



Native Plants for the Philadelphia Region

The following lists and resources accompany the gardening classes given by Donna L. Long. The presentation is given to adult learners in various setting. Please contact Donna on her website, donnalong.com or at donna@donnalong.com for speaking engagements.

Download this list at donnalong.com/gardeningbonuses

Spring Blooming Native Plants

This is a selected list of blooming plants indigenous to the City of Philadelphia, surrounding Delaware Valley, and Mid-Atlantic region. These plants are indigenous to the Atlantic Coastal Plain and smaller area of Piedmont Upland of the northwest section of Philadelphia.

It is not a list of all plants native to the region, but plants that are readily available as plants or seeds for plant nurseries.

There are other plants native to the surrounding area, that are fine to add to Philadelphia gardens.

Botanical name - Common name - flower color - height - light- soil

Spring Blooming Trees - tall canopy trees

Liriodendron tulipifera (Tulip Tree), green with orange centers - height 100+ feet - sun - moist

Robinia pseudoacacia (Black Locust), white pea-like flowers - height to 75 feet - sun - moist

Small Trees - small understory trees suitable to plant near houses and buildings

Aesculus pavia (Red Buckeye) - red tubular flowers-sun/part sun-height 10' - 25'- (native range south of Phila., but does well here)

Amelanchier canadensis (Downy Serviceberry or Shadbush) - white flowers-15-25'-full sun to part shade

Cercis canadensis (Eastern Redbud) - deep pink flowers - 25' - sun to shade - moist soil

Crataegus crus-galli (Cockspur Hawthorn) - white flowers - 30' - sun - dry to moist soil - dry to moist

Cornus florida (Flowering Dogwood) - white flowers - height varies - sun to light shade - moist

Magnolia virginiana (Sweetbay Magnolia) - large white flowers -10-20' - sun to shade - moist soil

Malus spp. (Flowering Crabapple), color varies - height varies - light sun/part shade - moist
Prunus virginiana (Chokecherry) - white flowers - 20' - sun - moist to dry soil - dry to moist

Spring Blooming Shrubs

Cephalanthus occidentalis (Buttonbush) - white - 9' - sun - moist
Cercis canadensis (Eastern Redbud) - deep pink - 25' - sun to shade - moist
Cornus florida (Flowering Dogwood), white - 3' - 10' - sun/light shade - moist
Lindera benzoin (Spicebush) - yellow - 6-12' - sun to shade - moist
Magnolia virginiana (Sweetbay Magnolia) white - 25'+ - sun/shade - moist
Rhododendron calendulaceum (Flame Azalea) - 10' - sun/pt. shade - moist
Rhododendron periclymenoides (Pinxter Azalea) - 8' - sun/pt. shade - dry/wet
Viburnum dentatum (Arrowwood Viburnum), white - 6' - 12' - light shade/sun - dry/moist
Viburnum trilobum (American Cranberrybush) white - 5' - 15' - sun, part sun - moist

Spring Blooming Flowers (Herbaceous Perennials)

Aconitum uncinatum – (Eastern Monkshood) - blue - 36" - sun/pt. shade - moist
Aquilegia canadensis (Eastern Columbine) - red/yellow - 10-24" - sun/part. shade - moist
Baptisa australis (Blue False Indigo) - violet/blue - 36-48" - sun/pt. shade - moist/dry
Dicentra cucullaria (Dutchman's Breeches) - pink - 3-6" - shade/pt. sun - moist
Dicentra eximia (Fringed Bleeding Heart) - pink - 12" - shade to sun - moist
Dodecatheon media (Shooting Star) - white, pink, or lilac - 8-14" - shade - moist
Heuchera species (Coral Bells), red - 2' - part sun/shade - moist
Iris versicolor (Blue Flag Iris) - blue-violet flowers - 1-3' - full sun - moist soil
Lobelia cardinalis (Cardinal Flower) - red - 1-3' - sun/part shade - moist
Lupine (Lupinus spp.), varies, sun, height varies
Mertensia virginica (Virginia Bluebells) - pink to blue flowers - 1-2' - part to full shade - moist soil
Oenothera fruticosa (Sundrops) - yellow flowers 1-2' - full sun - moist/dry
Penstemon digitalis (Foxglove Beardstongue) - white - 24-48" - sun to partial shade - moist
Penstemon hirsute (Hairy Beardstongue) - purple-violet flowers - 24-48" - full sun/pt. shade - dry
Polemonium reptant (Jacob's Ladder) - deep blue flowers 6-18" - full to part shade; moist soil
Polygonatum biflorum (Solomon's seal) - white-greenish - 1-3' - full to part shade - moist
Senecio aureus (Golden ragwort) – yellow - 1-3'; shade to sun; moist soil
Silene virginica (Fire Pink), red, 1 - 2' - sun/pt. shade - moist
Polygonatum biflorum (Solomon Seal) - white - 1 - 3' - shade/pt. sun - moist
Spigela marilandica (Indian Pink), red - 2-18" - part sun/light shade - moist

