

## 2017 Perennial of the Year



*Asclepias tuberosa*

**Hardiness** USDA Zones 4 to 9

**Light** - Butterfly weed grows best in full sun.

**Soil** - Grows best in well-drained soils and it is drought tolerant.

**Uses** - A perfect selection for full-sun meadow or prairie gardens as well as formal to semi-formal urban gardens. They make long-lasting cut flowers.

**Unique Qualities** - *Asclepias tuberosa* are butterfly magnets. Flowers are a nectar source for many butterflies and leaves are the food source for the monarch butterfly caterpillars.

Butterfly weed is subject to no serious insect or disease problems. Deer usually avoid butterfly weed. Commonly known as butterfly weed, this long-lived and striking perennial is native to the continental United States (except for the northeast) along with the Canadian provinces Ontario and Quebec. With vibrant orange/red/yellow flowers that seem to jump out, butterfly weed is a great addition to a sunny garden with average to dry soils. As the common name suggests, these plants attract butterflies.

They also have a medicinal history as treatment for pleurisy, a common ailment in early colonial times. It reportedly was so effective in treating this ailment it earned another common name, pleurisy root.

Butterfly weed is a member of Apocynaceae, or milkweed family. This family includes plants with a milky sap poisonous to most insects. Unlike other milkweeds, *Asclepias tuberosa* contains little sap. Stems are hairy and branched near the top with clusters (umbels) of many showy flowers in late spring through mid-July.

# Native Plants of Illinois

The 2017 GCI convention theme is “Go Native” as the interest in native plants is growing, but a plant’s nativity does not make it automatically a great garden plant. Every native plant will not be a good match for every garden. Some native plants can be aggressive in their growth, so that factor must be considered, especially if the plant will be placed in a small garden. If naturalizing is the goal, however, plants that are aggressive growers or self-sowers could be considered desirable.

Not all native plants are attractive and that should be taken into consideration. This is a subjective decision that each gardener must make. Whether a plant is native or introduced, it is a good idea to research a plant before placing it in your garden.

A misconception is that native plants are always more desirable than non-native species. Poison ivy and poison sumac are natives, but they are far from desirable. Some natives are aggressive growers, spreading rapidly. They may overwhelm a small yard or may not fit well in a traditional landscape. As with any plant group, careful selections need to be made.

This section of the yearbook is meant to highlight some of the most common native plants of Illinois. We hope this sparks your interest. For additional information, go to [www.illinoiswildflowers.info](http://www.illinoiswildflowers.info), [www.missouribotanicalgarden.org](http://www.missouribotanicalgarden.org) , <https://plants.usda.gov> or <http://extension.illinois.edu/wildflowers/directory.cfm>.



## Illinois Native Plants for Sun

*achillea millefolium* - Yarrow, Common Yarrow Best grown in lean, dry to medium, well- drained sandy loams in full sun. Plants do well in average garden soils and tolerate poor soils as long as drainage is good. Plants also tolerate hot, humid summers and drought.



*allium cernuum* - Nodding Onion

Easily grown in average, dry to medium, well-drained soil in full sun to light shade. Best in full sun, but appreciates some light afternoon shade in hot summer climates. Best in sandy loams. Plants will naturalize by self-seeding and bulb offsets in optimum growing conditions. Deadhead flowers before seed sets to help control any unwanted spread.



*amorpha canescens* - Lead Plant

Grow in average, dry to medium moisture, well-drained soil in full sun. Does well in poor, sandy, somewhat dry soils. May spread by self-seeding. Plant may die back to the ground in harsh winters.



*Andropogon gerardii* - Big Bluestem Grass

Easily grown in average, dry to medium, well-drained soils in full sun. Tolerant of a wide range of soils and growing conditions. Puts out lots of growth in moist, fertile soils, but is less apt to topple in dryish, infertile soils. Freely self-seeds in optimum growing conditions.

