

Gardening with Vermont Native Plants

A selection of plants that are beautiful, benefit wildlife, and are frequently available at Vermont nurseries

Plant name	Insects & birds (if a specific butterfly species is listed, it uses the plant as a larval foodplant)	Size	Season of interest
Annuals and Perennials			
Columbine <i>Aquilegia canadensis</i>	Bees, butterflies, moths	1-2'	Summer/Fall
Swamp milkweed <i>Asclepias incarnata</i>	Butterflies, moths, hummingbirds	2-3'	Summer/Fall
Milkweed, butterfly plant <i>Asclepias tuberosa</i> *	Butterflies, moth	1-2.5'	Summer
New England aster <i>Aster novae-angaliae</i>	American lady butterfly will use any of the composites. Pearl crescent and Baltimore checkerspots also use asters. Good source of nectar for others.	2-3'	Summer/Fall
New York aster <i>Aster novi-belgii</i>	Bees, butterflies, moths	1-3'	Summer/Fall
Turtlehead <i>Chelone glabra</i>	Baltimore checkerspot	1-2'	Summer
Coneflower* <i>Echinacea purpurea</i>	Butterflies, moths, hummingbirds	1-2'	Summer
Joe Pye Weed <i>Eupatorium maculatum</i>	The flat flowerheads make an excellent landing pad for nectaring butterflies	5-8'	Late summer
boneset <i>Eupatorium perfoliatum</i>	Same as above	5-8'	Late summer
Wild geranium <i>Geranium maculatum</i>	Bees and butterflies	1-2'	Spring/Summer
Spiked blazing star <i>Liatris spicata</i>	bees	3'	summer
Cardinal flower <i>Lobelia cardinalis</i>	nectar for butterflies	2-4'	Summer
Beebalm <i>Monarda fistulosa</i>	Butterflies, moths, hummingbirds	3'	Summer
Obedient Plant <i>Physostegia virginiana</i>	Butterflies	3'	Summer & fall
Black-eyed susan <i>Rudbeckia hirta</i> *	bees, butterflies, birds	1'	Summer/Fall
Foamflower <i>Tiarella cordifolia</i>	Eastern comma, Mourning cloak, Question mark	6-10"	Spring
Violet species <i>Viola adunca</i> *	Great spangled and meadow fritillary	3-4"	Spring/Summer
Shrubs and Trees			
American black elderberry <i>Sambucus canadensis</i>	birds	8-10'	Summer

Lowbush and Highbush blueberry <i>Vaccinium angustifolium and corymbosum</i>	bees, bee flies help to pollinate. Birds, fox, bear feast on fruits.
Nannyberry, cranberry, etc. <i>Viburnum species</i>	Fruits are eaten by birds
Grape (<i>vitis sp.</i>) and Virginia creeper <i>Parthenocissus quinquefolia</i>	Abbot's sphinx Pandora sphinx and Virginia creeper sphinx numerous birds eat fruits
Red maple <i>Acer rubrum and sugar maple Acer saccharum</i>	In the East, maples host over 68 species of moths and butterflies, including forest loving inchworms, Cercropia moth, IO moth. Polyphemus moth, Rosy maple moth, and the retarded dagger moth. Due to excellent biodiversity and biomass of native insects, numerous birds glean insects from foliage, blossoms and bark, including vireos, warblers, tanagers, and orioles. Nesting sites for robins, orioles, goldfinches and red-eyed vireos.
Black cherry <i>Prunus serotina</i>	Prunus species ranks third in the number of moths and butterflies they support. In Vermont, Cercropia moth, Striped hairstreak, Radcliffe's Dagger Moth, Polyphemus moth, and imperial moth all make their homes on these trees. Birds: <i>Same as above</i>
American beech <i>Fagus grandifolia</i>	Throughout the East, 126 species of moths and butterflies use beech as a larval host plant, including Luna moth, Juvenal's Duskywing and Early hairstreak. Small birds feed on seeds, as do turkey, grouse, small mammals, bear and deer.
American elm <i>Ulmus Americana</i>	Hosts up to 213 species of Lepidoptera in the east, including Eastern comma, Mourning cloak. Question mark, and Cercropia moth. The double toothed prominent (has adapted so specifically to elm that its back is shaped to look just like the serrated edge of American and slippery elm leaves- a great defense against feasting birds! Baltimore orioles nest in drooping twigs of mature elms; seeds are eaten by many bird species.
White birch <i>Betula papyrifera</i>	Mourning cloak, Tiger swallowtail, Cercropia moth, IO moth, Luna moth and Compton tortoiseshell all use birch as larval host plants. Kinglets, chickadees, goldfinches, redpolls, pine siskins, juncos, grouse, turkey eat seeds. Finches, vireos, warblers, orioles, tanagers glean insects.
northern red oak <i>Quercus rubra</i>	Oaks host up to 517 species of Lepidoptera including Juvenal's Duskywing, IO moth, Cercropia moth and Luna moth. Wild turkey, bluejays, titmice, doves, finches, juncos, and redheaded woodpeckers eat acorns. Tanagers, orioles, vireos, warblers, and flycatchers eat insects from foliage or flowers.

- not native to VT but further south

For more information go to:

The Nature Conservancy, www.nature.org/vermont/weeds

Bringing Nature Home www.bringingnaturehome.net

The Pollinator Project <http://pollinator.org>,

Butterflies and Moths of North America <http://www.butterfliesandmoths.org>