



NC COASTAL LANDSCAPING

A Native Plant Guide Provided by the *Coastal Landscapes Initiative*

Front cover photo: Spotted horsemint (*Monarda punctata*)
Photo credit: Paul Hosier, *Seacoast Plants of the Carolinas*

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LANDSCAPING FOR THE COAST

This guide is for anyone interested in adopting nature-enhancing gardening or landscaping practices in coastal North Carolina. It features 34 plants that stand out as all-stars — they are native to the region, visually attractive and versatile. Each profile includes details on plant appeal and growing conditions to assist with selection.

The guide is a product of the Coastal Landscapes Initiative, or CLI, a collaborative effort to address landscaping at every stage of the process, from planning and design to installation and management. Partners come from the public and private sectors and draw on a range of N.C. coastal landscaping expertise. The ultimate goal is to foster coastal landscapes that are beautiful, functional, manageable and environmentally friendly.

WHY NATIVE PLANTS?

Native plants play an important role in the coastal landscape. Incorporating them into landscape design is key to reintroducing natural plant communities. Their suitability to coastal environments allows them to thrive in often harsh conditions.



Wildlife relies on native plants for nourishment and shelter.



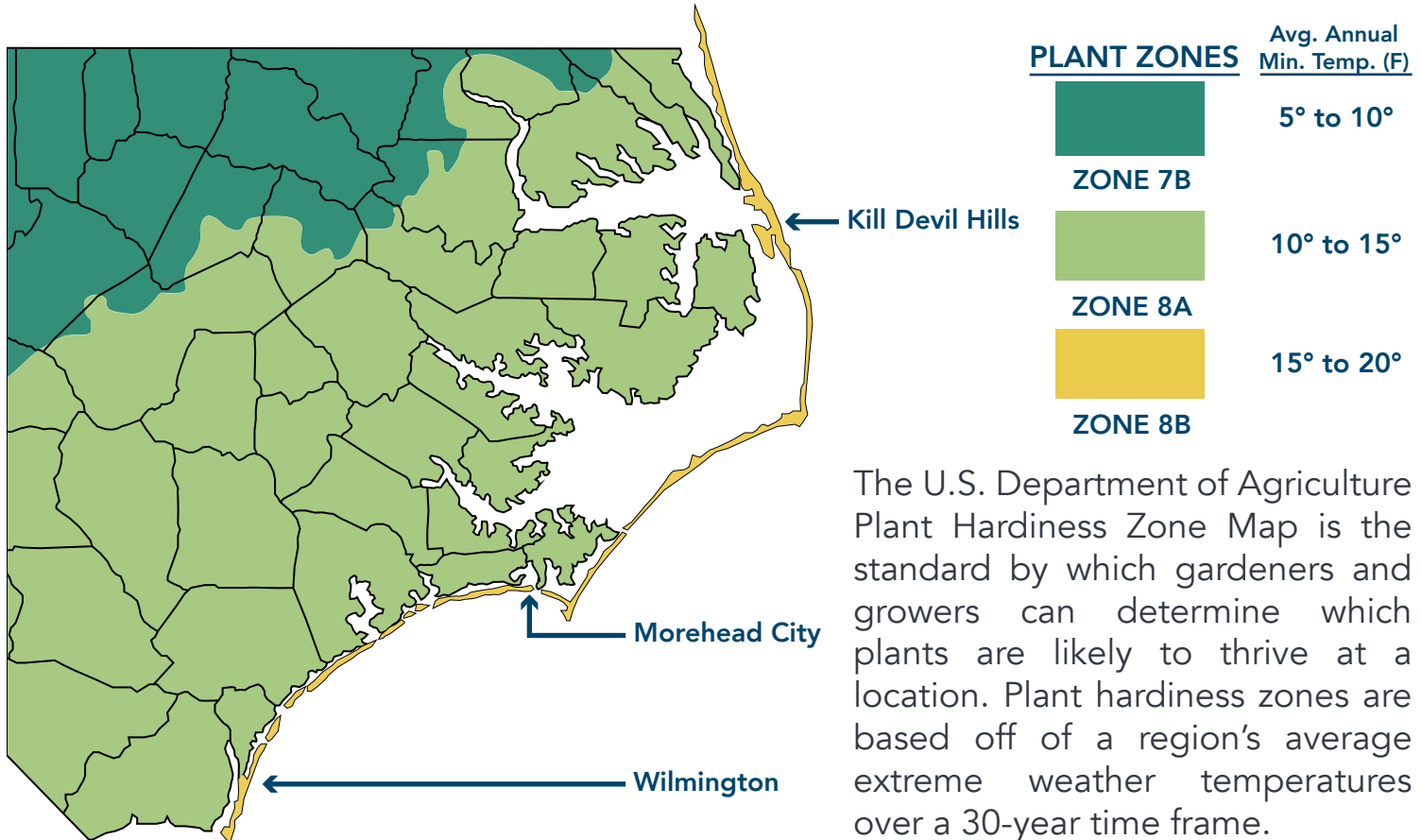
Shrubs and trees native to the coastal environment are more likely to withstand the effects of storms, because they are resistant to wind and floods.



Native plants are well adapted to the sunlight, temperatures, precipitation, hydrology, salt and soils of the coastal region, and therefore generally do not require excessive irrigation or fertilizer.

Some non-native plants are also well adapted to the coastal environment. Picking a non-invasive plant — regardless of origin — that flourishes in this climate will reduce the need for excessive watering or chemical inputs.

PLANT HARDINESS ZONES



The U.S. Department of Agriculture Plant Hardiness Zone Map is the standard by which gardeners and growers can determine which plants are likely to thrive at a location. Plant hardiness zones are based off of a region's average extreme weather temperatures over a 30-year time frame.

