

# **About Native Plants**

To understand the terminology used let's define the word native and its antonym invasive. The official definition of native plants is: A native species is one that occurs naturally with respect to a particular ecosystem, rather than as a result of an accidental or deliberate introduction into that ecosystem by humans. The official definition of an invasive plant is: An invasive species is a species that is not native to a specific location (an introduced species), and that has a tendency to spread to a degree believed to cause damage to the environment, human economy or human health.

Native plants form what is called plant communities (a number of plants species within a designated geographical unit) as well as biological interactions (when plant species depend on each other to survive). They also are specific to the environment to which they are originally from (to where they are native). Examples of environments are extreme heat, cold and even frequent wildfires.

There are many reasons why one should plant native plants instead of invasive plants. Whether one is gardening in their backyard or undertaking a huge project of environmental reconstruction, planting native plants is better for everyone. Bowker Creek is the perfect example of how we are starting to rebuild the native plants natural habitat. Below are the most important reasons why planting native plants are better for the Earth.

Native plants supply many needs for the wildlife population in the area. An important need is food, which makes it way around the food-web. A great example of this is how insects feed on the native plants and then the birds eat the high protein insects. If you are a bird watcher, planting native plants is a great way to view all types of birds! If there were no native plants in an area and only invasive plants then all the local wildlife would disappear and all the introduced species of animals will move in. This exact situation has happened before then milkweed started disappearing the monarch butterfly caterpillar also started decreasing in population. Native plants also do not require as much care as ornamentals, because they are better suited for the environment. When you plant native plants, even by just planting a few you are making a huge difference. This is because each plant acts as a source of seeds, which are spread by the waterways and winds to help spread that species of plant.

Native plants are naturally beautiful to the area in which they belong. So, when given the chance make sure that you plant native species and not invasive species!

