

Go Native!

Consider installing native plants to create diversity in your home landscape. Native plants, by definition, are plants that existed in the Great Lakes region prior to the arrival of European settlers. They contribute to the rich and productive relationships among plants, animals, insects and microorganisms in natural ecosystems such as woodlands, prairies, and wetlands.

Native shrubs contribute to the natural environment in important ways:

- **Natural vigor:** When properly planted, native shrubs adapt well to the variable weather conditions of Southeast Michigan and once established, typically require less maintenance than non-native species.
- **Resistance to pests and diseases:** Once established, native shrubs are often resistant to pests and diseases, reducing the need for pesticides.
- **Filtering air pollutants:** Wildflowers and tall grasses trap pollutants on their leaves and stems. Wildflowers, which may grow 2 or 3 feet tall, are more efficient at trapping pollutants than turf grass. Once pollutants are trapped by vegetation, they are less likely to run off into streams and rivers.
- **Water quality enhancement through soil stabilization:** Native plants and shrubs have extensive root systems, which can be very useful for streambank erosion areas. Natives absorb nutrients which might otherwise run off into waterways and provide suitable conditions for other plants – including the next generation of trees.
- **Reduction in fertilizer use:** When soils are enriched with compost or other types of organic matter, additional fertilizer may not be needed. Rather than guessing, test your soil for nutrients. Call Oakland County MSU Extension at: 248-858-0902 for more information.
- **Habitat for birds, insects, and other beneficial wildlife:** Native plant communities provide food, shelter and hiding places for birds, butterflies, insects and other beneficial wildlife.