FEATURED PLANTS

*TYPE - D (Deciduous), E (Evergreen)

**SUN - Full (Full Sun), P.S. (Part Shade), S (Shade)

<u>SCIENTIFIC NAME</u>	<u>COMMON NAME</u>	<u>HEIGHT</u>	<u>WIDTH</u>	<u>TYPE*</u>	<u>SUN**</u>	<u>SALT TOLERANCE</u>
Trees						
<i>Amelanchier canadensis</i>	Serviceberry	10' - 20'	15' - 20'	D	FULL / P.S.	MODERATE
<i>Chamaecyparis thyoides</i>	Atlantic white cedar	40' - 50'	10' - 20'	E	FULL / P.S.	NONE
<i>Diospyros virginiana</i>	Persimmon	30' - 60'	20' - 35'	D	FULL / P.S.	MODERATE
<i>Gordonia lasianthus</i>	Loblolly bay	30' - 50'	10' - 15'	E	FULL / P.S.	NONE
<i>Juniperus virginiana</i>	Eastern red cedar	30' - 40'	10' - 20'	E	FULL / P.S.	MODERATE
<i>Ostrya virginiana</i>	American hophornbeam	25' - 40'	30' - 40'	D	FULL / P.S.	NONE
<i>Pinus palustris</i>	Longleaf pine	80' - 100'	10' - 20'	E	FULL	HIGH
<i>Prunus caroliniana</i>	Carolina cherry laurel	20' - 40'	15' - 20'	E	FULL / P.S.	MODERATE
<i>Quercus michauxii</i>	Swamp chestnut oak	60' - 80'	50' - 70'	D	FULL	LOW
<i>Taxodium distichum</i>	Bald cypress	50' - 100'	20' - 30'	D	FULL / P.S.	MODERATE
Shrubs						
<i>Clethra alnifolia</i>	Sweet pepperbush	3' - 6'	4' - 6'	D	FULL / P.S. / S	MODERATE
<i>Ilex glabra</i>	Inkberry	6' - 8'	6' - 8'	E	FULL / P.S.	MODERATE
<i>Ilex vomitoria</i>	Yaupon holly	10' - 20'	8' - 12'	E	FULL / P.S.	HIGH
<i>Morella cerifera</i>	Southern wax myrtle	6' - 12'	10' - 20'	E	FULL / P.S.	HIGH
<i>Sabal minor</i>	Dwarf palmetto	4' - 6'	4' - 6'	E	FULL / P.S. / S	MODERATE
<i>Vaccinium corymbosum</i>	Highbush blueberry	6' - 10'	6' - 10'	D	FULL / P.S.	MODERATE

<u>SCIENTIFIC NAME</u>	<u>COMMON NAME</u>	<u>HEIGHT</u>	<u>WIDTH</u>	<u>TYPE*</u>	<u>SUN**</u>	<u>SALT TOLERANCE</u>
Vines						
<i>Ampelaster carolinianus</i>	Climbing aster	10' - 12'	10' - 12'	D	FULL / P.S.	NONE
<i>Bignonia capreolata</i>	Cross vine	15' - 20'	10' - 12'	E	FULL / P.S.	MODERATE
<i>Gelsemium sempervirens</i>	Carolina jessamine	10' - 12'	10' - 12'	E	FULL / P.S.	MODERATE
<i>Lonicera sempervirens</i>	Coral honeysuckle	15' - 20'	10' - 12'	E	FULL	MODERATE
Grasses						
<i>Muhlenbergia capillaris</i>	Pink muhly grass	3' - 4'	3' - 4'	D	FULL	HIGH
<i>Panicum amarum</i>	Bitter panicum	3' - 4'	3' - 4'	D	FULL	HIGH
<i>Panicum virgatum</i>	Switchgrass	3' - 5'	3' - 5'	D	FULL / P.S.	MODERATE
<i>Schizachyrium scoparium</i>	Little bluestem	2' - 4'	2' - 4'	D	FULL	HIGH
Flowering Perennials						
<i>Asclepias tuberosa</i>	Butterfly weed	1' - 3'	1' - 1.5'	D	FULL / P.S.	LOW
<i>Baptisia australis</i>	Blue wild indigo	2' - 4'	2' - 4'	D	FULL	LOW
<i>Conoclinium coelestinum</i>	Blue mistflower	1.5' - 3'	1' - 2'	D	FULL / P.S.	LOW
<i>Coreopsis lanceolata</i>	Sand coreopsis	1' - 2'	1' - 1.5'	D	FULL	MODERATE
<i>Erythrina herbacea</i>	Coral bean	3' - 6'	3' - 6'	D	FULL / P.S.	LOW
<i>Kosteletzkya virginica</i>	Seashore mallow	2' - 4'	2' - 4'	D	FULL	MODERATE
<i>Monarda punctata</i>	Spotted horsemint	2' - 3'	2' - 3'	D	FULL / P.S.	MODERATE
<i>Penstemon laevigatus</i>	Eastern smooth beardtongue	1' - 3'	1' - 2'	D	FULL / P.S.	MODERATE
<i>Rudbeckia hirta</i>	Black-eyed Susan	2' - 3'	2' - 3'	D	FULL / P.S.	LOW
<i>Symphotrichum lateriflorum</i>	Calico aster	2' - 3'	2' - 3'	D	FULL / P.S.	NONE



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SERVICEBERRY

Amelanchier canadensis

An early-flowering, deciduous, large shrub or small tree often found growing in swamps, lowlands and thickets. It is considered a coastal species of low elevations. Its white, slightly fragrant flowers appear in clusters before the leaves emerge in early spring. Also known as shadbush or shadblow, it often blooms during the annual shad migration in New England. Green berries on the tree turn purplish-black in early summer. Resembling blueberries in size and color, this edible fruit can be used used in jams, jellies and pies. Serviceberry is a larval host of viceroy and red-spotted purple butterflies. Songbirds and various mammals eat its fruit.

HIGHLIGHTS – ATTRACTS BIRDS & BUTTERFLIES
 – DROUGHT-TOLERANT
 – POLLINATOR-FRIENDLY

LIGHT EXPOSURE – FULL SUN TO PART SHADE

SOIL – MOIST

HEIGHT & WIDTH – H: 10' - 20' W: 15' - 20'

FORM – OFTEN MULTI-STEMMED

SALT TOLERANCE – MODERATE

ZONE – 3 - 8



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ATLANTIC WHITE CEDAR

Chamaecyparis thyoides

An evergreen tree with a tight columnar shape found in freshwater swamps, bogs and wet woods. It dons scale-like, bluish-green foliage and reddish-brown bark with intersecting ridges that sometimes spiral. Pollen-bearing cones are yellow, while seed-bearing cones form in purple clusters that mature to brown. Also known as swamp cedar, Atlantic white cedar is the larval host of the rare Hessel's hairstreak butterfly. It also provides cover for a variety of birds and mammals. The yellow-throated warbler, prairie warbler and hooded warbler nest close to the ground in Atlantic white cedar stands. Cavities provide nesting areas for the pileated woodpecker. The wood excels at resisting decay and has been used for a number of construction purposes, including boat building, shingles and posts. While this tree is a good choice for a coastal buffer, it is highly flammable, so plant it some distance from the home.



