birds? Yes and no.



Fleabane /Erigeron

Annual Fleabane (Shown)

Erigeron annuus

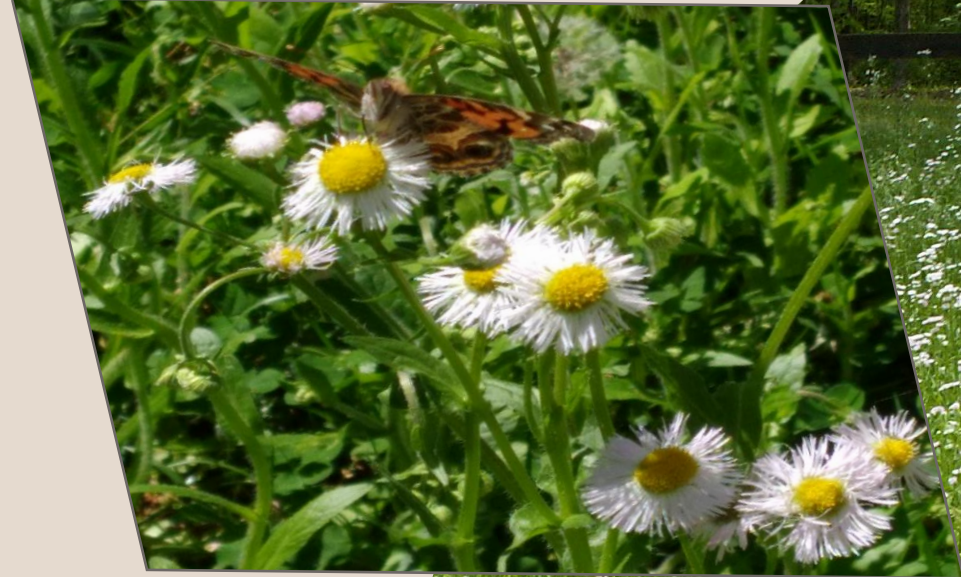
Philadelphia Daisy

Erigeron philadelphicus

Grows to 30 inches tall

Prefers sun and average soil conditions

Early blooms attract small bees and pollinators



Iris

Dwarf Crested Iris

Iris cristata

Low growing, 4-6 inches

Prefers moist conditions

Blooms April to May



Pinks

Fire Pink (Shown)

Silene virginica

Wild Pink or Catchfly

Silene Caroliniana

Grows to 1.5 feet tall

Woodland conditions

Blooms in Spring



Obedient Plant

Obedient Plant

Physostegia virginiana

Grows 3-4 feet tall

Prefers moist or disturbed habitats

Summer to Fall blooms

Note: Can become “disobedient” in the right conditions.



Monarda

Bee Balm (Shown)

Monarda didyma

Appalachian Bergamot

Monarda fistulosa

Eastern Horse-Mint

Monarda punctata

Grows to 2 to 5 feet

Thrives in disturbed soil

Blooms Summer to Fall



Orange or Three-Lobed Coneflower

Orange Coneflower

Rudbeckia triloba

Grows 1 to 3 feet tall

Prefers moist or well-watered soil

Blooms Summer to Fall



Cutleaf Coneflower

Cutleaf Coneflower

Rudbeckia laciniata

Grows to 7 feet in right conditions

Prefers moist areas, bottomlands

Blooms Summer to Fall



Lobelia

Cardinal Flower (Shown)

Lobelia cardinalis

Great Blue Lobelia

Lobelia siphilitica

Grows 2 to 4 feet tall

Likes moist soils, including rain gardens

Blooms Summer to early Fall



Blue Mistflower

Blue Mistflower

Conoclinium coelestinum

Grows to 3 feet tall

Seen in disturbed areas, but adapts well to our gardens.

