

Cape Cod Native

Grown by Crocker Nurseries



Allium cernuum (Nodding Onion)

Known as pollinator magnets, these easy-to-grow plants sport adorable pom-pom-like purple-pink flowers all summer. They also host the caterpillars for the yellow-striped armyworm moth and the hairstreak butterfly, making them an important part of any butterfly garden.

Technically, nodding onions are not native to Cape Cod, but they are native to Long Island's pine barrens, the same ecosystem as we have on the Cape (and we thought it was okay to include them, as the Cape Cod Native Plant finder also includes them).

Over time, this plant will spread by both seed and bulb offshoots. Mass plantings make for striking displays, and, as a bonus, the greens can be used like chives for cooking.

Photo courtesy of Van Berkum Nursery

Sun	part to full shade	Height	12-36"	Bloom time	Summer	Pollinators	Bees, butterflies, hummingbirds
Water	drought tolerant*	Spread	12"	Resistant	Deer, rabbits	Host	yellow-striped armyworm moth, hairstreak butterfly

* Drought tolerant when established. Plants need to be watered regularly in their first season so they can establish a strong root system, but soil should not be soggy.



***Aquilegia canadensis* (Wild Columbine)**

A delicate woodland plant that provides a welcome spot of color in early spring, with blooms emerging in March, wild columbine flourishes in part to full shade. The long spurs on the unusual red and yellow flowers hold nectar and attract long-tongued bees, butterflies and hummingbirds.

Because of its early bloom time, wild columbine provides an important source of energy for migrating hummingbirds when few other plants are in bloom.

Wild columbine will go dormant in late summer and return in the fall. Plants will readily self-seed; new plants will bloom in their second year.

Photo courtesy of Centerton Nursery

Sun	full to part	Height	12-24"	Bloom time	Mar - Jul	Pollinators	bees, butterflies, hummingbirds
Water	drought tolerant*	Spread	12"	Resistant	deer, rabbits	Host	columbine duskywing butterfly

* Drought tolerant when established. Plants need to be watered regularly in their first season so they can establish a strong root system, but soil should not be soggy.



***Asclepias incarnata* (Swamp Milkweed)**

Swamp milkweed blooms with rosy pink flowers from early to mid-summer, providing food and a place to lay eggs for the Monarch Butterfly. Its nectar makes it a favorite for a wide range of pollinators.

Swamp Milkweed has specialized thick white roots that do well in heavy, wet soils that are low in oxygen. In the wild these plants are typically found alongside streams, ponds, or bogs, but can adapt to loam or clay soils.

Three to four inch narrow seed pods split in fall to release seeds with tufts of feathery hair that float on the wind

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Photo by Crocker Nurseries

Sun full to part shade	Height 36 - 48"	Bloom time Jun - Jul	Pollinators bees, butterflies
Water moist	Spread 24"	Resistant deer, rabbits	Host Monarch butterflies



***Asclepias syriaca* (Common Milkweed)**

Well-known as the host for the monarch butterfly caterpillars, common milkweed also hosts the tussock moth caterpillar. Its dense clusters of small, fragrant, pink flowers are also extremely attractive to pollinators, attracting a wide range of insects.

Common milkweed can be found in fields, open woods, and waste areas. It's easily grown in average, well-drained soils and full sun. The plant can do well in poor, somewhat dry soils.

The common milkweed is a tall, slender plant with sturdy stems, and looks best when planted in a group or among other tall plants. The plants spread both through rhizomes and through seeds, released from seed pods in late summer and fall.

Photo courtesy of Van Berkum Nursery

Sun	full to part	Height	12-24"	Bloom time	Mar - Jul	Pollinators	bees, butterflies
Water	drought tolerant*	Spread	12"	Resistant	deer, rabbits	Host	monarch butterfly, tussock moth



***Asclepias tuberosa* (Butterfly Milkweed)**

One of the showiest wildflowers with its bright orange blossoms all summer, butterfly milkweed is a host plant for monarch butterfly caterpillars. Hummingbirds and a wide range of other pollinators are attracted by its nectar.