Will Cook, Carolina Nature

HIGHLIGHTS – ATTRACTS BIRDS & BUTTERFLIES
– WILDLIFE HABITAT

LIGHT EXPOSURE – FULL SUN TO PART SHADE

SOIL – MOIST

HEIGHT & WIDTH – H: 40' - 50' W: 10' - 20'

FORM – TALL, SLENDER, COLUMNAR TREE

SALT TOLERANCE – NONE

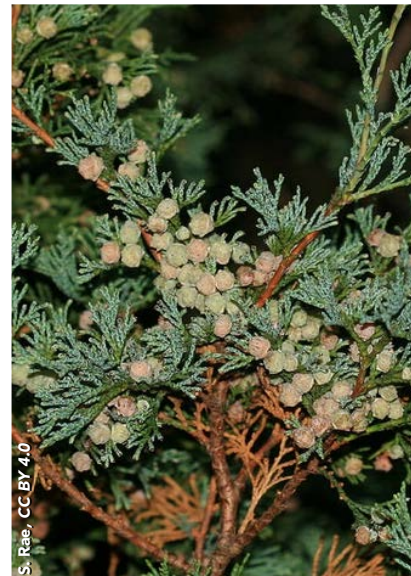
ZONE – 4 - 8



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Duane Burdick, CC BY 4.0



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PERSIMMON

Diospyros virginiana

A deciduous fruit tree found in a wide range of locations, including dunes, maritime forests, sandy woodlands and river bottoms. Persimmon is known for its autumn color, with leaves turning yellow to reddish purple. Its fruit also changes in autumn, maturing from green to an orange to reddish-purple color, and may persist into winter. Persimmon is a nectar source for honeybees, and its fruit is edible. However, do not pick fruits directly from the tree — they fall to the ground when ripe. They lend a spicy sweetness to syrups, jellies and other confections. Trees are either male or female, and only female trees produce fruit.

HIGHLIGHTS – ATTRACTS BIRDS & BUTTERFLIES
– DROUGHT-TOLERANT

LIGHT EXPOSURE – FULL SUN TO PART SHADE

SOIL – DRY TO MOIST

HEIGHT & WIDTH – H: 30' - 60' W: 20' - 35'

FORM – PYRAMIDAL IN YOUTH; SPREADING

SALT TOLERANCE – MODERATE

ZONE – 4 - 9



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LOBLOLLY BAY

Gordonia lasianthus

A flowering, broadleaf, evergreen tree common in pocosins or wetland bogs, swamp forests and wet pine savannas. Loblolly bay is important to Carolina bay wetland ecosystems — unique geological formations with an elliptical shape that are often seen in eastern North Carolina. Waxy white, fragrant, camellia-like blooms emerge amid glossy green leaves for an extended period in the summer. Although the leaves are evergreen, several individual leaves at a time will turn a brilliant scarlet color in autumn. The bark is light gray and splotchy, and develops splits and long, flat ridges. Loblolly bay provides cover to wildlife during winter and extreme weather. It normally grows in wet, acidic, nutrient-poor soils of the southeastern U.S. coastal plain, but does not tolerate standing water for long periods.



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HIGHLIGHTS – ATTRACTS BIRDS & BUTTERFLIES
– WILDLIFE HABITAT

LIGHT EXPOSURE – FULL SUN TO PART SHADE

SOIL – MOIST

HEIGHT & WIDTH – H: 30' - 50' W: 10' - 15'

FORM – PYRAMIDAL WITH AGE

SALT TOLERANCE – NONE

ZONE – 8 - 9



Will Cook, Carolina Nature



Will Cook, Carolina Nature



Henry de Saussure Copeland, CC BY-NC 2.0



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EASTERN RED CEDAR

Juniperus virginiana

A dense, fast-growing, evergreen conifer with scale-like foliage found in forests or disturbed areas in fields and pastures and along fence rows. Its bark peels off in thin, shreddy strips that are collected by birds as nesting material. Female trees produce bluish, berry-like cones that ripen in autumn and provide nourishment for songbirds and small mammals. Eastern red cedar also provides winter cover to wildlife and is the larval host of the juniper hairstreak butterfly. Its aromatic heartwood is commonly used for cedar chests. Suitable as a windscreen or buffer, this tough tree also boasts the best drought resistance of any conifer native to the eastern U.S. A smaller relative, the southern coastal red cedar (variety *silicicola*), found near ocean dunes, is significantly more tolerant of salt spray. *Silicicola* is harder to find in nurseries, however, apart from the "Brodie" cultivar.

HIGHLIGHTS – ATTRACTS BIRDS & BUTTERFLIES
 – PEST-RESISTANT
 – WILDLIFE HABITAT

LIGHT EXPOSURE – FULL SUN TO PART SHADE

SOIL – DRY TO MOIST

HEIGHT & WIDTH – H: 30' - 40' W: 10' - 20'

FORM – UPRIGHT; DENSELY PYRAMIDAL

SALT TOLERANCE – MODERATE

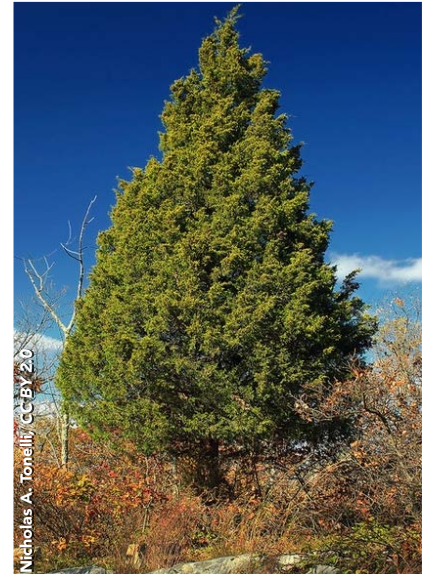
ZONE – 2 - 9



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AMERICAN HOPHORNBEAM

Ostrya virginiana

A deciduous, small- to medium-sized tree that usually occurs in dry soils on rocky slopes, in upland woods and on bluffs. Its coppery-tan leaves look similar to those of birch trees and can last into winter. Its shreddy bark also provides winter interest. Drooping clusters of papery, seed-containing pods develop in the summer and somewhat resemble the fruit of hops — hence the common name. American hophornbeam works well in urban settings because it tolerates drought and heavy clay soils. Plant in a lawn, along a driveway or street, or in a woodland garden. Another good choice is the related American hornbeam (*Carpinus caroliniana*) which alternatively has smooth, muscular bark.