Blooms all Summer into early Fall



Blue Verbena

Blue Verbena or Blue Vervain

Verbena hastata

Can grow to 5 feet tall

Prefers rain garden or moist conditions

Blooms Summer to Fall



Culver's Root

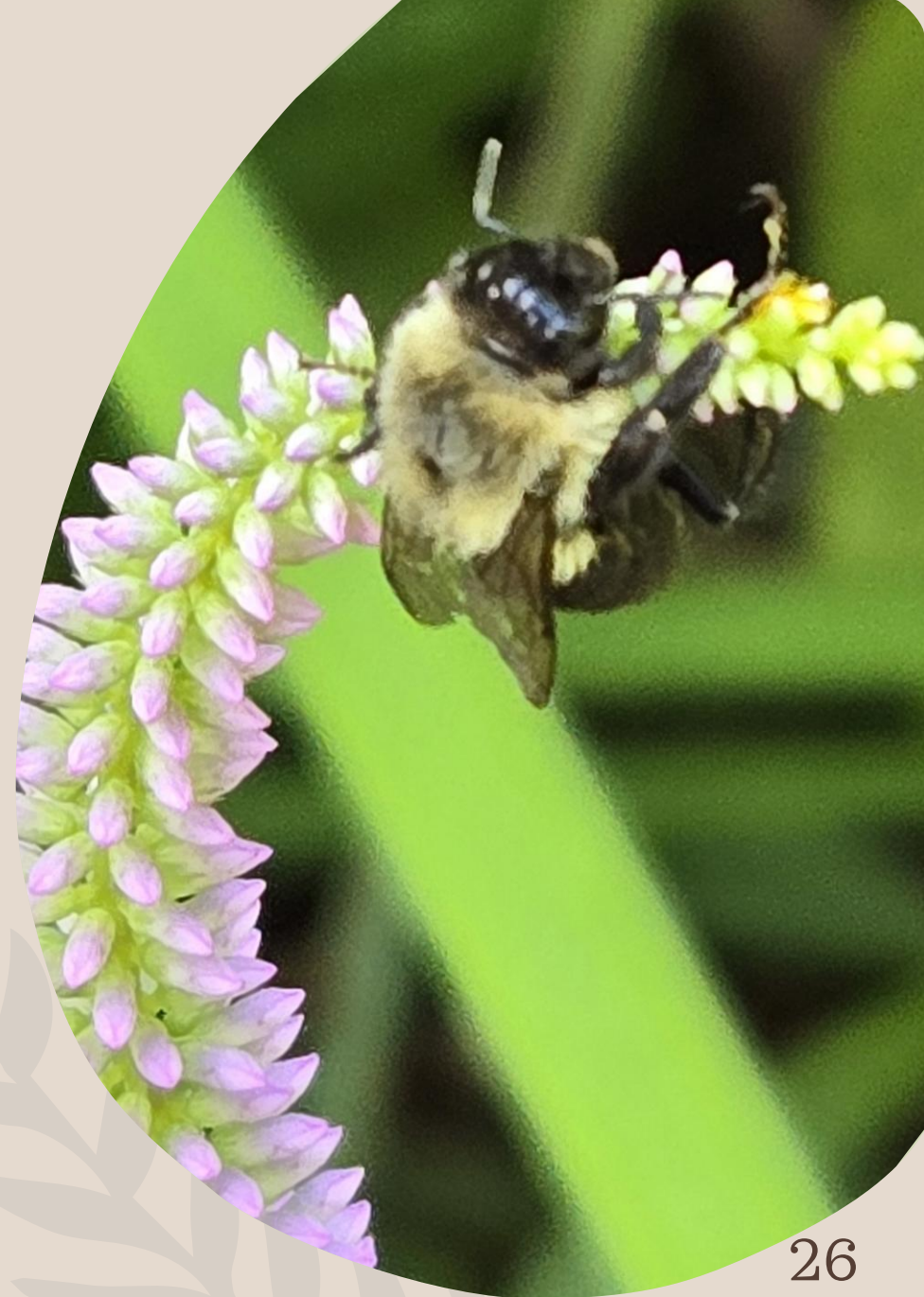
Culver's Root

Veronicastrum virginicum

May grow to 5 feet tall

Prefers moist conditions

Flowers July through September.