Tiarella cordifolia (Heart-leaf Foamflower) - white - 3-10" - sun/shade - moist
Tradescantia virginiana (Spiderwort) - 1-3' - purple - pt./full shade - dry
Trillium spp. shade - moist soil
Zizia aurea (Golden Alexander) - yellow flowers 1-3' - sun/shade - moist

Spring Blooming Ground Covers

Cornus canadensis (Bunchberry) - white flowers 4-10" - partial sun/shade - moist
Jeffersonia diphylla (Twinleaf) - white flowers - 12-18" - shade/pt. sun - moist soil
Mahonia repens (Creeping Mahonia) - yellow flowers - 2-3" - sun/shade -
Phlox stolonifera (Creeping Phlox) - pink - 6-10" - pt.sun/shade - moist
Podophyllum peltatum (Mayapple) - white flowers 1-2' - shade - moist
Sanguinaria canadensis (Bloodroot) - white flowers - 3-6" - shade - moist
Sedum ternatum (Wild Stone Crop) - white flowers - 3-8" - sun/pt. shade - moist
Viola blanda. (Sweet White Violet) - white flowers - to 1' - sun/shade - moist
Viola, various species

Spring Blooming Vines

Coral Honeysuckle (Lonicera sempervirens), orange-red - 4' - 15' - sun/partial sun - moist

Summer Into Fall Blooming Native Plants

Many of these plants will start blooming in the summer and last until early autumn or the first frost.

Botanical Name - Common name - Flower color - Height - Light - Soil

Summer Into Fall Blooming Shrubs

Actaea racemosa or Cimicifuga racemosa (Black Cohosh) - height 3'-8' white flowers; moist

Summer Into Fall Blooming Flowers (Herbaceous Perennials)

Agastache nepetoides (Yellow Giant Hyssop) - pale yellowish-green/white - 2'-5' - shade - moist

Agastache scrophulariaefolia (Purple Hyssop) - purple flowers -2-5' - sun/pt.shade - moist soil

Anaphalis margaritacea (Pearly Everlasting) - white flowers - 1-3' - sun/pt.shade - dry

Asclepias incarnate (Swamp Milkweed) -rose pink - 2-6' - sun/pt. shade - moist soil

Asclepias syriaca (Common Milkweed) - pink flowers - 2-6'- full sun - dry

Asclepias tuberosa (Butterflyweed) - orange - 1-2' - sun - dry

Aster cordifolius (Blue Wood Aster) - blue-violet/rose - 1-5" - pt. shade/full shade

Aster divaricatus (White Wood Aster) - white flowers - 1-3' - pt. shade/full shade