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- HIGHLIGHTS** – ATTRACTS BIRDS & BUTTERFLIES
 – DROUGHT-RESISTANT
 – POLLINATOR-FRIENDLY

LIGHT EXPOSURE – FULL SUN TO PART SHADE

SOIL – MOIST

HEIGHT & WIDTH – H: 25' - 40' W: 30' - 40'

FORM – ROUNDED CROWN

SALT TOLERANCE – NONE

ZONE – 3 - 9



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Will Cook, Carolina Nature

LONGLEAF PINE

Pinus palustris

An evergreen conifer — and North Carolina's state tree — that thrives in maritime forests, pine savannas, and pine and oak woodlands on sandhills. As the largest of the native pines, it can soar to 100 feet or more under ideal conditions. In the salty air of the coast, however, it rarely reaches 50 feet. A germinated seedling spends at least five years establishing itself, but once its roots are fully developed, the tree can grow as much as 15 feet over a few years. Planted singularly, the tree will grow more limbs, taking a denser form. Planted in a group, it will grow much taller, with few limbs. Longleaf is the preferred nesting tree of the red-cockaded woodpecker — an endangered species — and small mammals feed on its seeds. The nickname “tar heel” is associated with people who burned longleaf heartwood to collect pitch for the naval industry.

HIGHLIGHTS – DROUGHT-TOLERANT
– WILDLIFE HABITAT

LIGHT EXPOSURE – FULL SUN

SOIL – DRY TO MOIST

HEIGHT & WIDTH – H: 80' - 100' W: 10' - 20'

FORM – TALL, WITH ROUNDED CROWN

SALT TOLERANCE – HIGH

ZONE – 7 - 9



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CAROLINA CHERRY LAUREL

Prunus caroliniana

A flowering, evergreen tree or large shrub native to low woods, fields and thickets. Creamy white flowers occur in clusters along the branches in the spring. Pollinated flowers give way to fleshy, green fruits that mature to a blue-black color. Carolina cherry laurel is important to wildlife: Its blooms attract many pollinating bees and butterflies; birds and small mammals feed on its fruit; and the dark green, glossy foliage provides cover during winter and extreme weather. This plant is hardy and makes a good hedge. When bruised or broken, its branches smell like cherries.



Paul Hostier, Seacoast Plants of the Carolinas

- HIGHLIGHTS** – ATTRACTS BIRDS & BUTTERFLIES
 – DROUGHT-TOLERANT
 – WILDLIFE HABITAT

LIGHT EXPOSURE – FULL SUN TO PART SHADE

SOIL – MOIST

HEIGHT & WIDTH – H: 20' - 40' W: 15' - 20'

FORM – ROUNDED CROWN WITH AGE

SALT TOLERANCE – MODERATE

ZONE – 7 - 10



Will Cook, Carolina Nature



Br. Weldon, CC BY 4.0



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SWAMP CHESTNUT OAK

Quercus michauxii

A deciduous tree found in bottomland forests that periodically flood throughout the lower piedmont and coastal regions of North Carolina. Its smooth leaves are somewhat oval, with numerous shallow lobes or rounded teeth along the edges. Their undersides are softly hairy. In autumn, foliage erupts in a showy display. Spring flowers give way to acorns consumed by various birds and other wildlife, including chipmunks. The tree also serves as a larval host of numerous butterflies, such as the banded hairstreak and Horace's duskywing, as well as many moths. Swamp chestnut oak was a popular timber tree in the cotton-growing regions of the South because of its durable wood. The wood also provided fiber for weaving heavy baskets used to harvest cotton.

HIGHLIGHTS – ATTRACTS BIRDS & BUTTERFLIES
– WILDLIFE HABITAT

LIGHT EXPOSURE – FULL SUN

SOIL – DRY TO WET

HEIGHT & WIDTH – H: 60' - 80' W: 50' - 70'

FORM – CONICAL IN YOUTH; ROUND CROWN

SALT TOLERANCE – LOW

ZONE – 5 - 8



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Will Cobb, Carolina Nature

BALD CYPRESS

Taxodium distichum

A long-lived conifer found in estuarine shorelines and blackwater swamps, typically draped in Spanish moss. A relative of the redwood, it can grow to 2,000 years old. As its common name suggests, bald cypress is deciduous. In autumn, feathery, light green foliage turns orange to cinnamon brown before shedding. The gray to brown bark is fibrous, usually peeling away in strips. Globe-shaped cones enclose seeds that birds and squirrels snack on. The flat-topped tree is also a popular nesting site for eagles and ospreys. The base of bald cypress is a wide, spreading buttress that helps the tree resist toppling during major storms. Lateral roots give rise to familiar, knobby growths called "knees." Be thoughtful about planting locations, and anticipate that these unique structures can pop up.

HIGHLIGHTS – ATTRACTS BIRDS
– WILDLIFE HABITAT

LIGHT EXPOSURE – FULL SUN TO PART SHADE

SOIL – MOIST TO WET

HEIGHT & WIDTH – H: 50' - 100' W: 20' - 30'

FORM – PYRAMIDAL & SPREADING CROWN

SALT TOLERANCE – MODERATE

ZONE – 4 - 9



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SWEET PEPPERBUSH

Clethra alnifolia

A deciduous shrub that grows naturally along East Coast streams from Maine to Florida. It is commonly called sweet pepperbush for its peppercorn-like fruit. In autumn, glossy green leaves generally turn to attractive shades of yellow to golden brown. In July and August, sweetly fragrant, white flowers grow in clusters along a central stem, attracting bees, butterflies and hummingbirds. The fruit, though not showy, is eaten by birds.