Mountain Mint

Short-Toothed Mountain Mint (Shown)

Pycnanthemum muticum

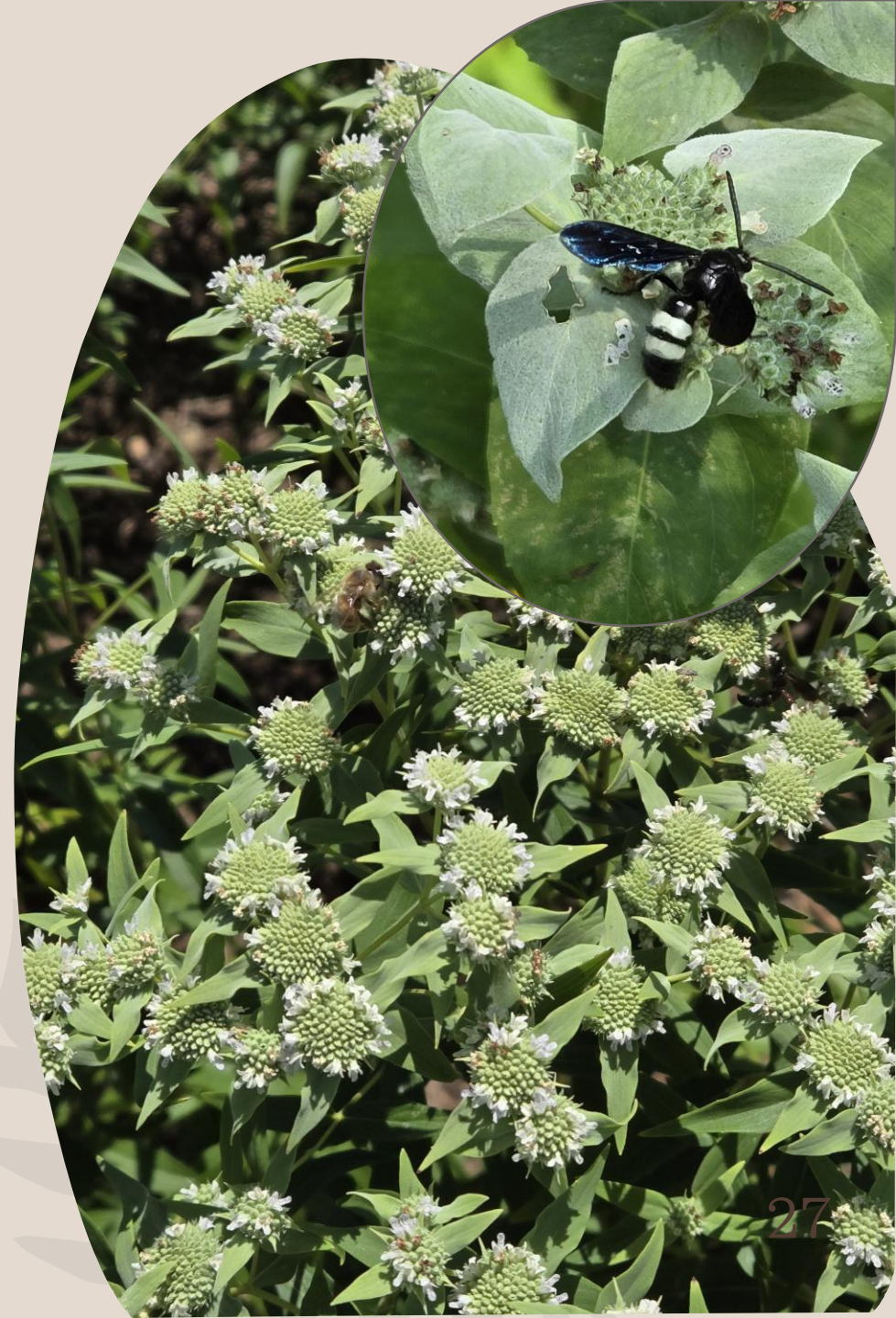
Slender Mountain Mint

Pycnanthemum tenuifolium

Grows to 3 feet tall

Part or full sun, average conditions

Blooms all Summer



Native Trap Plants - Integrated Pest Management

Here is some (insect) food for thought for integrated pest management:

Consider locating beds of native flowers near your vegetable garden to support the pollinators. And to support insects that prey on the ones that eat our crops. Or add containers of native perennials, like mountain mint.