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Aster novae-angliae (New England Aster) - bright purple/pink - 2-8' - full sun/part shade - moist
Aster novi-belgii (New York Aster) - 1-4' ; violet to blue flowers; full sun; moist soil
Baptistia tinctoria (Wild Indigo) - yellow pea-like flowers - 2-3' - full sun/part shade - dry soil
Lobelia cardinalis (Cardinal flower) - scarlet flowers - 2-5' - part/full shade - moist
Lobelia syphilitica (Great Blue Lobelia) - white/blue flowers - 1-3' - full sun/part shade - moist
Chelone glabra (Turtlehead) - white flowers - 1-3' - full sun/part shade - moist
Eupatorium fistulosum (Joe Pye-weed) - white - to 10' - sun/shade - moist
Gentiana clausa (Closed Gentian) - blue-violet flowers - 1-3' - full sun/pt. shade - moist
Helenium autumnale (Sneezeweed) - 2-6'; yellow flowers; full sun; moist soil
Helianthus giganteus (Thin-leaved Sunflower) - yellow flowers - 2-5' - full sun - moist
Heliopsis helianthoides (Ox-eye) - pale yellow - 2-5' - full/part shade - moist/dry
Heuchera americana (Alumroot) - greenish-purple flowers - 1-3' - shade/full sun - moist/dry
Hibiscus moscheutos (Swamp mallow) - large pink/purplish/white - 3-7' - sun/pt. shade - moist
Liatris spicata (Spiked Gayfeather) - purple - 4-5' - full sun - moist
Lilium canadense (Canada Lily) - yellow/orange/red - 2-5' - full sun/pt. shade - moist
Lilium superbum (Turk's cap-lily) - orange, orange-red flowers 3-8' - full sun - moist
Monarda didyma (Bee-balm) - red flowers - 2-5' - full sun - moist
Monarda fistulosa (Wild Bergamot) - pink to lavender flowers - 2-4' - full sun/pt. shade - dry
Oenothera biennis (Evening Primrose) - yellow flowers - 2-5' - full sun - dry
Oenothera fruticosa (Sundrops) - yellow - 1-3' - full sun - moist/dry
Phlox paniculata (Summer Phlox) - magenta pink - 2-6' - sun/pt. shade - moist
Phlox maculata (Wild Sweet William) - deep pink/rose-purple- 1-3' - sun - moist
Rudbeckia laciniata (Cutleaf coneflower) - yellow flowers 5-10' - pt. shade - moist
Sedum 'Autumn Joy' (Stonecrop) - pink flowers - 12"-23" - full/pt. shade - average/moist/dry
Senna hebecarpa or Cassia hebecarpa (Wild Senna) yellow - 3-5' - sun - moist
Solidago flexicaulis (Zigzag Goldenrod) - 1-3'; yellow flowers; shade; moist soil
Solidago sempervirens (Sea-side Goldenrod) - yellow flowers - 3-5' - sun - dry
Tradescantia virginiana (Spiderwort) - purple - 1-3'; pt./full shade - dry
Veronica novaboracensis (New York Ironweed) - rose-purple - 3-5' - full sun - moist
Zizia aurea (Golden Alexander) yellow - 1-3' - full sun/shade - moist

Summer Blooming Vines

Campsis radicans (Trumpet Creeper) - red - 40+' - sun/pt. sun - any soil

Clematis Virginiana (Virgin's Bower) white - 20'+ - sun/pt. sun - moist
In general the native plants that bloom in the autumn are goldenrods, tickseeds, asters, and sedums.

This list doesn't have all the native plants that bloom during autumn. I included the plants I know which are great plants in the garden. I have grown many of these plants in my own garden.

These are straight species without cultivated varieties.

Botanical Name - Common name - Flower color - Height - Light - Soil

Summer Into Fall Blooming Trees

Potentilla fruticosa (Shrubby cinquefoil) - height 2'-4', June - September, yellow

Spiraea tomentosa (Steeplebush) - height 2'-4', July- September, pink

Summer Into Fall Blooming Flowers (Herbaceous Perennials)

Great Purple Hyssop July - Sept.

