

The Value of Native Plants in Virginia

Understanding the Impacts of Invasive Plants on Native Plant Communities

NATIVE PLANTS

In North America, plants are generally described as native if they occurred here prior to European settlement. (Plant Virginia Natives)

More broadly, native plants are those that occur in the region in which they evolved. Plants evolve over geologic time in response to physical and biotic processes, interactions with other species inhabiting the local community and the characteristics of a region to include climate and soil. (VA Department of Conservation and Recreation)

Why Use Native Plants?

Native plants, including trees, shrubs, vines and flowers, support and feed native wildlife that is essential for maintaining biodiversity. Native plants have co-evolved with wildlife for

many years, resulting in unique relationships between insects, birds, and other animals. Native plants provide wildlife with the food and shelter that is necessary for their survival. As natural habitats are lost to development, the use of native plants in landscapes can support local ecosystems and build resilience. Native plants are also essential for native pollinators. (Society for Ecological Restoration)



(Mountain laurel; credit DCR)

Local native plants are adapted to local environmental

conditions. Once established, native plants may require less water compared to some non-native species, which could save natural resources, time, and money. (Virginia Tech)

Native plants can support restoration of landscapes. Some native plants can be used to replant or restore landscapes once invasive species have been removed. (USDA-NRCS)

Healthy, well-established, and biodiverse ecologies are better able to resist invasive plant species. Native plants contribute to biodiverse landscapes which are more resilient against invasive insects, foreign plant pathogens, and other invasive plants. (USDA-NRCS)

Please consult your local horticultural professional for more information on native or non-native, non-invasive plants.

INVASIVE PLANTS

Invasive plants are species intentionally or accidentally introduced by human activity into a region in which they did not evolve and that cause harm to natural resources, economic activity or humans.

(Va. Dept. of Conservation and Recreation)

The Threat:

- ◆ Invasive plants may have characteristics of:
 - ◇ prolific seed production,
 - ◇ easy to disperse,
 - ◇ fast growing, and
 - ◇ rapid vegetative reproduction.
- ◆ Invasive plants can displace native plant species, reduce wildlife habitat, and alter natural processes.
- ◆ Invasive plants can degrade rangelands, clog waterways, and reduce agricultural and forest crop yields.
- ◆ Invasive plants can substantially impact rare or vulnerable native species or natural areas.
- ◆ Invasive plants are a long term threat to biodiversity and ecosystem stability.
- ◆ Invasive plants require significant resources to manage and control.
- ◆ Some invasive plants could cause human health concerns.

Please consult your local horticultural professional regarding the characteristics of invasive plants prior to their purchase.



www.vdacs.virginia.gov

NOXIOUS WEEDS

A noxious weed is any living plant, or part thereof, declared by the Board of Agriculture to be detrimental to crops, surface waters, including lakes, or other desirable plants, livestock, land, or other property, or to be injurious to public health, the environment, or the economy, except when in-state production of such living plant is commercially viable or is commercially propagated in Virginia. (VA Code 3.2-800 et seq.)

The Virginia Noxious Weed Law

The Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services Office of Plant Industry Services administers the Virginia Noxious Weed Law.

More information and the current list of Virginia's Noxious Weeds is available at www.vdacs.virginia.gov/plant-industry-services-noxious-weeds.shtml

Resources

Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation's Invasive Plant Species List

www.dcr.virginia.gov/natural-heritage/invspdflist



Virginia Nursery and Landscape Association:

www.vnla.org/

Virginia Native Plant Society:

www.vnps.org/about/

Virginia Department of Forestry

www.buyvatrees.com/

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service Plant Materials Program:

www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/site/national/home/

Plant Virginia Natives

www.plantvirginiannatives.org/



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