Arrow-Shaped Micrathena Spider on Three-
Seeded Mercury *Acalypha rhomboidea*



Milkweed

Butterfly Weed (Shown)

Asclepias tuberosa

Common Milkweed

Asclepias syriaca

Swamp Milkweed

Asclepias incarnata

Grows to 4 feet tall

Moist to dry conditions, depending on species

Blooms Summer to Fall



Joe Pye Weed

Hollow-Stem Joe Pye Weed (shown)

Eutrochium fistulosum

Dwarf Joe Pye Weed

Eutrochium dubium 'Little Joe'

Can reach 8 feet tall in woodland areas

Moist conditions

Late Summer, Fall blooms



Honeysuckle

Trumpet or Coral Honeysuckle

Lonicera sempervirens

Will grow 10 to 15 feet in a season

Woodland to garden conditions

Blooms Spring until frost

Note: Plant the native honeysuckle!



Crossvine

Crossvine

Bignonia capreolata

Can grow to 50 feet

Woodland conditions

Blooms in Spring



Trumpet Vine

Trumpet Creeper or Trumpet Vine

Campsis radicans

Can grow a 30-40 foot vine

Sunny to woodland conditions

Blooms in late Summer, Fall

Note: Can be aggressive in gardens



Violets

Cream Violet (Shown)

Viola striata

Common Blue Violet

Viola sororia

Low growing

Sunny to part shade

Blooms in Spring

Note: Virginia is home to more than 30 species of violets!