Aster divaricatus (White Wood Aster) - height 1'-2', August - September, white

Aster ericoides (Heath Aster) - height 1' -3', August - October,

Aster lateriflorus (Calico Aster) - height 1' -3', August - October,

Chelone glabra (White Turtlehead) - height 3', August - September, white

Chelone lyonii (Pink Turtlehead) - height 3', August - September, pink

Coreopsis auriculata (Mouse Ear Tickseed) - height 1', May - October,

Coreopsis tripteris (Tall Coreopsis) - height 3' -6' - yellow

Coreopsis verticillata (Whorled Tickseed) - height 1' -2', July - September, yellow

Mistflower

Hypssop Leaved Boneset

Heliopsis helianthoides (False Sunflower) - height 3' - 5', June - September,

Heuchera villosa (Alumroot) - height 10" -18", July - October,

Liatris scariosa (Northern Blazing Star) - height 1' 2' - blue, August - September

Lobelia cardinalis (Cardinal Flower) - height 2' - 4' - red, August - September

Lobelia spicata (Great Blue) - Blazing Star - height 1' -3' - blue, August - September

Monarda fistulosa (Wild Bergamot) - height 3' - 4' - red, June - September

Monarda media (Purple Bergamot) - height 3' - 4' - purple, July - September

Physostegia virginiana (Obedient Plant) - height 2'-5', July - October

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Solidago rigida (Stiff Goldenrod) - height 2' - 5', August - October,
Solidago rugosa (Rough-leaved Goldenrod) - height 2' -6', September,
Solidago speciosa (Showy Goldenrod) - height 2'-5', August - October,
Solidago sphacelata (False Goldenrod) - height 2'-4', August - September,

Summer Into Fall Blooming Grasses

Boufelova gracilis (Blue Grama Grass) - height 8-15", June - September,
Eragrostis (Purple Lovegrass) - height 1-2", August - September,
Panicum amarum (Atlantic Coastal Panic Grass) - height 3-6', September
Schizachyrium scoparium (Little Bluestem) - height 2-4', August - September,

Autumn Blooming Native Plants

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Botanical Name - Common name - Flower color - Height - Light - Soil

Autumn Interest Trees

Potentilla fruticosa (Shrubby cinquefoil) - height 2'-4', June - September, yellow
Spiraea tomentosa (Steeplebush) - height 2'-4', July- September, pink

Autumn Interest Flowers (Herbaceous Perennials)

Great Purple Hyssop July - Sept.
Aster divaricatus (White Wood Aster) - height 1'-2', August - September, white
Aster ericoides (Heath Aster) - height 1' -3', August - October,
Aster lateriflorus (Calico Aster) - height 1' -3', August - October,
Chelone glabra (White Turtlehead) - height 3', August - September, white
Chelone lyonii (Pink Turtlehead) - height 3', August - September, pink
Coreopsis auriculata (Mouse Ear Tickseed) - height 1', May - October,

Autumn Interest Flowers (Herbaceous Perennials)

Coreopsis tripteris (Tall Coreopsis) - height 3' -6' - yellow

Coreopsis verticillata (Whorled Tickseed) - height 1' -2', July - September, yellow
Mistflower

Hypssop Leaved Boneset

Heliopsis helianthoides (False Sunflower) - height 3' - 5', June - September,

Heuchera villosa (Alumroot) - height 10" -18", July - October,

Liatis scariosa (Northern Blazing Star) - height 1' 2' - blue, August - September

Lobelia cardinalis (Cardinal Flower) - height 2' - 4' - red, August - September

Lobelia spicata (Great Blue) - Blazing Star - height 1' -3' - blue, August - September

Monarda fistulosa (Wild Bergamot) - height 3' - 4' - red, June - September

Monarda media (Purple Bergamot) - height 3' - 4' - purple, July - September

Physostegia virginiana (Obedient Plant) - height 2'-5', July - October

Solidago rigida (Stiff Goldenrod) - height 2' - 5', August - October,

Solidago rugosa (Rough-leaved Goldenrod) - height 2' -6', September,

Solidago speciosa (Showy Goldenrod) - height 2'-5', August - October,

Solidago sphacelata (False Goldenrod) - height 2'-4', August - September,

Autumn Interest Grasses

Bouteloua gracilis (Blue Grama Grass) - height 8-15", June - September,

Eragrostis (Purple Lovegrass) - height 1-2", August - September,

Panicum amarum (Atlantic Coastal Panic Grass) - height 3-6', September

Schizachyrium scoparium (Little Bluestem) - height 2-4', August - September,

Sorghastrum nutans (Indian Grass) - height 5', August - October,

Sporobolus heterolepis (Northern Dropseed) - height 15", August - September,

Autumn Interest Vines

Campsis radicans (Trumpet Creeper) - length 35', July- Sept.