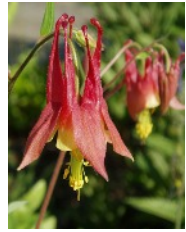


## Native Plants for Sun

### *aquilegia Canadensis* - Canadian Columbine

#### Wild Columbine

Easily grown in average, medium, well-drained soil in full sun to part shade. Wide range of soil tolerance as long as drainage is good. Prefers rich, moist soils tolerates light to moderate shade. Freely self-seeds and will naturalize to form large colonies in optimum growing conditions.



### *asclepias syriaca* - Common Milkweed

Easily grown in average, dry to medium, well-drained soils in full sun. Drought tolerant. Does well in poor, dryish soils. Easily grown from seed, and will self-seed in the landscape if seed pods are not removed prior to splitting open. Can spread somewhat rapidly by rhizomes.



### *asclepias tuberosa*- Butterfly Weed

Easily grown in average, dry to medium, well-drained soils in full sun. Drought tolerant. Does well in poor, dry soils. New growth tends to emerge late in the spring. Plants are easily grown from seed, but are somewhat slow to establish and may take 2-3 years to produce flowers. Mature plants may freely self-seed in the landscape if seed pods are not removed prior to splitting open. Butterfly weed does not transplant well due to its deep taproot, and is probably best left undisturbed once established.



### *aster azureus* - Sky Blue Aster, Azure Aster

This plant prefers full or partial sun and moderate to dry conditions. This plant is rather indifferent to soil characteristics – it can flourish in soil that is loamy, sandy, rocky, or contains clay. This plant is easy to grow and drought resistant



## Native Plants for Sun

*baptisia australis* - Blue Wild Indigo

False Blue Indigo

Easily grown in average, dry to medium, well-drained soil in full sun to part shade. Best in full sun. Tolerates drought and poor soils. Over time, plants develop slowly expanding clumps with deep and extensive root systems, and should not be disturbed once established.



*baptisia leucantha* - White Wild Indigo

This plant prefers full sun and moist to slightly dry soil. It is not fussy about growing conditions, and is easy to grow. However, it dislikes alkaline soil and may fail to bloom in shady conditions.



*caltha palustris* - Marsh Marigold

Grow in full sun to part shade in shallow water at the margins of a pond or water garden or in wet, boggy soils. Best flowering usually occurs in full sun, but plants appreciate some part shade in the heat of the summer.



*ceanothus americanus* - Jersey Tea, Red Root Easily grown in average, dry to medium, well-drained soils in full sun to part shade. Best in sandy loams or rocky soils with good drainage. Thick, woody, red roots go deep and help plant withstand drought conditions, but make established shrubs difficult to transplant.



*dalea purpurea* - Purple Prairie Clover

Easily grown in average, medium, well-drained soils in full sun. Thick and deep taproot enables this plant to tolerate drought well. May self-seed in optimum growing conditions.



# Illinois Native Plants for Sun

## *echinacea pallid* - Pale Purple Coneflower

Easily grown in average, dry to medium, well-drained soil in full sun to part shade. Best in full sun. An adaptable plant that is tolerant of drought, heat, humidity and poor soils. Divide clumps when they become overcrowded (about every 4 years).



## *echinacea purpurea* - Purple Coneflower

Grows in sun to part shade, best in full sun, dry to medium well- drained soil.



## *eupatorium perfoliatum* - Boneset

Medium to wet soils in full sun to part shade. Does well in both sandy and clay soils. Needs constant moisture.



## *eupatorium purpureum* - Joe Pye Weed

Average, medium moisture soils in full sun to part shade. Prefers moist, fertile, humusy soils which do not dry out.



## *geranium maculatum* - Wild Geranium

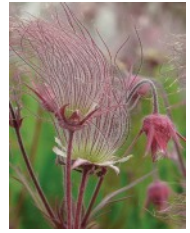
Average, medium, well-drained soil in full sun to part shade. Prefers moist, humusy soils, but tolerates poor soils.





## Illinois Native Plants for Sun

*geum triflorum* - Prairie Smoke or Old Man's Whiskers  
Best grown in dry, well-drained soils in full sun.  
Tolerates light shade and prefers some  
afternoon shade in hot summers.