Green-and-Gold

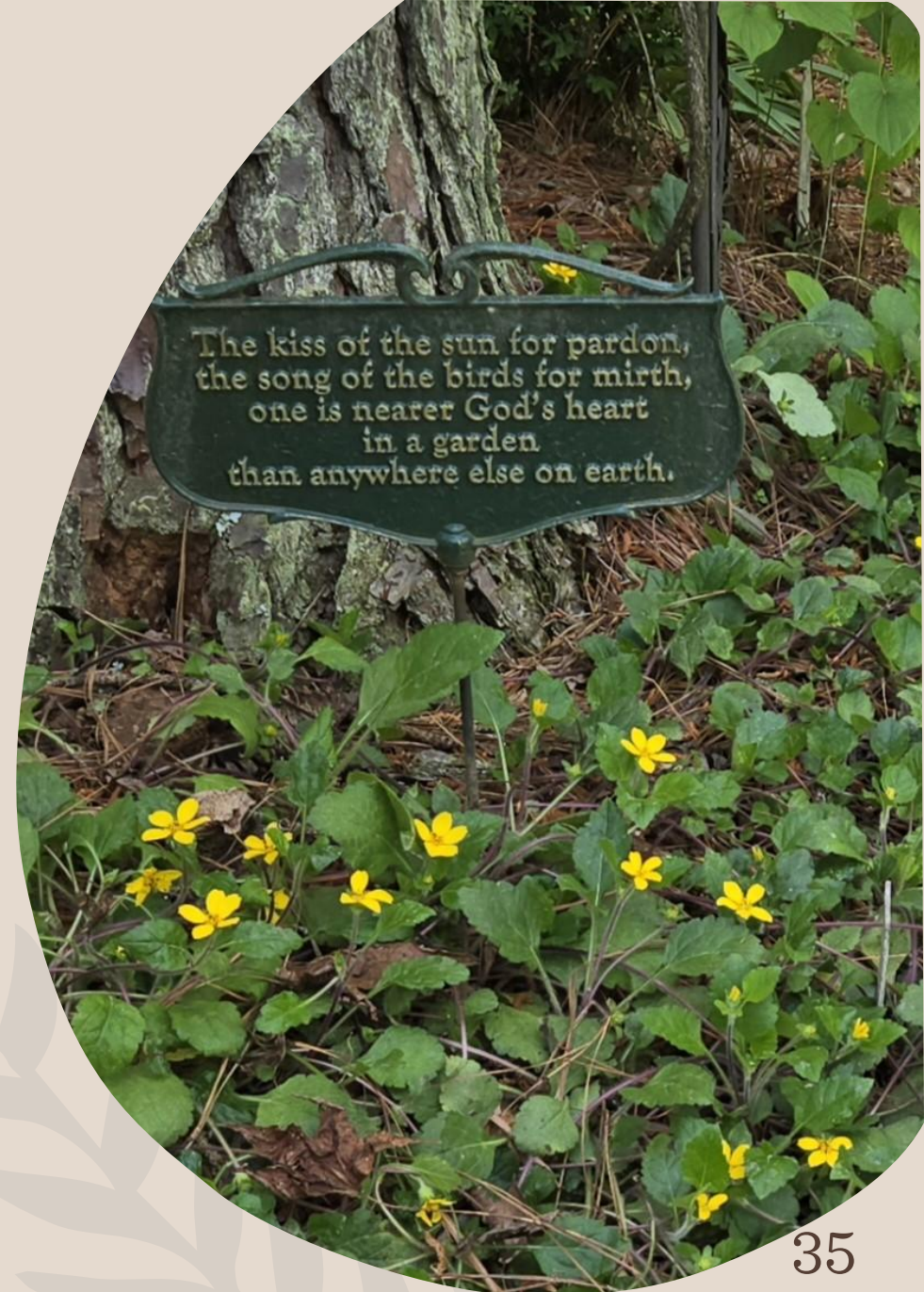
Green-and-Gold

Chrysogonum virginiana

Low growing – 4-6 inches

Shade or woodland garden in rich soil

Blooms March to June, with occasional flowers until frost



Golden Ragwort

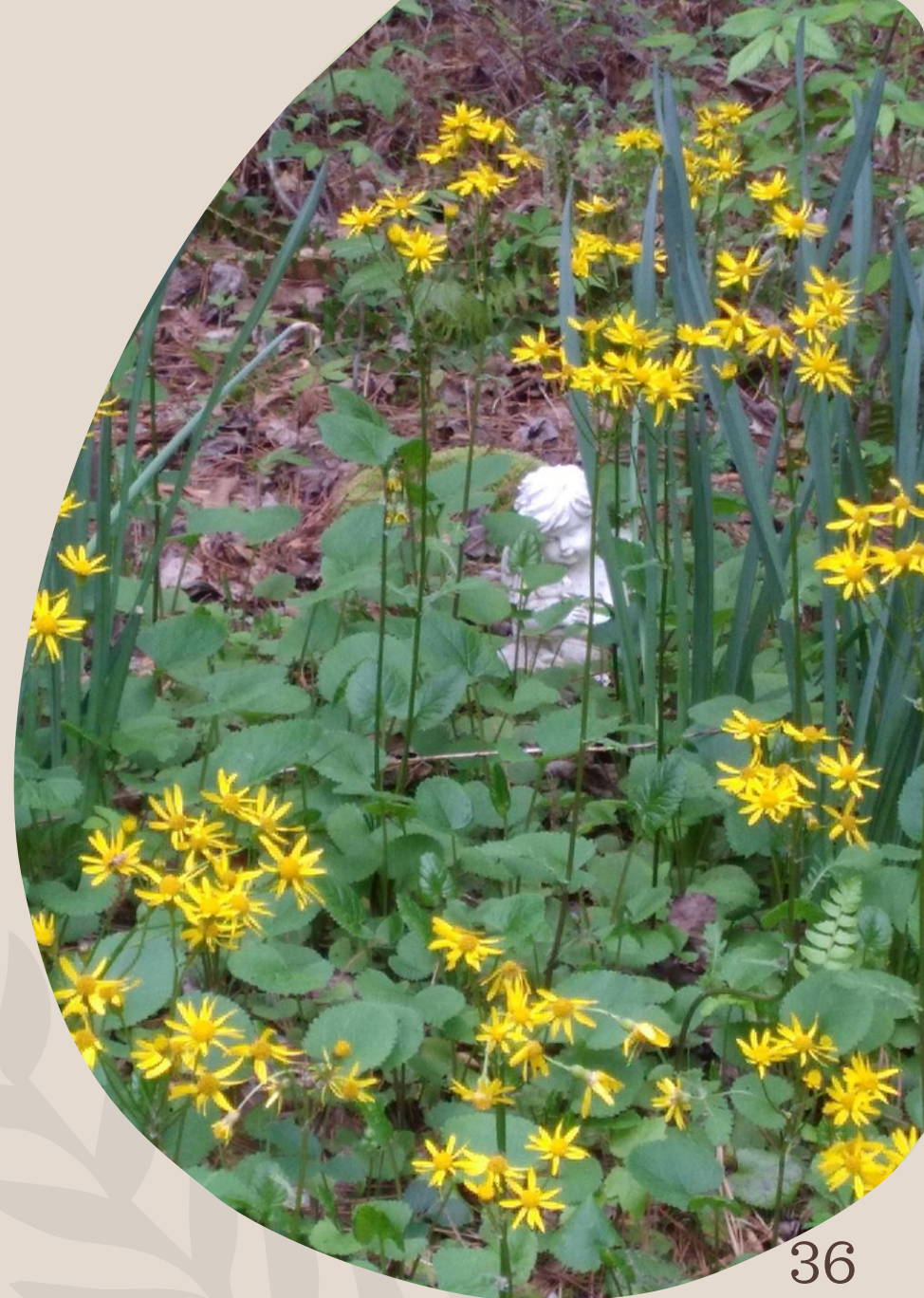
Golden Ragwort or Golden Groundsel

Packera aurea

Grows up to 2 feet

Thrives in part shade

Spring blooming



Lyreleaf Sage

Lyreleaf Sage

Salvia lyrata

Grows to 1-2 feet in gardens

Adaptable to many conditions

Blooms in Spring/Early Summer



Strawberry

Wild Strawberry

Fragaria Virginiana

Low growing to 4-9 inches tall

Prefers well-drained soil

Blooms in Spring



Native or Mock Strawberry? A Spring Weeding Tip



Mock Strawberry –
Yellow Flowers

Wild Strawberry –
White flowers

Mock Strawberry –
Rounded leaf lobes

Wild Strawberry –
Pointed leaf lobes



Spice Bush

Spice Bush

Lindera benzoin

Grows 6-12 feet as understory shrub

Moist conditions

Blooms about the same time as non-native
Forsythia



New Jersey Tea

New Jersey Tea

Ceanothus americanus

Grows to 3 feet high by 5 feet wide
Prefers good drainage and loamy soil
Blooms Spring to Summer



Wild Rose

Virginia or Prairie Rose

Rosa Virginiana

Grows to 4 feet tall

Prefers well-drained soil and
part to full sun

Flowers in Spring



Yaupon Holly

Dwarf Yaupon Holly (Shown)

Ilex vomitoria 'Dwarf'