HIGHLIGHTS – ATTRACTS BIRDS & BUTTERFLIES
– POLLINATOR-FRIENDLY

LIGHT EXPOSURE – FULL SUN TO FULL SHADE

SOIL – DRY TO WET

HEIGHT & WIDTH – H: 3' - 6' W: 4' - 6'

FORM – DENSE OVAL TO UPRIGHT SHRUB

SALT TOLERANCE – MODERATE

ZONE – 3 - 9



Will Cook, Carolina Nature



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Will Cook, Carolina Nature

INKBERRY

Ilex glabra

A slow-growing, evergreen shrub commonly found in sandy woods and peripheries of swamps and bogs. From inconspicuous flowers emerge black, pea-sized, berry-like fruit that matures in early autumn and persists until spring. Male plants are needed for female plants to bear fruit. Inkberry is the source of a highly prized honey made from bees that pollinate its flowers. It is also a larval host of the Henry's elfin butterfly. This shrub is an excellent choice for house-hugging beds and borders. Most inkberry available commercially is cultivated into a more compact form, reaching only 3-5 feet in height and width.



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HIGHLIGHTS – ATTRACTS BIRDS & BUTTERFLIES
– DROUGHT-TOLERANT

LIGHT EXPOSURE – FULL SUN TO PART SHADE

SOIL – DRY TO WET

HEIGHT & WIDTH – H: 6' - 8' W: 6' - 8'

FORM – UPRIGHT & ROUNDED

SALT TOLERANCE – MODERATE

ZONE – 5 - 9



Will Cook, Carolina Nature



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YAUPON HOLLY

Ilex vomitoria

An evergreen shrub or small tree native to sandy woods, brackish and tidal marsh shorelines, dunes, maritime forests and shrub thickets. Plants are either male or female. On pollinated female plants, small, white, fragrant flowers give way to red berries that provide sustenance to songbirds and small mammals. Though toxic to humans, the bright fruit adds pizzazz to holiday decor. Yaupon holly is the source of a concentrated drink that Native Americans made to reportedly cleanse the body, hence its scientific name. Browned and dried leaves can also be steeped in hot water to brew a caffeinated tea. This species has been known to tolerate flooded conditions for extended periods of time.

HIGHLIGHTS – ATTRACTS BIRDS & BUTTERFLIES
– PEST-RESISTANT

LIGHT EXPOSURE – FULL SUN TO PART SHADE

SOIL – DRY TO WET

HEIGHT & WIDTH – H: 10' - 20' W: 8' - 12'

FORM – UPRIGHT & MULTI-STEMMED

SALT TOLERANCE – HIGH

ZONE – 7 - 9



Camella TWU, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0



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Will Cook, Carolina Nature

SOUTHERN WAX MYRTLE

Morella cerifera

A common semi-evergreen shrub that shows up in most Carolina coastal habitats, from the landward edge of dunes to the upper edge of tidal marshes. Its leathery, waxy, olive green leaves smell spicy when crushed. Plants are either male or female. In the winter, pollinated female plants give rise to globular, gray-blue berries. Colonists used the fruit to make candles by boiling them and separating the waxy coating. Seeds are a food source for various songbirds, including Carolina wrens, tree swallows and migratory warblers. Useful as a screen or a hedge, southern wax myrtle bounces back quickly after storms, with broken branches resprouting and releafing within weeks.

HIGHLIGHTS – ATTRACTS BIRDS &
BUTTERFLIES
– POLLINATOR-FRIENDLY

LIGHT EXPOSURE – FULL SUN TO PART SHADE

SOIL – DRY TO WET

HEIGHT & WIDTH – H: 6' - 12' W: 10' - 20'

FORM – MULTI-TRUNK

SALT TOLERANCE – HIGH

ZONE – 7 - 10

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DWARF PALMETTO

Sabal minor

A fan-shaped, evergreen palm shrub that thrives in maritime forests as well as in a number of low-lying plant communities. In fact, it is the hardiest native palm along the U.S. East Coast. Standing above the tallest leaves, branched clusters of small, white flowers appear in summer, followed by blue to black fleshy fruits. The weight of maturing fruit — eaten by small mammals and some birds — can cause the stem to gracefully arch over and touch the ground. This blue-green shrub brings dramatic form and texture to any garden.

HIGHLIGHTS – ATTRACTS BIRDS & BUTTERFLIES
– DROUGHT-TOLERANT

LIGHT EXPOSURE – FULL SUN TO FULL SHADE

SOIL – WET

HEIGHT & WIDTH – H: 4'- 6' W: 4'- 6'

FORM – PALM

SALT TOLERANCE – MODERATE

ZONE – 7 - 10



HIGHBUSH BLUEBERRY

Vaccinium corymbosum

A slow-growing, deciduous shrub found in and around marshes, swamps and flood-prone areas. Small, white or pink, bell-shaped flowers form in the spring and mature in clusters. The blooms give way to an edible blueberry that matures in mid- to late summer. Foliage turns a brilliant red in autumn. Although blueberries are self-fertile, planting multiple shrubs will result in larger, earlier berries with more seeds. Highbush blueberry also makes an excellent hedge when planted en masse. Bees are the primary pollinator, while the fruits attract birds and various mammals.



Maja Dumat, CC BY 2.0

HIGHLIGHTS – ATTRACTS BIRDS & BUTTERFLIES
– WILDLIFE HABITAT

LIGHT EXPOSURE – FULL SUN TO PART SHADE

SOIL – MOIST TO WET

HEIGHT & WIDTH – H: 6' - 10' W: 6' - 10'

FORM – UPRIGHT SPREADING SHRUB

SALT TOLERANCE – MODERATE

ZONE – 3 - 8



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Alan Cressler, LBJWC

CLIMBING ASTER

Ampelaster carolinianus

A flowering, deciduous, perennial vine that prefers sunny, wet sites along the coastal plain. It will spread through other plants or over fence posts, reaching heights of 10 to 12 feet. Its fragrant blooms are pink to purple with yellow centers, appearing in late summer and autumn. A late nectar source for migrating monarchs and bees, climbing aster is also a larval host of the pearl crescent butterfly.

HIGHLIGHTS – ATTRACTS BIRDS & BUTTERFLIES
 – DROUGHT-TOLERANT
 – POLLINATOR-FRIENDLY

LIGHT EXPOSURE – FULL SUN TO PART SHADE

SOIL – DRY TO WET

HEIGHT & WIDTH – H: 10'- 12' W: 10'- 12'

BLOOM TIME – AUTUMN

SALT TOLERANCE – NONE

ZONE – 6 - 10



Alan Cressler, LBJWC



Javier Alejandro, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0



Joseph Allan Tauscher, LBJWC

CROSS VINE

Bignonia capreolata

A fast-growing, semi-evergreen, perennial vine found in rich forest swamps. Showy, fragrant flowers bloom in late winter to early spring in shades ranging from orange and yellow to reddish-orange. The tubular flowers produce abundant nectar that attracts hummingbirds and butterflies. The cross vine is appropriate as a cover for fences and trellises. A cross section of the stem reveals a marking resembling the Greek cross, hence the common name.