*heliopsis helianthodes* - False Sunflower or Ox Eye  
Easily grown in average, dry to medium,  
well- drained soil in full sun. Tolerates  
drought, but does best if regularly watered.



*iris versicolor* - Northern Blue Flag  
Grow in medium to wet soils in full sun to part  
shade. This iris may be grown in up to 2-4" of  
shallow standing water (muddy bottom or  
containers



*juncus effuses* - Rush, Soft Rush  
Grows in sunny, wet conditions. Will grow in  
4" of water; to control in water, grow in tubs.



*liatris aspera* - Rough Blazing Star  
Average, dry to medium, well-drained soils in  
full sun. Tolerant of poor soils, drought,  
summer heat and humidity. Intolerant of wet  
soils in winter.



*liatris pycnostacha* - Prairie Blazing Star  
Average, dry to medium, well-drained soils in  
full sun. Tolerant of poor soils, drought,  
summer heat and humidity. Intolerant of wet  
soils in winter. Sometimes treated as a biennial.



## Illinois Native Plants for Sun

### *lobelia cardinalis* - Cardinal Flower

Rich, medium to wet soils in full sun to part shade. Needs constant moisture. Tolerates brief flooding. Soils should never be allowed to dry out.



### *lobelia siphilitico* - Great Blue Lobelia

Preference is wet to moist soil and partial sun. Full sun is tolerated if the soil is consistently moist.



### *parthenium intergrifolium* - Wild Quinine Feverfew

Prefers average, dry to medium, well-drained soil in full sun.



### *ratibida pinnata* - Grey-Head Coneflower

Grow in average, medium moisture, well-drained soil in full sun. Prefers clay or sandy soils.



### *rudbeckia hirta* - Black Eyed Susan

Prefers full sun, and slightly moist to moderately dry soil conditions. Biennial or short-lived perennial that is winter hardy to USDA Zones 3-7



### *siliphium perfoliatum* - Cup Plant

Prefers full or partial sun, and moist loamy soil.





## Illinois Native Plants for Sun

### *silphium laciniatum* - Compass Plant

Easily grown in average, medium, well-drained soils in full sun. Tolerates poor soils.



### *solidago speciosa* - Showy Goldenrod

Easily grown in average, dry to medium, well-drained soil in full sun. Tolerates poor, dry soils. Remove spent flower clusters to encourage additional bloom.



### *sorghastrum nutans* - Indian Grass

Easily grown in average, dry to medium, well-drained soils in full sun. Tolerant of a wide range of soils including heavy clays. Does well in poor, dry, infertile soils. Tends to open up and/or flop in moist, rich soils however.



### *sporobolus heterolepis* - Prairie Dropseed

Easily grown in average, dry to medium, well-drained soils in full sun. Tolerates wide range of soils, including heavy clays. Prefers dry, rocky soils. Good drought tolerance. Slow-growing and slow to establish. May be grown from seed but does not freely self-seed in the garden.



### *symphyotrichum novae-angiae* - New England Aster

Easily grown in average, medium, well-drained soil in full sun. Prefers moist, rich soils. Good air circulation helps reduce incidence of foliar diseases. Pinching back stems several times before mid-July will help control plant height, promote bushiness and perhaps obviate the need for staking. Easily grown from seed and may self-seed in the garden in optimum growing conditions. Plants may be cut to the ground after flowering to prevent any unwanted self-seeding.



## Illinois Native Plants for Sun

*tradescantia ohiensis* – Spiderwort

Easily grown in average, dry to medium, well-drained soil in full sun to part shade. Very tolerant of part shade, but bloom may be less profuse. Prefers moist, acidic, sandy soil.



*veronicastrum virginicum* - Culvers Root

Easily grown in average, medium to wet, well-drained soil in full sun.



*zizia aptera* - Heartleafed Golden Alexanders

Grow in average, medium moisture, well-drained soils in full sun to part shade.