The plant's name, "tuberosa", refers to the tuberous shape of its deep taproot, which makes the plant difficult to transplant – so it's best to pick a sunny, well-draining spot, and let this easy-to-grow plant flourish. New growth emerges a bit on the late side in spring; it's a slow starter.

Butterfly milkweed blooms give way to narrow, spindle shaped seed pods, which will burst in late summer or early fall and lead to self-seeding.

Photo by Crocker Nurseries

Sun	full	Height	12-28"	Bloom time	Jun - Aug	Pollinators	bees, butterflies, hummingbirds
Water	drought tolerant*	Spread	12"	Resistant	deer, rabbits	Host	monarch butterflies

* Drought tolerant when established. Plants need to be watered regularly in their first season so they can establish a strong root system, but soil should not be soggy.



***Baptisia australis* (Blue False Indigo)**

Blue false indigo plays host to the caterpillars of several varieties of butterfly, including the wild indigo duskywing, the orange sulphur, the clouded sulphur, the eastern tailed blue, and the frosted elfin. In addition, blue false indigo is especially important to native bees.

Blue false indigo blooms in spring, with dense, upright spikes covered in pea-like purple-blue flowers. Typically found in rich woods, this plant does best in full sun. Over time, it will build a large root system, becoming drought tolerant, but because of this root system, it's not easily moved.

The plant tends to open up after blooming, and might benefit from being cut back to shape it. However, that would mean missing out on the striking seed pods that darken to black about six weeks after blooming.

Photo courtesy of Van Berkum Nursery

Sun	sun to part shade	Height	36 - 48"	Bloom time	May - June	Pollinators	bees, butterflies
Water	drought tolerant*	Spread	24 - 48"	Resistant	deer, rabbits	Host	several varieties of butterflies

* Drought tolerant when established. Plants need to be watered regularly in their first season so they can establish a strong root system, but soil should not be soggy.



***Chelone glabra* (White Turtlehead)**

Named for its white flowers that resemble turtles' heads, white turtlehead hosts a number of butterfly and moth caterpillars, including the Baltimore checkerspot and the common buckeye. Hummingbirds and butterflies are attracted to its nectar, and you will often see a bumblebee forcing its way into the partially closed flowers.

The plant is happiest in moist, rich soils in partial shade; in the wild it's found in moist woods, swampy areas, and along streams.

The plant is somewhat susceptible to mildew, particularly if soil is kept dry and air circulation is poor, but overall there are no serious problems.

Photo courtesy of Van Berkum Nursery

Sun	part shade	Height	24 - 28"	Bloom time	Aug	Pollinators	bees, butterflies, hummingbirds
Water	medium to wet	Spread	18 - 28"	Resistant	deer, rabbits	Host	Monarch Butterflies



***Clematis virginiana* (Woodbine or Virgin’s Bower vine)**

This vine, one of the few that will flower in shade, is covered in delicate, fragrant white flowers from August well into autumn, attracting a wide range of pollinators, including hummingbirds. Additionally, the vine hosts nine species of moth and butterfly caterpillars, including the Clematis clearwing moth.

A Type 3 Clematis, flowers emerge on new wood and the vine should be hard-pruned to 12 inches in late winter or early spring, leaving a few healthy leaf buds on the remaining stalks. It’s a fast grower, and will reach up to 20 feet high and over three feet wide by the end of the season, and does best with a trellis or other support for climbing.

The plant needs a good supply of nutrients to support its rapid growth. It can spread aggressively through self-seeding and suckering.

Photo courtesy of Centerton Nursery

Sun sun to part shade	Height 144 - 240” (vine)	Bloom time Aug - Oct	Pollinators bees, butterflies, hummingbirds
Water medium to wet	Spread 36 - 72”	Resistant deer, rabbits	Host several butterfly and moth caterpillars



***Echinacea purpurea* (Purple Coneflower)**

While the purple coneflower's native range includes New York and Pennsylvania, it does well on Cape Cod, and has been included in the Cape Cod Native Plant database, so we've included it in our range of natives. The plant is valuable in particular to native bees, and goldfinches and other birds will visit the cones well into the winter, to feed on the seeds.