Celastrum virginiana (Virgin's Bower) - length 3-20', July - Sept.

Leaf Colors of Common Trees Here in the Oak-Hickory Forest

The Philadelphia area is graced with a show of spectacular fall tree color. We are just far enough north for the tree leaves to change and just far enough south to miss frigid winter temperatures. Perfect.

These areas of Earth have the brightly colored foliage that we appreciate.

1. most of southern mainland Canada
2. most of eastern part of United States (New England and small areas of the forest further west)
3. Adirondack, Appalachian, Smoky, and Rocky Mountains
4. Scandinavian, Northern, and Western Europe north of the Alps
5. the Caucasus region near the Black Sea and Eastern Asia, including much of northern and eastern China, as well as Korea and Japan

Tree leaves change colors in autumn according to their species DNA. Here is a list of the fall colors of common tree species here in the Oak-Hickory region of the Eastern Deciduous Forest.

Oaks

bear oak - yellowish-brown

black oak - dull brown

blackjack oak, pin oak, turkey oak - reddish with an orange tinge

post oak - brown-red oak - dull brown

scarlet oak - bright scarlet to deep red

Virginia live oak - green this is an evergreen oak)

Virginia live oak - green this is an evergreen oak)

Hickories

All hickories have yellow leaves in fall.

Maples

box-elder - yellow, sometimes reddish

red maple - red

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silver maple - pale yellow
striped maple - yellow
sugar maple - bright orange, turning to yellow

Birches

birches - all turn shades of yellow

Other species

American beech - light yellow and turning brownish tan
American chestnut - brownish-yellow
Black tupelo - deep dark red
Bigtooth aspen - orange-yellow, turning pale yellow
Eastern cottonwood - yellow
Eastern sycamore - brown
Flowering Dogwood - deep red
Pin and wild cherries - reddish, turning yellow
Quaking Aspen - yellow varies from pale to deep
Sassafras - reddish becoming yellowish
Sumacs - orange, turning bright red
Sweetgum - orange-red, turning yellow
Tamarack (American Larch) - bright yellow needles
Tuliptree - bright yellow
White ash - maroon, dark reddish-green

<https://donnalong.com/why-do-leaves-change-color/>

<https://donnalong.com/why-trees-shed-leaves-in-the-fall/>

Wind Resistant Trees that Can Survive Strong Winds

Whenever there is a storm with strong winds and heavy rain, the television news displays dramatic photos of large downed trees. But they don't explore why the trees fell.

While no tree can withstand all storms. Trees that are able to survive strong winds have a number of characteristics in common.

There are several factors which contribute to tree damage.

Trees that are damaged in storms are:

swallow-rooted system

fast-growing species

weak wooded

high center of gravity (a dense canopy with many leaves)

many are non-native species

tall with a slender trunk and dense canopy (like a lollipop)

in storms the trees snap or uproot during a storm

Storm weak trees

Pecans

Pines

Some Red Oaks

Red Cedars

Bradford Pears and other Ornamental Pears

Willows

Silver Maples

Box Elders

Cottonwoods

Hickories

Some Elms

Trees that have a good chance of surviving storms:

are native species

slow-growing

hard woods

low center of gravity, compact or height seems short and stocky

well-developed root system especially lateral (sideways) roots

healthy, young to middle-age

well-maintained

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open branching canopy, short leaf branching,
fine textured leaves, deciduous
heavy stout leader (central trunks)
flexible limbs

Strong storm trees

Live Oak
Black Gum
Iron Wood
Shumard Oak
Winged Elm

More strong storm trees

American Elm
American Holly
American Hop Hornbeam
Black Locust
Catalpa
Green Ash
Hackberry
Osage Orange
River Birch
Sycamore
Sweet Bay Magnolia
Sweet Gum
Tulip Tree
Willow Oak