Grows to 5 feet tall

Prefers loamy or sandy soil

Tiny blooms in Spring



Viburnum

Arrowwood Viburnum (Shown)

Viburnum dentatum

Mapleleaf Viburnum

Viburnum acerifolium

Grows 5 to 10 feet tall

Woodland conditions

Blooms in Spring



Photo taken at the Pollinator Garden
at Fighting Creek Park

Chokeberry

Black Chokeberry (Shown)

Aronia melanocarpa

Will grow from 6 to 12 feet tall

Woodland conditions

Blooms in Spring



Frost Flowers

Frost flowers are most likely to form when the air temperature is frigid while soil is not yet frozen.



Frost Flowering Plants

White Crownbeard or Frostweed (Shown)

Verbesina virginica

Wingstem or Yellow Ironweed

Verbesina alternifolia

American Dittany or Wild Oregano

Cunila origanoides

All three plants attract pollinators and have the potential to produce frost flowers in late Fall or early Winter.



Rattlesnake Master

Bear Grass or Rattlesnake Master

Eryngium yuccifolium

Will grow to 5 feet tall and spread to 3 feet

Prairie plant that prefers full sun

Eyecatching Summer blooms

Note: Parsley relative, so it supports Black Swallowtail caterpillars



Turtlehead

White Turtlehead

Chelone glabra

Can grow to 4 feet tall and wide

Thrives when planted near a downspout or
in a rain garden

Blooms in late Summer to Fall



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