Purple Coneflowers are easily grown in dry to medium well-drained soils. They are attractive to rabbits, and new plants should be protected. Established plants will rapidly send up new growth from the roots.

Photo courtesy of Centerton Nursery

Sun	full to part sun	Height	24 - 36"	Bloom time	Jun - Aug	Pollinators	bees, butterflies, hummingbirds
Water	drought tolerant*	Spread	18 - 24"	Resistant	not to rabbits	Host	—

* Drought tolerant when established. Plants need to be watered regularly in their first season so they can establish a strong root system, but soil should not be soggy.



***Eutrochium dubium* (Coastal Plain Joe Pye Weed)**

A vital pollinator plant, coastal Joe Pye weed blooms late in the summer and into September, with large, fragrant, dome-shaped clusters of pink to dark purple flowers that attract bees, skippers, and butterflies, including swallowtails. The plant also plays host to several different types of caterpillars, which, in addition to becoming butterflies and moths, are also excellent food for birds. Birds feed on the seeds in fall.

These plants are easily grown in full sun to part shade, and prefer moist, fertile soils. While the shortest of the Joe-Pye weeds at between three and five feet, they still create a dramatic backdrop for a late summer perennial garden, or as part of a wildflower meadow.

Photo by Crocker Nurseries

Sun	full to part sun	Height	36 - 72"	Bloom time	Jul - Sep	Pollinators	bees, butterflies, hummingbirds
Water	medium to wet	Spread	24 - 48"	Resistant	deer	Host	several types of caterpillars



***Eutrochium maculatum* (Spotted Joe Pye Weed)**

The towering spotted Joe Pye Weed is an important source of pollen and nectar at the end of summer and into fall, when many other plants have finished blooming. The nectar and the plant's sweet fragrance attract a wide range of pollinators, including hummingbirds. All Joe Pye weeds play important roles as hosts of over thirtyfive species of moth and butterfly caterpillars, including ruby tiger moths.

This plant likes moist, humusy, rich soils that don't dry out. It does best in full sun, but can tolerate some afternoon shade. It's native to damp meadows and coastal areas.

With its height, spotted Joe Pye weed makes a fantastic backdrop for black-eyed Susans, coneflowers, asters, and works well with grasses, many of which bloom around the same time.

Photo by Crocker Nurseries

Sun	full to part sun	Height	36 - 72"	Bloom time	Jul - Sep	Pollinators	bees, butterflies, hummingbirds
Water	medium to wet	Spread	24 - 48"	Resistant	deer	Host	35+ types of caterpillars



Fern - *Athyrium filix-femina* (Lady Fern)

Ferns don't bloom and therefore don't support pollinators, however they shouldn't be overlooked when it comes to benefitting wildlife. Ferns create safe foraging spaces and shelters for small birds and animals, and hiding places for frogs and turtles.

Lady ferns grow best in rich, well-drained soils of medium moisture, in partial to full shade. They make an excellent, easily grown plant, tolerating drier soil than other ferns.

Lady ferns will creep slowly, and can form a beautiful ground cover in the right conditions.

Photo courtesy of Van Berkum Nursery

Sun part to full shade	Height 12 - 36"	Bloom time –	Pollinators –
Water medium	Spread 12 - 30"	Resistant deer, rabbits	Host –



Fern - *Matteuccia struthiopteris* (Ostrich Fern)

Ostrich Ferns can reach six feet tall when growing in moist, cool climates in the wild, but tend to reach about three feet when grown in cultivation. They do well when planted with early blooming native shade wildflowers, and will be well grown by the time those plants go dormant.

While not supporting pollinators, they will provide shelter for small animals while they forage.

Given their height, Ostrich Ferns make a dramatic and lush backdrop for a shade garden.

Photo courtesy of Centerton Nursery

Sun part to full shade	Height 36 - 72"	Bloom time –	Pollinators –
Water medium to wet	Spread 60 - 72"	Resistant deer, rabbits	Host –



Fern - *Polystichum acrostichoides* (Christmas Fern)

Christmas Ferns remain green year-round, providing winter cover for small animals. Songbirds will use parts of the plant for nesting materials.

