What are Native Plants and Why Plant Them?



Location: Keystone Flora Native Plants

Have you been thinking about updating your landscaping by adding native plants?

Gardening season is here! Learn how to incorporate native plants in your yard, buy native plants, and support your neighbors all in one day. On Saturday, 6/27, a number of Amberley properties will be featured in the Cincinnati Nature Center's (CNC) annual Garden Tour: Noteworthy Natives. Sign up for the tour here, https://www.cincynature.org/garden-tour-noteworthy-natives. CNC will also have a Pop-Up Native Plant Sale at Amberley Green during the tour hours (9a-5p). And, CNC's Director of Conservation, Cory Christopher, will provide a free, guided prairie tour at Amberley Green at 5:30p.

So, what are native plants? There are many interpretations however the textbook definition is plants that have been growing in an area prior to European settlement. Native insects and wildlife have evolved with those plants and developed complex relationships with particular plant communities for their survival.

Some of the benefits of native plants:

- They can improve the aesthetics of a community by providing diverse flowers, foliage and textures.
- They attract a large variety of pollinators.
- They do not require fertilizer and are more drought resistant when compared with both turf grass and non-native ornamentals.
- Their deep root systems contribute to improved percolation through soil, decreasing runoff, preventing erosion, and reducing flooding.
- They provide educational opportunities for both children and adults to learn about the values of biodiversity.
- Time spent amongst native plants can have positive impacts on mental health and stress levels.

Whether you grow native plants or non-native ornamentals, make sure to include a border around your beds (bricks, rocks, grass, etc.). Steer clear of fire hydrants and ensure that plant heights and widths do not obscure sightlines near driveways and street corners. Keep turf grass at 10" or under.

Native plants make a great addition to any landscape! Click on the following link for additional reading and pictures.

Tammy, it would be great if you could provide the following in a link. Thank you!

June Newsletter Article, Citations and Further Reading

https://www.realtor.com/advice/home-improvement/native-plant-landscaping/

https://www.nwf.org/Native-Plant-Habitats/Impact/Sustainable-Gardening-Trends

The Conservation Foundation. (2012, May 22). Native Plants 101: What is a Native Plant? https://theconservationfoundation.org/native-plants-101-what-is-a-native-plant/

Buxton, R.T., Hudgins, E.J., Lavigne, E. *et al.* Mental health is positively associated with biodiversity in Canadian cities. *Commun Earth Environ* 5, 310 (2024). https://doi.org/10.1038/s43247-024-01482-9

Cincinnati Parks. (2023, May 31). Transform your lawn into a native plant sanctuary. City of Cincinnati. https://www.cincinnati-oh.gov/cincyparks/news/transform-your-lawn-into-a-native-plant-sanctuary/

Creating a Native Garden: Improving Ohio's Habitat. Ohio Department of Natural Resources. (n.d.). https://ohiodnr.gov/discover-and-learn/safety-conservation/about-odnr/division-parks-watercraft/sustainability/pollinators

Norton B. A., G. D. Bending, R. Clark, R. Corstanje, N. Dunnett, K. L. Evans, D. R. Grafius, E. Gravestock, S. M. Grice, J. A. Harris, S. Hilton, H. Hoyle, E. Lim, T. G. Mercer, M. Pawlett, O. L. Pescott, J. P. Richards, G.

E. Southon and P. H. Warren. 2019. Urban meadows as an alternative to short mown grassland: effects of composition and height on biodiversity. *Ecological Applications* 29(6):e01946.

Selbig, W. R., & Balster, N. (n.d.). *Evaluation of Turf-Grass and Prairie-Vegetated Rain Gardens in a Clay and Sand Soil, Madison, Wisconsin, Water Years 2004–08*. USGS. https://pubs.usgs.gov/sir/2010/5077/pdf/sir20105077.pdf

https://www.cincynature.org/conservation/plant-native



Location: Amberley Village Residential Property



Location: Civic Garden Center