

Chesapeake Bay Region NATIVE PLANTS, BENEFITS & RESOURCES

Native plants are plants that naturally occur in the region which they have evolved. Native plants:

-are adapted to local soils & climate conditions and generally require less water and fertilizer than non-natives.
-are more resistant to insects and disease requiring less or no pesticides.
-are used by wildlife as food, cover and for rearing young.
-help preserve the balance and beauty of natural ecosystems.

As the Chesapeake Bay region's human population has boomed 15.24% since 2000, the land uses and environment have been altered. With added impervious surfaces and increased lawn and garden maintenance, rain and stormwater wash chemicals and fertilizers into the rivers, tributaries and ultimately, the Chesapeake Bay. Once in the waterways, these pollutants can trigger the growth of excess algae, which depletes the waterways of oxygen and threatens the health of fish, crabs, and the entire Chesapeake Bay ecosystem.

Therefore to help reduce overall pollution in the Chesapeake Bay use native plants instead of non-native plants on lawns and in gardens. By picking native plants that suit local conditions, citizens can reduce or even eliminate the need for fertilizers, pesticides and watering saving time and money.

Native plants with similar shape, color, size or other characteristics can be found to replace non-native plants creating attractive and more natural landscapes for yards in the Chesapeake Bay region. Chesapeake Natives Inc is a nonprofit organization devoted to promoting, protecting and propagating plants native to the Chesapeake Region. While their headquarters is located in Maryland, they travel the Chesapeake Region to sell their native plants. For a schedule of their upcoming events visit: www.chesapeakenatives.org.

The U.S Fish & Wildlife Service provides ample information on Native Plants for Wildlife Habitat and Conservation Landscaping (<https://www.nps.gov/Plants/pubs/chesapeake/pdf/chesapeakenatives.pdf>) and has created a tool to help citizens in the Chesapeake Bay watershed select native plants available through the Internet. Users of the portal, www.nativeplantscenter.net, can search for native plants by name, plant type, sun exposure, soil texture and moisture.

The site also includes a geo-locator feature to identify plans suited to a user's specific location.

Here's a sample list of some of the Native Plants for the Middle Peninsula Region of Virginia:

Box Elder	Butterfly Weed	Sweet Goldenrod
Ash leaf Maple	Swamp Milkweed	Chestnut Oak
Purple False Foxglove	Atlantic Wisteria	Willow Oak
Dune Grass	Striped Violet	Virginia Meadow-beauty
Broom Sedge	Virginia Chain Fern	Sweet Azalea
Eastern Columbine	Wild Rice	Marsh Pine



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