These evergreen ferns are typically found in both dry or moist wooded slopes and, while rhizomatous, will not spread or naturalize, but rather form fountain-shaped clumps about 2 feet high. These are great plants for massing on dry, rocky slopes to help prevent erosion.

Photo courtesy of Centerton Nursery

Sun	part to full shade	Height	12 - 24"	Bloom time	–	Pollinators	–
Water	dry to medium	Spread	12 - 24"	Resistant	deer, rabbits	Host	–



***Geranium maculatum* (Wild Geranium or Cranesbill)**

Wild geranium, a spring bloomer with pale pink to lilac flowers about one inch across, hosts several species of caterpillars, and provide nectar to butterflies, beetles, flies, and bees, including a native bee, the Cranesbill Miner, which is thought to rely solely on Wild Geranium. Birds, including mourning doves and sparrows, eat the seeds.

Wild Geranium will spread, but not over-aggressively, forming a nice groundcover over time. Easily grown, this plant prefers rich, loamy soils, can adapt to either sun or part shade, and once established becomes drought tolerant. It's one of those rare plants that can handle dry shade.

Wild Geraniums' seed dispersal is fun to watch: its seeds develop at the bottom of narrow spikes that look like cranes' beaks (hence the name "cranesbill"), and when dry, the spikes eject the seeds like tiny catapults.

Photo courtesy of Centerton Nursery

Sun sun to part shade	Height 18 - 24"	Bloom time April - May	Pollinators bees, butterflies, flies
Water medium	Spread 12 - 18"	Resistant deer, rabbits	Host several species of caterpillars



***Helenium autumnale* (Common Sneezeweed)**

Despite its name, common sneezeweed does not cause sneezing or hayfever; the name has its root in the plant's dried leaves' historical use as snuff.

Common sneezeweed is truly prolific, with one mature plant able to produce up to 100 blooms. This attracts a wide range of pollinators, and the plant is a vital source of late-season nectar. In addition, common sneezeweed is a host for the caterpillars of several native butterflies and moths.

This plant does not tolerate dry soils; it prefers rich, moist soils and does best in full sun. Plants can be cut back in early June to encourage more branching and therefore more flowers.

Photo courtesy of Van Berkum Nursery

Sun sun to part shade	Height 36 - 72"	Bloom time Aug - Oct	Pollinators bees, butterflies
Water medium	Spread 24 - 36"	Resistant deer, rabbits	Host several species of caterpillars



***Hibiscus Moscheutos* (Swamp Rose Mallow or Hardy Hibiscus)**

The rose mallow’s large white-to-pink blooms – up to eight inches across – attract all sorts of pollinators, including bees, butterflies, and hummingbirds. Twenty eight species of butterfly and moth caterpillars use this plant as a host.

Each flower lasts only one or two days, but, when mature, this shrub-like perennial can produce twenty or more new flowers each day, providing striking beauty over several weeks of bloom time, late in the summer and into the fall.

In nature, this plant is found in the borders of marshes and swamps, and moist meadows, so it requires regular watering, especially during dry periods. Rose mallow flowers best in full sun. Despite its shrub-like appearance, Rose Mallow dies back to the ground in the fall, and should be cut back in late winter or early spring to about six inches above the ground.

Photo courtesy of Centerton Nursery

Sun sun	Height 36 - 72”	Bloom time Aug - Oct	Pollinators bees, butterflies, hummingbirds
Water medium to wet	Spread 24 - 36”	Resistant deer, rabbits	Host several species of caterpillars



***Iris Versicolor* (Blue Flag Irises)**

Butterflies, hummingbirds, and bees are attracted by the blue flag irises' vibrant colors and nectars. The plant also acts as host for thirteen butterfly and moth caterpillars.