# NOTES

## Illinois Native Plants for Shade

### *actaea racemosa* - Black Cohosh

Easily grown in average, medium moisture soils in part shade to full shade. Prefers humusy, organically rich, moisture-retentive soils. Endangered in Illinois.



### *athyrium filix-femina* - Lady Fern

Easily grown in rich, medium moisture, well-drained soil in part shade to full shade. Tolerates drier soils than many other ferns.



### *carex muskingumensis* - Palm Sedge

This grass is easily grown in average, medium to wet soil in full sun to part shade. This species does well in some shade, but tends to flop in too much shade.



### *dryopteris marginalis* - Wood Fern

Marginal Wood Fern

Well-drained slightly acidic soil is preferred.



### *hepatica acutiloba* - Liver Leaf, Liverwort

Best grown in humusy, medium moisture, well-drained soils in part shade. Needs consistently moist soils which do not dry out.



# Illinois Native Plants for Shade

## *matteuccia struthiopteris* - Ostrich Fern

Easily grown in average, medium to wet soils in part shade to full shade. Best in rich soils with constant moisture. Soil must never be allowed to dry out. Avoid windy sites.



## *mertensia virginica* - Virginia Bluebells

Easily grown in average, medium, well-drained soils in part shade to full shade. Prefers moist, rich soils.



## *onoclea sensibilis* - Sensitive Fern

Grows in partial sun to light shade and wet to moist conditions.



## *osmunda regalis* - Royal Fern

Best grown in medium to wet soils in part shade. Prefers moist, rich, humusy, acidic soils, but adapts to lesser conditions. Also prefers cool summer climates where it tolerates close to full sun as long as given consistent moisture.



*osmundastrum cinnamomeum* - Cinnamon Fern Easily grown in medium to wet soils in part shade to full shade. Prefers moist, rich, humusy, acidic soils, but adapts to lesser conditions.



# Illinois Native Plants for Shade

## *phlox divaricata* - Wild Blue Phlox, Woodland Phlox

Best grown in humusy, medium moisture, well-drained soil in part shade to full shade. Prefers rich, moist, organic soils. Appreciates light summer mulch which helps retain moisture and keep roots cool.



## *podophyllum petatum* - May Apple

Grow in average, medium moisture, well-drained soil in part shade to full shade. Prefers rich, moist, humusy soils. Often forms large colonies in the wild. Will self-seed under optimum growing conditions. As with many of the early spring wildflowers, Mayapple goes dormant in summer.



## *polemonium reptans* - Jacob's Ladder

Best grown in moist, humusy, well-drained soil in part shade. Tolerates full sun in cool summer climates. Although technically rhizomatous, plants do not creep. Freely self-seeds in optimum growing conditions.



## *polygonatum biflorum* – Smooth Solomon's Seal

Easily grown in average, medium to wet, well-drained soil in part shade to full shade. Prefers moist, humusy soils. Slowly spreads by rhizomes to form colonies in optimum growing conditions.



## *polygonatum commutatum* - Solomon's Seal

This plant has the same characteristics as the Smooth Solomon's Seal but can be taller. Sometimes called Giant Solomon's Seal.





## Illinois Native Plants for Shade

*polystichum acrostichoides* - Christmas Fern

Very adaptable, but likes full to part shade and fertile, humusy, well-drained soil.



*smilacina racemosa* - False Solomon's Seal

Grows in light shade to partial sun, fertile, moist to slightly dry soil.



*tirella cordifolia* - Foam Flower

Easily grown in average, medium, well-drained soil in part shade to full shade. Wet soils can be fatal but does not do well in extremely dry soils.



*trillium grandiflorum* - Wood Lily

Easily grown in deep, rich, humusy, moist but well-drained soils in part shade to full shade. Needs regular watering.



*uvularia grandiflora* - Large-Flowered Bellwort,  
Merrybells

Prefers part to full shade, moist, well-drained soils.



## Illinois Native Plants for Shade

*viola conspersa* - Dog Violet

In spring they prefer dappled sunlight to light shade, moist conditions, and a rich loamy soil with abundant organic material



# NOTES

# NOTES