

## Gardener's Guidelines #1 Obtaining and Using Native Plants



Maryland Native Plant Society

## Gardener's Guidelines #1

The **Gardener's Guidelines Series** provide advice and information in the use of native plants in home gardens. They are available from the Society: visit the website or write for a copy.

GG #1 *Obtaining and Using Native Plants*  
GG #2 *Collecting Seeds from Native Plants*  
GG #3 *Using Native Plants to Attract Butterflies*

This series is designed to increase awareness of the diversity of native plants and their value to home gardeners. By offering these guidelines, we can protect Maryland's native flora while still enjoying their many benefits in the garden. These were adapted from guidelines by the Canadian Wildflower Society, now the North American Native Plant Society.

## Maryland Native Plant Society

The Maryland Native Plant Society uses education, research, and community service to increase awareness and appreciation of native plants and their habitats leading to their conservation and restoration.

Membership is open to all who are interested in Maryland's native plants and their habitats. Preserving Maryland's natural heritage, increasing knowledge about native plants, and helping to further the Society's mission are our goals.

The Maryland Native Plant Society sponsors monthly meetings, workshops, field trips, and an annual fall conference.

## Reference

The book "*The Gardener's Guide to Plant Conservation*," by Nina T. Marshall (©1993, World Wildlife Fund; ISBN: 0-89164-139-4) is an excellent guide to species that should not be purchased for the garden. Visit our web site at [www.mdflora.org](http://www.mdflora.org) to see an extensive bibliography on native plants.

*Artwork © Gary Pendleton*

# Guidelines for Obtaining and Using Native Plants

**Become a member of MNPS.  
Membership is for 12 months.  
We thank you for your support.**

If you would like to grow native plants, we encourage you to follow these recommendations. By doing so you will be helping to preserve Maryland's native flora in natural areas, while enjoying their many benefits in your own garden.

1. **DO NOT DISRUPT NATIVE PLANT COMMUNITIES** either in the wild or on your property.

2. Learn native plants *in situ*, by soil and moisture regime, and in the interplay of communities and associations.

3. Allow native soils, soil structure, and duff layer to remain rather than disturbing, amending, or "improving" soils for the purpose of making sites amenable to new plant species. Carefully treat disturbed soils, especially near structures or improvements, with the goal of returning soils and soil structure to match adjoining natural areas.

4. Obtain native plants from seed, garden or nursery. Buy only if certified by the vendors as "Nursery Propagated." Question ambiguous phrases such as "Nursery Grown" because they are almost certainly wild-collected plants. Become aware of the methods used for propagation by vendors. MNPS encourages propagation from seed rather than vegetative reproduction, to maintain species vigor and genetic diversity. Many vendors now propagate from local seed sources and we encourage you to support such efforts.

5. Orchids, trilliums, insectivorous plants, and other difficult or impossible-to-propagate species should not be purchased to plant in gardens because they are almost certainly wild-collected plants.

6. Promote the cultivation and propagation of bioregionally native plants as an educational and conservation measure to reinforce and spur on the preservation of natural habitat

7. Plant bioregionally native plant species in your garden, rather than naturalized or exotic species, or named clones. Naturalized or exotic species can escape to wild habitats, suffocating and inhibiting the growth and spread of native flora and fauna. Named clones often do not reflect the range of traits of bioregionally-native species, including wildlife value, and if widely planted, can change natural populations.

8. Begin by using plants and seeds of common species that have originated in your immediate bioregion. Plants and seeds of local origin are best adapted to the local climate, soil, predators, pollinators and disease. They also serve to familiarize others with the value and beauty of common species, communities and associations.

9. Give preference to natural means of fertilizing, weed and predator control rather than synthetic chemical means.

10. Plant native species attractive to native fauna, especially birds, butterflies and moths common to your bioregion.

11. State or federally rare, threatened or endangered plants should be collected or propagated only with a permit.

12. Transplant native flora from wild settings only when the plants of a given area are officially slated for destruction, e.g. road construction, subdivisions, pipelines, golf courses, etc. Obtain permission before removing wild flora.

13. Exercise extreme caution when studying and photographing wildflowers in order not to damage the surrounding flora and fauna.

14. Openly share your botanical knowledge with the public but ensure that native plant species or communities will not be damaged in the process.

Name 1 \_\_\_\_\_

Name 2 \_\_\_\_\_

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- Do not list me in membership directory.  
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**Please include me on the MNPS providers list as a:**

- native plant propagator, grower, or supplier  
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Comp. /Org. \_\_\_\_\_

**Membership Dues:**

- New       Renewal  
 \$15      Student / Limited Income  
 \$25      Individual  
 \$35      Double  
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**Please make checks payable to  
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