Blue flag irises are native to marshes, swamps, wet meadows, and shoreline, and can be grown in up to four inches of standing water or in constantly moist humusy soil. They look wonderful grown in groups in sunny areas near ponds or water gardens

These irises can be propagated by division after they bloom, but as their rhizomes are poisonous, this should be done while wearing gloves to avoid a possible rash.

Photo by Crocker Nurseries

Sun sun to part shade	Height 12 - 36"	Bloom time May - Jun	Pollinators bees, butterflies, hummingbirds
Water medium to wet	Spread 12 - 24"	Resistant deer, rabbits	Host several species of caterpillars



***Liatris spicata* (Blazing Star)**

The blazing star is the host plant for the caterpillars of both the Liatris flower moth and the Liatris borer moth, and attracts pollinators, including bees, hummingbirds, and beneficial insects. The plant’s small seeds are attractive to song birds.

The flowers are shaped like bottlebrushes, and bloom from the top down. Their shape, deep purple color, and the delicacy of their foliage, contrasts beautifully with coneflowers and black-eyed Susans, which also bloom mid-summer.

Native to most low grounds, meadows, and marsh edges, blazing star is easily grown in average, well-drained soil, though it is somewhat tolerant of poor soils. The plant does not tolerate wet soil in winter, but can handle summer heat and humidity.

Photo courtesy of Centerton Nursery

Sun sun	Height 18 - 30”	Bloom time Jul - Aug	Pollinators bees, butterflies, hummingbirds
Water medium	Spread 6 - 12”	Resistant deer, rabbits	Host several species of caterpillars



***Lobelia cardinalis* (Cardinal Flower)**

If you want to attract hummingbirds to your garden, this is the flower. At two to three feet tall, it's the right height; the flowers are shaped like tubular cups and hold nectar; and they are bright red – a hummingbird's favorite color. Butterflies love these flowers as well. The plants also host several species of butterfly larvae.

Cardinal flowers need rich, consistently moist soil to do well; their native habitat is along stream edges or wet meadows. These plants will even tolerate brief flooding. They do well in full sun, though with our increasingly hot summers, they may welcome some afternoon shade.

The plant is toxic to humans and pets.

Photo courtesy of Centerton Nursery

Sun sun to part shade	Height 24 - 36"	Bloom time Jul - Sep	Pollinators bees, butterflies, hummingbirds
Water medium to wet	Spread 8 - 12"	Resistant deer, rabbits	Host several species of caterpillars



***Lobelia siphilitica* (Great Blue Lobelia)**

A wide variety of bees, hummingbirds, and butterflies are attracted to the striking blue flowers of the great blue lobelia; its flowers are slightly more open than those of its famous cousin, the Cardinal flower, and so can be pollinated by long-tongued bees, not just hummingbirds and proboscis-sporting insects like butterflies. The plant also hosts several butterfly and moth caterpillars, including the pink-washed looper moth.

In the wild, the great blue lobelia can be found in moist to wet areas, along streams, swamps, meadows, and low wooded areas.. It can be grown easily in rich, moist to wet soils in sun to part shade; it needs constant moisture.

Photo courtesy of Centerton Nursery

Sun	sun to part shade	Height	24 - 36"	Bloom time	Jul - Sep	Pollinators	bees, butterflies, hummingbirds
Water	medium to wet	Spread	8 - 12"	Resistant	deer, rabbits	Host	several species of caterpillars



***Monarda fistulosa* (Wild Bergamot)**

Wild bergamot is an excellent choice for a pollinator-friendly garden, as bees, including specialist bees, wasps, hummingbirds, and hawk moths love the fragrance and nectar from its pink and lilac flowers, and benefit from the plant’s long bloom time.

Wild bergamot is shorter than some of its *Monarda* cousins, and while the plant does form clumps, it’s a less aggressive spreader than some other varieties. Wild bergamot is best grown in dry to medium moisture soils, in either full sun or part shade.

Powdery mildew can be a problem with all the *Monardas*, but this species has good mildew resistance. *Monardas* do best with good air circulation.

