

Plant Natives...Why??

by Sheila Swiney, Extension Master Gardener

2/26/2026

Choosing native plants over invasive or non-native species offers many benefits for our environment and gardens. Native plants are naturally suited to the local soil, climate, and rainfall patterns, which means they usually need less water, fertilizer, and pesticides—making gardening easier and more sustainable. Their deep roots help improve soil quality, enhance drainage, and prevent erosion, contributing to a healthier earth. Plus, native plants are essential for supporting local wildlife—they provide nectar, pollen, seeds, and shelter that many native pollinators, birds, butterflies, and other creatures depend on, resources that non-native plants might not offer.

Creating a garden with native species can become a charming little wildlife haven that helps protect regional ecosystems and preserve our natural heritage. Native gardens also tend to be low maintenance because these plants require less care, reducing the need for chemicals and lowering long-term costs. This sustainable approach helps keep waterways clean, conserves water, and promotes a healthier environment for all of us. Ultimately, by choosing native plants, we're not only making gardening simpler and more affordable but also strengthening our ecosystems, supporting local wildlife, conserving precious resources, and caring for the environment around us.



Licensed Adobe Photo

References:

US Forest Service Native Gardening -

https://www.fs.usda.gov/wildflowers/Native_Plant_Materials/Native_Gardening/

Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation Native Plants –

<https://www.dcr.virginia.gov/natural-heritage/nativeplants>