**Recommended Native Plants for River Friendly Gardens**

Wherever your property is in the watershed, your landscape affects stream quality and flow. Lawns and pavements let runoff flow more quickly and in higher volumes than natural vegetation. Wherever your property is in the watershed, your landscape affects stream quality and flow. Lawns and pavements let runoff flow more quickly and in higher volumes than natural vegetation. Use this list to begin selecting native plants that do well in most of our gardens and are not difficult to grow. However a garden planted with diverse native plants can mimic natural woodlands and reduce runoff while beautifying your property, supporting healthy streams, improving habitat, and increasing infiltration to replenish groundwater.

**Key:**
- **Light:** SU = full sun; PS = part shade; SH = shade
- **Moisture:** D = dry; M = moist; W = wet

### Grasses

- **Aristida rubens** - Early fall color; adaptable; high wildlife value
  - Light: SU, PS  -  Moisture: D, M, W  -  Height: 2'-3'

- **Arrhenatherum elatius** - pink nutty grass
  - Light: SU - Moisture: D, M - Height: 1'-3'; seed heads to 3'
  - Spreading, tolerates very low ph, deer resistant

- **Sporobolus heterolepis** - prairie-dropped
  - Light: S - Moisture: D - Height: 1'-2'; seed heads to 3'
  - Drought tolerant, deer resistant

### Ferns

- **Dryopteris intermedia** - blue shield
  - Light: SU, PS, SH  -  Moisture: D, M, W  -  Height: 40'-60'
  - Adaptable; high wildlife value

- **Osmunda regalis** - southern oak fern, bigwood fern
  - Light: SU, PS  -  Moisture: M, W  -  Height: 0.5'-1.5'

### Herbaceous Perennials

- **Cornus sericea** - Adaptable; high wildlife value
  - Light: SU, PS  -  Moisture: M, W  -  Height: 5'-9'

- **Iris versicolor** - Spring bloom; southern US native; forms large clumps
  - Light: SU, PS  -  Moisture: M, W, -  Height: 1'-3'

- **Amsonia tabernaemontana** - Adaptable; high wildlife value
  - Light: SU, PS  -  Moisture: M, W  -  Height: 5'-9'

### Shrubs and Vines

- **Amelanchier arborea** - Red fall color; bank stabilizer; deer resistant
  - Light: SU, PS  -  Moisture: D, M, W  -  Height: 6'-12'

- **Photinia pyrifolia** - Red winter stems; white berries; high wildlife value
  - Light: SU, PS, SH  -  Moisture: D, M  -  Height: 6'-7'

- **Hydrangea quercifolia** - Attracts hummingbirds; many varieties
  - Light: SU, PS  -  Moisture: D, M  -  Height: 2'-4'

### Trees

- **Carya alba** - Adaptable; high wildlife value
  - Light: SU, PS, SH  -  Moisture: D, M, W  -  Height: 60'-100'

- **Magnolia grandiflora** - Fragrant June bloom; drought tolerant when established
  - Light: SU, PS, SH  -  Moisture: D, M, W  -  Height: 20'-35'

- **Celtis occidentalis** - eastern boxelder
  - Light: SU, PS  -  Moisture: D, M, W  -  Height: 20'-35'
  - Very early bloom; yellow fall color; thrive in high soil ph

- **Sorbus americana** - southern arrowwood
  - Light: SU, PS  -  Moisture: D, M  -  Height: 12'-30'
  - Fragrant late bloom; drought tolerant when established

- **Amelanchier x grandiflora** - prairie dropseed
  - Light: SU, PS - Moisture: D, M - Height: 30'-70'
  - Fragrant late bloom; drought tolerant when established

- **Sporobolus heterolepis** - prairie-dropped
  - Light: S - Moisture: D - Height: 1'-2'; seed heads to 3'
  - Drought tolerant, deer resistant

- **Atriplex medusa** - blue wild indigo
  - Light: SU, PS - Moisture: D, M - Height: 2'-4'
  - Blue flowered varieties available; use as groundcover

- **Ilex verticillata** - Late spring bloom; spreads; smaller cultivars available
  - Light: SU, PS, SH  -  Moisture: D, M  -  Height: 6'-7'

- **Viburnum dentatum** - Late spring bloom; spreads; smaller cultivars available
  - Light: SU, PS, SH  -  Moisture: D, M  -  Height: 6'-7'

- **Hydrangea arborescens** - Late spring bloom; shrub-like form
  - Light: SU, PS  -  Moisture: D, M  -  Height: 1'-3'
  - Drought tolerant, deer resistant

- **Geranium obvallatum** - southern redbud
  - Light: SU, PS  -  Moisture: D, M, W  -  Height: 30'-50'
  - Oakleaf hydrangea

- **Prunus serotina** - Red cherry; adaptable; high wildlife value
  - Light: SU, PS  -  Moisture: M, W  -  Height: 15'-30'

- **Fagus grandifolia** - Red spring flowers; adaptable; high wildlife value
  - Light: SU, PS, SH  -  Moisture: D, M, W  -  Height: 40'-60'

- **Amelanchier arborea** - Red fall color; red fruit; high wildlife value
  - Light: SU, PS  -  Moisture: D, M  -  Height: 20'-40'

- **Quercus coccinea** - Red fall color; red fruit; high wildlife value
  - Light: SU, PS  -  Moisture: D, M  -  Height: 20'-40'

- **Betula nigra** - Spreads; deer resistant
  - Light: PS, SH  -  Moisture: M  -  Height: 3'-6'

### Photo Credits


- Delaware Riverkeeper Network
- Bristol, PA 19007
- Delaware Riverkeeper Network
- www.delawareriverkeeper.org

**River Friendly Gardens**