Photo courtesy of Centerton Nursery

Sun sun to part shade	Height 24 - 48”	Bloom time Jul - Sep	Pollinators bees, butterflies, hummingbirds
Water drought resistant*	Spread 24 - 36”	Resistant deer, rabbits	Host several species of caterpillars

* Drought tolerant when established. Plants need to be watered regularly in their first season so they can establish a strong root system, but soil should not be soggy.



***Monarda didyma* ‘Jacob Cline’ (Scarlet Beebalm ‘Jacob Cline’)**

Scarlet Beebalm ‘Jacob Cline’ is a common native beebalm cultivar we have included in our range of plants because, while similar in color, shape, and size to the straight species, it is much more vigorous and resistant to disease, including powdery mildew, a common issue with *Monarda*. Its large red flowers attract hummingbirds, as well as bees and butterflies.

Found in bottomlands, thickets, moist woods, and along stream banks, scarlet beebalm prefers rich, medium to wet, moisture retentive soil, and grows in full sun to part shade. Standing tall at three to four feet, this variety tends to spread, occasionally aggressively, and should be divided every three to four years to prevent overcrowding.

Beebalm is a member of the mint family, and when leaves are crushed they release a lovely minty scent.

Photo courtesy of VanBerkum Nursery

Sun sun to part shade	Height 36 - 48"	Bloom time Jul - Aug	Pollinators bees, butterflies, hummingbirds
Water medium	Spread 36 - 48"	Resistant deer and rabbits	Host several species of caterpillars

* Drought tolerant when established. Plants need to be watered regularly in their first season so they can establish a strong root system, but soil should not be soggy.



***Monarda punctata* (Spotted Beebalm)**

The flowers on spotted beebalm are beautiful and unusual, and known for being pollinator magnets, drawing bees, butterflies, butterfly moths, hummingbirds, and others to the plant. Each complex blossom displays multiple colors, including pink, purple, green, yellow, and maroon.

This variety of beebalm is more drought tolerant than others; rather than growing in moist areas, in the wild Spotted Beebalm grows in sandy areas, prairies, and Oak savannahs. This plant grows best in full sun and sandy soil with consistent moisture. Spotted beebalm can be a short-lived perennial, but readily self-seeds and can naturalize in appropriate conditions.

Leaves are noticeably fragrant, and can be used to make tea.

Photo courtesy of VanBerkum Nursery

Sun sun to part sun	Height 18 - 24"	Bloom time Jul - Sep	Pollinators bees, butterflies, hummingbirds
Water drought resistant*	Spread 9 - 12"	Resistant deer and rabbits	Host several species of caterpillars

* Drought tolerant when established. Plants need to be watered regularly in their first season so they can establish a strong root system, but soil should not be soggy.



***Penstemon digitalis* (Foxglove Beardtongue)**

Foxglove beardtongue's tubular white flowers attract long-tongued bees, butterflies, and hummingbirds. The plant is host to several moth and butterfly caterpillars, including the Chalcedon checkerspot and Edith's checkerspots.

Found in prairies, wood margins, and open woods, this plant prefers average, dry to medium well-drained soils in full sun, and may suffer root rot in poorly drained soils.

Despite its name, this plant is not related to Foxgloves, and doesn't have their toxicity. Perhaps the namer saw some resemblance in the plants' flowers.

Photo courtesy of Centerton Nursery

Sun sun	Height 36 - 48"	Bloom time Apr - Jun	Pollinators bees, butterflies, hummingbirds
Water drought resistant*	Spread 18 - 24"	Resistant deer and rabbits	Host several species of caterpillars

* Drought tolerant when established. Plants need to be watered regularly in their first season so they can establish a strong root system, but soil should not be soggy.



***Pycnanthemum muticum* (Mountain Mint)**

Mountain mint with its tall white and light pink flowers and a silvery sheen on its aromatic foliage is a pollinator powerhouse – extremely attractive especially to bees and butterflies, though less so to hummingbirds, who visit on occasion. Mountain mint also hosts larvae of several moth and butterfly species.

Mountain mint typically grows in open spaces like meadows and fields, but not in alpine spaces as its somewhat misleading name suggests. This plant does best in fertile, medium moisture, well-draining soil, in full to part sun, with the best flowering in full sun.

