Plants Native to New England

The following list of native plants have been recommended by the Boston Parks Department.

Perennials
(flowers that come up year after year)

Naturescaping is the process of designing your landscape with plants native or naturalized to New England. This process also creates a natural habitat which attracts a variety of birds and butterflies by providing food and shelter. Native plants are better adapted to local soil and climate conditions, and need relatively little or no watering, fertilizing, or care once established. They are also less susceptible to common garden pests and diseases.

Plants with similar water needs should be grouped together in areas which retain more or less rainwater, so each plant receives the water it needs to be healthy. To minimize erosion on slopes, plant groundcover or other plants close together and apply mulch until the plants fill in.

Xeriscaping refers to selecting plants with a reduced need for water when compared to other plants.
Perennials (continued)
(flowers that come up year after year)
Black-Eyed Susans (Rudbeckia)
Catmint (Nepeta)
Daylilies (Hemerocallis)
Goldenrods (Solidago)
Purple Coneflowers (Echinacea)
Stonecrop (Sedum)
Yarrow (Achillea)

Shrubs
Bayberry (Myrica)
Chokeberry (Aronia)
Fetterbush (Leucothoe)
Fragrant Sumac (Rhus aromatica)
Spirea (Spiraea)
Sweet Fern (Comptonia peregrina)

For more information on native plants, contact your local garden shop or nursery.
Why Grow Natives?

There are many advantages to growing native plants in your yard. Since they’re adapted to the natural ecosystem, they’re better able to withstand climate changes and invasions from insects and diseases. Natives require little care once established in your yard.

Native plants also are not invasive. They have evolved a delicate balance with other plants, pests, and diseases so they don’t overwhelm an ecosystem, but remain an essential part of it. Because they’re so well adapted to a specific region, they provide reliable food and shelter to local wildlife, such as birds, mammals, and bees.

What is a Native Plant?

Native plants are those species and varieties that have naturally evolved in an area over thousands of years. There are many plants that have naturalized in specific areas by escaping from gardens and domestic cultivation and spreading in the native environment. However, a true native is a plant that has co-evolved with the specific ecosystem and the insects, animals, microbes, soil, and weather.

Photos courtesy of Amanda Sloan, Landscape Designer