Susan E. Adams, CC BY-SA 2.0

HIGHLIGHTS – ATTRACTS BIRDS & BUTTERFLIES
– POLLINATOR-FRIENDLY

LIGHT EXPOSURE – FULL SUN TO PART SHADE

SOIL – MOIST

HEIGHT & WIDTH – H: 15'- 20' W: 10'- 12'

BLOOM TIME – SPRING

SALT TOLERANCE – MODERATE

ZONE – 6 - 9



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CAROLINA JESSAMINE

Gelsemium sempervirens

A bushy, evergreen, perennial vine that grows along the edges of maritime forests and shrub thickets, and sometimes amid dunes. Foliage may turn purple-bronze in cold weather. Its sweetly scented, canary yellow flowers herald the arrival of spring in the coastal Carolinas. The tubular blooms attract bumblebees, honeybees and other insect pollinators. Its fruit is a brown capsule containing numerous winged seeds. Carolina jessamine can be trained to climb arbors and trellises but takes a few growing seasons to become well-established. It tolerates partial shade, but sunny locations are best. In shady conditions, the plant grows slowly and may become leggy as it seeks more light. Left unmanaged, Carolina jessamine can develop a wild appearance, with most of the foliage and flowers appearing at the tops of the vines. To encourage fuller growth lower down, cut back the vine tips after the flowers fade.

HIGHLIGHTS – ATTRACTS BIRDS &
BUTTERFLIES
– POLLINATOR-FRIENDLY

LIGHT EXPOSURE – FULL SUN TO PART SHADE

SOIL – DRY TO MOIST

HEIGHT & WIDTH – H: 10'- 12' W: 10'- 12'

BLOOM TIME – SPRING

SALT TOLERANCE – MODERATE

ZONE – 6 - 9



North Carolina State Extension



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CORAL HONEYSUCKLE

Lonicera sempervirens

A fast-growing, woody, semi-evergreen vine that twines along the margins of maritime forests and maritime shrub thickets. One of the showiest of the vining honeysuckles, it dons long, tubular flowers that range from coral-red to orange-red and that may be lined with yellow. Coral honeysuckle is a larval host to the hummingbird clearwing moth. Various songbirds — including cedar waxwings, catbirds and cardinals — feed on its round, red berries, and hummingbirds seek its nectar. Unlike its invasive relative Japanese honeysuckle, coral honeysuckle is not aggressive. It blooms both in the spring and in autumn.



Bob Gutowski, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0

- HIGHLIGHTS** – ATTRACTS BIRDS & BUTTERFLIES
 – DROUGHT-TOLERANT
 – POLLINATOR-FRIENDLY

LIGHT EXPOSURE – FULL SUN

SOIL – MOIST

HEIGHT & WIDTH – H: 15'- 20' W: 10'- 12'

BLOOM TIME – SPRING TO SUMMER

SALT TOLERANCE – MODERATE

ZONE – 6 - 8



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PINK MUHLY GRASS

Muhlenbergia capillaris

A perennial grass that grows in sandy, dry pinelands in the coastal Carolinas. In autumn, its delicate flowering plumes create a striking pink haze above its wiry leaves — an effect even showier in mass plantings. As an ornamental grass, it complements landscape beds of colorful autumn perennials. Its close relative (*Muhlenbergia filipes*) is used to make traditional sweetgrass baskets in coastal South Carolina and Georgia. Pink muhly grass is easy to grow and requires little extra attention. The grass is semi-evergreen, but cutting it back in early spring to remove brown blades can help make way for new green growth.

HIGHLIGHTS – DROUGHT-TOLERANT
– AUTUMN INTEREST

LIGHT EXPOSURE – FULL SUN

SOIL – DRY TO MOIST

HEIGHT & WIDTH – H: 3' - 4' W: 3' - 4'

FORM – CLUMPING

SALT TOLERANCE – HIGH

ZONE – 6 - 9



BITTER PANICUM

Panicum amarum

A perennial grass naturally found almost exclusively on dunes. Along with sea oats, saltmeadow cordgrass and sea elder, it is one of the most important and useful plants in the coastal Carolinas for creating and vegetating coastal dunes. Bitter panicum offers some cover for birds and small mammals, and songbirds feed on its seeds. An excellent ornamental plant with chalky blue-green leaves, this grass naturalizes easily in the landscape.



HIGHLIGHTS – DROUGHT-TOLERANT
– AUTUMN INTEREST

LIGHT EXPOSURE – FULL SUN

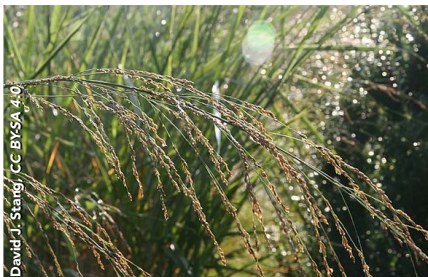
SOIL – DRY

HEIGHT & WIDTH – H: 3'- 4' W: 3'- 4'

FORM – CLUMPING & SPREADING

SALT TOLERANCE – HIGH

ZONE – 2 - 9





Forest and Kim Staley, CC BY 4.0

SWITCHGRASS

Panicum virgatum

A fast-growing, perennial grass common in many coastal dune and marsh environments, as well as in tallgrass prairie. Its stems don pink-tinged flower clusters that are wind-pollinated. Autumn color often reveals reddish-purple streaks. Switchgrass is a boon to wildlife: A variety of wetland birds and songbirds eat its seeds; it offers nesting sites and cover for small mammals; and it is a larval host of various species of skipper butterfly. Switchgrass' ornamental appeal and ability to thrive in poor soils makes it suitable for any coastal landscape.