While not an aggressive spreader like true mints, mountain mint does spread through rhizomes. The rhizomes are fairly close to the surface, however, so can easily be controlled by cutting with a shovel in the spring.

Photo by Crocker Nurseries

Sun sun to part sun	Height 12 - 36"	Bloom time Jul - Sep	Pollinators bees, butterflies
Water drought resistant*	Spread 12 - 36"	Resistant deer and rabbits	Host several species of caterpillars

* Drought tolerant when established. Plants need to be watered regularly in their first season so they can establish a strong root system, but soil should not be soggy.



***Rudbeckia fuldiga* (Black-Eyed Susan or Orange Coneflower)**

The late-summer blooms on this variety of black-eyed Susan glow a slightly orangy yellow around its black center, and act as important sources of nectar for a wide range of pollinators. The plant hosts the larvae of several moths and butterflies, including the wavy-lined emerald and the silvery checkerspot.

Black-eyed Susans are found in both dry and moist soils in open woods and thickets. They are easily grown in dry to medium moisture, organically rich soil, and bloom best in full sun, though they will tolerate light shade.

These plants spread slowly through rhizomes, and can be deadheaded to encourage additional blooming. However, leaving the final flowers in place will ensure that the songbirds get their seeds in the fall.

Photo courtesy of Centerton Nursery

Sun sun to part sun	Height 24 - 36"	Bloom time Jul - Sep	Pollinators bees, butterflies
Water drought resistant*	Spread 24 - 30"	Resistant deer and rabbits	Host several species of caterpillars

* Drought tolerant when established. Plants need to be watered regularly in their first season so they can establish a strong root system, but soil should not be soggy.



Solidago flexicaulis (Zigzag Goldenrod)

Named for the way its stem grows back and forth, the zigzag goldenrod is a vitally important source of nectar to native bees, wasps, butterflies, and pollinating flies, providing food late in the season. The plant also hosts a number of moth larvae, and songbirds and mice eat the seeds.

Zigzag goldenrod brightens shady spots with its small yellow flowers that grow in clusters on the upper part of the stems – it’s of the rare pollinator-friendly plants that will tolerate full shade, though sun-dappled shade works best.

Goldenrods have often been wrongly accused of causing hayfever or seasonal allergies; they are not wind pollinators. The true culprits may be ragweed, a wind pollinator that blooms at the same time but perhaps has escaped blame because of its inconspicuous flowers.

Photo courtesy of VanBerkum Nursery

Sun sun to part sun	Height 12 - 36"	Bloom time Aug - Oct	Pollinators bees, butterflies
Water medium	Spread 12 - 36"	Resistant deer and rabbits	Host several species of caterpillars

***Solidago odora* (Sweet Goldenrod or Anise-scented Goldenrod)**



As its name implies, sweet goldenrod's foliage emits a lovely anise-like scent when bruised. Its gracefully arching stems of yellow flowers bloom late summer into the fall, providing vital food to pollinators including specialist bees, and to butterflies preparing to migrate or overwinter. And, like other goldenrods, sweet goldenrod is host to over 100 moths and butterfly caterpillars.

Sweet goldenrod is native to dry, sandy, open woods, and can therefore tolerate poor, dry soils and light shade, but prefers full sun. This variety of goldenrod forms clumps, but does not spread as aggressively as some of the others.

Like other goldenrods, this plant has often been thought to cause hayfever or seasonal allergies, despite not being a wind pollinator. Blame for pollen-induced discomfort probably lies with ragweed, a wind pollinator that blooms at the same time.

Photo courtesy of VanBerkum Nursery

Sun sun to part shade	Height 24 - 48"	Bloom time Aug - Sep	Pollinators bees, butterflies
Water dry to medium	Spread 24 - 48"	Resistant deer and rabbits	Host 100+species of caterpillars



***Solidago sempervirens* (Seaside Goldenrod)**

In the fall, seaside goldenrod is one of the primary food sources for migrating monarch butterflies, and its spikes of dense yellow flowers attract butterflies, bees, and other pollinators. During the winter, Seaside Goldenrod, like other goldenrods, provides overwintering habitat for gall-producing insects. These gall larvae, in turn, are an excellent source of nutrition in winter for birds, including woodpeckers and chickadees.