HIGHLIGHTS – DROUGHT-TOLERANT
– AUTUMN INTEREST

LIGHT EXPOSURE – FULL SUN TO PART SHADE

SOIL – DRY TO MOIST

HEIGHT & WIDTH – H: 3' - 5' W: 3' - 5'

FORM – UPRIGHT

SALT TOLERANCE – MODERATE

ZONE – 5 - 9



Andrey Zhanikhin, CC BY 4.0



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Sally / Andy Wisowski, LBJWC

LITTLE BLUESTEM

Schizachyrium scoparium

A perennial grass that tolerates high heat and humidity, and is therefore well-adapted to southern climates. Its blue-green leaves turn yellow-orange in autumn, making for an attractive planting. Showy in mass plantings, it also makes an ideal addition to a rain garden. Little bluestem is a larval host of various skipper butterfly species. For example, it provides habitat and the only known sustenance for the caterpillar of the crystal skipper butterfly, named after North Carolina's Crystal Coast (Bogue Banks). This rare butterfly makes its home on a 30-mile stretch of sand dunes in Carteret and Onslow counties. Cut back little bluestem to the ground in early spring to promote new, attractive growth.



Sally/Andy Wasowski, LBUWC

HIGHLIGHTS – DROUGHT-TOLERANT
– AUTUMN INTEREST

LIGHT EXPOSURE – FULL SUN

SOIL – MOIST TO WET

HEIGHT & WIDTH – H: 2'- 4' W: 2'- 4'

FORM – UPRIGHT CLUMPING

SALT TOLERANCE – HIGH

ZONE – 3 - 9



Norman C. Briggs, LBUWC



Tom Potterfield, CC BY-SA-2.0



Joshua Mayer, CC BY-SA-2.0 DE



BUTTERFLY WEED

Asclepias tuberosa

A perennial that occurs in dry or rocky open woods, glades, prairies and fields and along roadsides. Bright orange flower clusters give way to prominent, spindle-shaped seed pods popular in flower arrangements. The pods split open when ripe, releasing numerous silky-tailed seeds for wind dispersal. Various butterfly species and bees seek nectar from its flowers. Butterfly weed is a type of milkweed — a genus of plant that is the exclusive larval host of the monarch butterfly. While butterfly weed can be slow to establish, it is long-lived. Avoid moving it once it is planted.

HIGHLIGHTS – ATTRACTS BIRDS &
BUTTERFLIES
– DROUGHT-TOLERANT

LIGHT EXPOSURE – FULL SUN TO PART SHADE

SOIL – DRY TO MOIST

HEIGHT & WIDTH – H: 1' - 3' W: 1' - 1.5'

BLOOM TIME – SPRING TO SUMMER

SALT TOLERANCE – LOW

ZONE – 3 - 9



BLUE WILD INDIGO

Baptisia australis

A perennial that occurs in rich woods and thickets and along streambanks. Come springtime, purplish-blue flowers emerge in spiky clusters above the foliage. In late summer, the blooms give way to inflated seed pods that turn charcoal black when ripe. Popular nowadays as decoration, those ripe pods were once given to children as rattles — the seeds make noise when shaken. The roots, stems and leaves, meanwhile, were once used to make a dye akin to indigo. Blue wild indigo is a larval host for skipper butterflies.



Will Law, CC BY-SA 2.0 DE

HIGHLIGHTS – ATTRACTS BIRDS & BUTTERFLIES
– DROUGHT-TOLERANT

LIGHT EXPOSURE – FULL SUN

SOIL – DRY TO MOIST

HEIGHT & WIDTH – H: 2'- 4' W: 2'- 4'

BLOOM TIME – SPRING

SALT TOLERANCE – LOW

ZONE – 3 - 9



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BLUE MISTFLOWER

Conoclinium coelestinum

A perennial that thrives in moist, nutrient-rich soils. From mid-summer to early autumn, bluish purple flowers form in dense clusters at the tops of plants, attracting butterflies seeking nectar. Blue mistflower is an ideal addition to a wildflower garden or around pond borders. Roots have a tendency to spread and form new plants, however, so avoid planting in smaller areas. Cut back taller plants in spring to avoid flopping.

HIGHLIGHTS – ATTRACTS BIRDS & BUTTERFLIES
 – DROUGHT-TOLERANT
 – POLLINATOR-FRIENDLY

LIGHT EXPOSURE – FULL SUN TO PART SHADE

SOIL – MEDIUM TO WET

HEIGHT & WIDTH – H: 1.5'- 3' W: 1'- 2'

BLOOM TIME – SUMMER TO AUTUMN

SALT TOLERANCE – LOW

ZONE – 5 - 10



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SAND COREOPSIS

Coreopsis lanceolata

A perennial that typically occurs in prairies, glades and fields and along roadsides. It naturalizes near ocean dunes. Flowers are bright yellow and daisy-like, with eight rays that are toothed at the tips. Butterflies and other pollinators seek out the sunny blooms, while songbirds eat the seeds. Sand coreopsis freely self-seeds, and can sprawl to form large colonies, so summer maintenance may be necessary.



Stephanie Brundage, LBJWC

HIGHLIGHTS – ATTRACTS BIRDS &
BUTTERFLIES
– DROUGHT-TOLERANT

LIGHT EXPOSURE – FULL SUN

SOIL – DRY TO WET

HEIGHT & WIDTH – H: 1'- 2' W: 1'- 1.5'

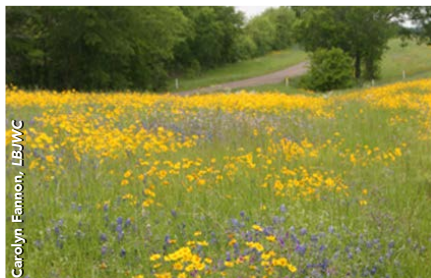
BLOOM TIME – SPRING

SALT TOLERANCE – MODERATE

ZONE – 4 - 9



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Alan Cressler, LBJWC

CORAL BEAN

Erythrina herbacea

A perennial wildflower or small shrub most often found in open, sandy woods and clearings, as well as maritime forests. Its bright green leaves are uniquely shaped; each leaf contains three leaflets that are broad in the center but pointed at the tips. In the spring, tubular scarlet flowers appear, attracting hummingbirds and butterflies. Elongated seed pods mature in autumn, turning almost black, and splitting open to release shiny red seeds that are both pretty and poisonous. Coral bean is a great choice for planting in the back of mixed borders, but keep away from pets and kids. When working with this plant, wear gloves to avoid the prickles and spines on the leaves and stems.

HIGHLIGHTS – ATTRACTS BIRDS & BUTTERFLIES
 – DROUGHT-TOLERANT
 – POLLINATOR-FRIENDLY

LIGHT EXPOSURE – FULL SUN TO PART SHADE

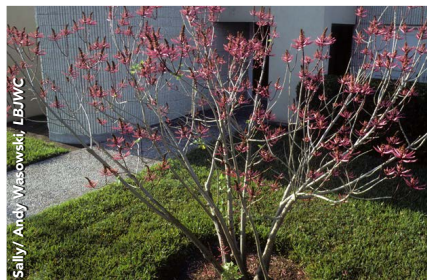
SOIL – DRY TO WET

HEIGHT & WIDTH – H: 3' - 6' W: 3' - 6'

BLOOM TIME – SPRING TO AUTUMN

SALT TOLERANCE – LOW

ZONE – 8 - 11



Sally/Andy Masowski, LBJWC



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SEASHORE MALLOW

Kosteletzkya virginica

An attractive perennial that occurs in brackish waters and sometimes freshwater. Its long blooming period can extend from May into October. During that time, showy flowers reminiscent of hibiscus blooms appear in shades ranging from deep pink to whitish. A versatile ornamental plant, seashore mallow — also known as Virginia saltmarsh mallow — is a valuable addition to rain and pollinator gardens. Indeed, it attracts a number of butterflies and other insects, as well as the ruby-throated hummingbird. Seashore mallow also has multiple culinary applications. Its flowers are edible and can be eaten raw or used for tea. Leaves are used as a potherb, and the cooked root serves as a vegetable.



Bob Peterson, CC BY-NC 2.0

HIGHLIGHTS – ATTRACTS BIRDS & BUTTERFLIES
– POLLINATOR-FRIENDLY

LIGHT EXPOSURE – FULL SUN

SOIL – WET

HEIGHT & WIDTH – H: 2'- 4' W: 2'- 4'

BLOOM TIME – SUMMER TO AUTUMN

SALT TOLERANCE – MODERATE

ZONE – 6 - 9



Ray Mathews, LB/JWC



Ray Mathews, LB/JWC



Sally Andy Wasowski, LB/JWC



SPOTTED HORSEMINT

Monarda punctata

A short-lived perennial with aromatic leaves found in dunes and dry, sandy woods and fields. Purple dots speckle its pale yellow flowers, which emerge in mid-summer and grow in tight whorls at the top of the plant. Attractive lavender, pink or white leaf-like structures called bracts encircle the captivating blooms. The nectar and pollen attract hummingbirds, butterflies, honey bees, bumblebees, miner bees and plasterer bees. Spotted horsemint contains an essential oil called thymol, used as an antiseptic in some mouthwashes, and Native Americans drank tea made from its leaves to treat colds, fever and flu. Also known as bee balm, this plant is well-suited to various types of gardens, including cottage, container, herb and butterfly gardens. It is unpalatable to deer, rabbits and other herbivores.

HIGHLIGHTS – ATTRACTS BIRDS & BUTTERFLIES
 – DROUGHT-TOLERANT
 – POLLINATOR-FRIENDLY

LIGHT EXPOSURE – FULL SUN TO PART SHADE

SOIL – DRY TO MOIST

HEIGHT & WIDTH – H: 2'- 3' W: 2'- 3'

BLOOM TIME – SUMMER TO AUTUMN

SALT TOLERANCE – MODERATE

ZONE – 3 - 8



EASTERN SMOOTH BEARDTONGUE

Penstemon laevigatus

An early-blooming perennial found in woodlands and fields. Its flowers are white with a slight purplish tinge and appear in spring and early summer. The tubular blooms sport a hairy lower lip, hence the common name. The plant's semi-evergreen foliage stays attractive year-round. Eastern smooth beardtongue is a larval host of the common buckeye butterfly, and also attracts bees and hummingbirds. It is a prime choice for a butterfly or cottage garden. It does well in dry soils and is very drought-tolerant.



Eleanor, CC BY-NC 2.0

- HIGHLIGHTS** – ATTRACTS BIRDS & BUTTERFLIES
 – DROUGHT-TOLERANT
 – POLLINATOR-FRIENDLY

LIGHT EXPOSURE – FULL SUN TO PART SHADE

SOIL – DRY TO MOIST

HEIGHT & WIDTH – H: 1'- 3' W: 1'- 2'

BLOOM TIME – SPRING

SALT TOLERANCE – MODERATE

ZONE – 6 - 8



JC Raulston Arboretum



JC Raulston Arboretum



BLACK-EYED SUSAN

Rudbeckia hirta

A short-lived, herbaceous (non-woody), biennial wildflower found in fields and along banks and roadsides. Bright yellow florets with a brown, domed center mature in mid-summer and into autumn. Butterflies seek nectar from the flowers, and songbirds — particularly American goldfinches — eat the seeds in autumn. Black-eyed Susan tolerates drought and forgives gardener neglect.

HIGHLIGHTS – ATTRACTS BIRDS & BUTTERFLIES
 – DROUGHT-TOLERANT
 – POLLINATOR-FRIENDLY

LIGHT EXPOSURE – FULL SUN TO PART SHADE

SOIL – DRY TO MOIST

HEIGHT & WIDTH – H: 2'- 3' W: 2'- 3'

BLOOM TIME – SUMMER TO AUTUMN

SALT TOLERANCE – LOW

ZONE – 3 - 7



CALICO ASTER

Symphotrichum lateriflorum

A hardy, bushy perennial often found in understory woodland areas and meadows, along creek and river beds, and in wet depressions, although it tolerates a wide range of soil types. White or pale purple flowers envelop flower heads that first appear yellow, and later turn purplish-red. One plant may include both colors at the same time, hence the common name. Calico aster attracts a number of bee species and is a fitting addition to a woodland garden. It is also a larval host of pearl crescent butterflies. Its arching stems are well-suited to informal gardens.



Stephanie Brundage, LBJWC

HIGHLIGHTS – ATTRACTS BIRDS & BUTTERFLIES
– POLLINATOR-FRIENDLY

LIGHT EXPOSURE – FULL SUN TO PART SHADE

SOIL – DRY TO MOIST

HEIGHT & WIDTH – H: 2'- 3' W: 2'- 3'

BLOOM TIME – AUTUMN

SALT TOLERANCE – NONE

ZONE – 4 - 8



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