Seaside Goldenrod often occurs in dunes, grasslands, and transition areas. Its somewhat succulent, fleshy leaves are well adapted to tolerate salt spray and dry conditions, and this plant has been successfully used in dune rehabilitation. It blooms prolifically in full sun.

Seaside Goldenrod spreads through rhizomes and will form dense colonies over time.

Photo by Crocker Nurseries

Sun sun to part shade	Height 24 - 72"	Bloom time Aug - Oct	Pollinators bees, butterflies
Water dry to medium	Spread 24 - 36"	Resistant deer and rabbits	Host 100+species of caterpillars



***Tiarella cordifolia* (Foamflower)**

In spring, tiny pinkish-white flowers float above the mounded foliage on slender stems, attracting early bees and butterflies. The plant also hosts the larvae of a number of moths and butterflies, including eastern commas and mourning cloaks.

Foamflower is an excellent ground cover for shady areas with moist, well-draining soil, spreading through stolons (runners) to form dense clumps, one to two feet wide. This plant is grown easily in averagely moist, but not wet, soil in part to full shade.

Foliage turns an attractive reddish bronze in fall.

Photo courtesy of Centerton Nursery

Sun part to full shade	Height 9 - 12"	Bloom time May - June	Pollinators bees, butterflies
Water medium	Spread 12 - 24"	Resistant deer and rabbits	Host several varieties of caterpillars



***Tradescantia ohiensis* (Spiderwort)**

Spiderwort is one of the few pollinator-friendly plants that can grow in shade, though it does flower more profusely in sun or part sun. Its interestingly shaped three-petal purple flowers open during the morning, and close in the afternoon to conserve energy. Flowers provide nutrition for bees, butterflies, select beetles, and other pollinators.

Found in wood margins, meadows, and along roadsides, spiderwort can be easily grown in average, dry to medium soil. The plant can self-seed.

By mid-summer, foliage can start to flop over, and the plants benefit from being cut back by six to twelve inches. This will also encourage a fall bloom.

Photo courtesy of Centerton Nursery

Sun sun to part shade	Height 24 - 36"	Bloom time Jun - Jul	Pollinators bees, butterflies, beetles
Water dry to medium	Spread 18 - 30"	Resistant deer and rabbits	Host several varieties of caterpillars



***Verbena hastata* (Blue Vervain)**

Blue vervain’s candelabra-like spikes of densely-packed, tiny, tubular, purplish-blue flowers attract a range of pollinators, but are especially attractive to butterflies and hummingbirds. The plant also plays host to several butterfly and moth caterpillars, including that of the common buckeye butterfly and the verbena moth. Birds, including cardinals, sparrows, and juncos eat blue vervain seeds.

Blue vervain can be found in wet meadows, stream banks, and disturbed areas. It’s happiest in medium to wet soils and full sun, and could be used in moist sites around ponds or bogs. Blue vervain can be a relatively short-lived perennial, but also can self-seed.

Photo courtesy of VanBerkum Nursery

Sun sun	Height 24 - 72”	Bloom time Jul - Sep	Pollinators bees, butterflies, hummingbirds
Water medium to wet	Spread 12 - 30”	Resistant deer and rabbits	Host several varieties of caterpillars

Resources:

[Missouri Botanical Garden Plant Finder](#)

[Association to Preserve Cape Cod's Cape Cod Native Plant Finder](#)

[Mt. Cuba Center](#)

[Native Plant Trust](#)

[North Carolina Extension Gardener Plant Toolbox](#)

[Northern Gardener by the Minnesota State Horticultural Society](#)

[Pollinator Pathway](#)

[The US Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Plant Database and Fact Sheets](#)

[Virginia Native Plant Society, Conserving Wild Flowers and Wild Places](#)

[Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation, Pollinator-friendly Plant Lists](#)