

Recommended Native Plants for Landscaping in Pennsylvania

The species on this list are native plants suggested for landscaping in Pennsylvania. They have been selected because they tend to grow widely throughout the state; they are common and will likely do well if matched to their preferred growing conditions. By definition, none of these plants are rare, endangered, threatened, or extinct in the state. These plants are also commonly cultivated and used in horticulture; they should be available for purchase and should perform well in garden conditions;

Common Name: since there often are many common names for the same plant, these species are arranged alphabetically by scientific name.

Scientific Name: Scientific name from Rhoads and Klein, 1993, *The Vascular Flora of Pennsylvania* (see resource list).

Zone Preference: Pennsylvania is generally divided into two horticultural zones: **USDA zone 5** in the northern half of the state and higher elevations where the average minimum temperature may reach -10 to -20F. **USDA Zone 6** is in the southern half of the state and lower elevations where the average coldest temperature is 0 to -10F. An X in the zone 6 column means that a plant grows fairly widely through that zone where minimums are 0 to -10F; if there is an X in both Zone columns, it means that the plant grows throughout the whole state in both temperature zones. If there is a dash (-), the plant grows partially in that zone, but not throughout the area.

Caution: Edible and herbal uses should be carefully researched as these notes are not an endorsement or recommendation.

Herbaceous Perennials

	Common Name	Scientific Name	Zone Preference		Bloom Period	Bloom Color	Light Preference			Moisture Preference			Height In Feet	Notes
			5	6			Sun	Med	Shade	Wet	Moist	Dry		
Showy Flowers	Dolls eyes	<i>Actaea pachypoda</i>	X	--	Apr-Jun	white							1-3	Interesting berries
	Wild columbine	<i>Aquilegia canadensis</i>	X	X	Apr-Jun	red and yellow							1-3	Commonly cultivated; spreads by seed; hummingbirds
	Jack-in-the-pulpit	<i>Arisaema triphyllum</i>	X	X	Apr-Jun	green-purple							1-3	Unusual flower; bright red berries
	Wild ginger	<i>Asarum canadense</i>	X	X	Apr-May	maroon							<1	Edible and herbal uses
	Swamp milkweed	<i>Asclepias incarnata</i>	--	X	Jul-Aug	rose							2-4	Butterfly plant; needs wet-moist soil
	Common milkweed	<i>Asclepias syriaca</i>	X	X	Jun-Aug	pink							2-6	Butterfly plant; interesting seed pods
	Butterfly-weed	<i>Asclepias tuberosa</i>	--	X	May-Sep	orange							1-3	Butterfly plant; tolerates dry conditions; taproot
	New England aster	<i>Aster novae-angliae</i>	--	X	Aug-Oct	purple							2-6	Showy and frequently cultivated
	Turtlehead	<i>Chelone glabra</i>	X	X	Jul-Sep	whitish							1-3	Tolerates wet; strong grower; herbal uses; hummingbirds
	Joe-Pye weed	<i>Eupatorium fistulosum</i>	--	X	Aug-Sep	purple							3-6	Good for insects in the garden; herbal uses
	White snakeroot	<i>Eupatorium rugosum</i>	--	X	Jul-Oct	white							2-3	Tough plant; can grow in dry shade; cultivars available
	Gaura	<i>Gaura biennis</i>	X	X	Jul-Sep	white							1-6	Attractive flowers
	Wood geranium	<i>Geranium maculatum</i>	X	X	Apr-Jul	rose							1-2	Adaptable plant; long bloom time; spreader; herbal uses
	Common sneezeweed	<i>Helenium autumnale</i>	--	X	Aug-Oct	yellow							2-6	Tolerates wet areas; showy flowers; herbal uses
	Sunflowers	<i>Helianthus sp.</i>	--	X	Jul-Sep	yellow							4-6	Perennials; often aggressive; showy flowers; good for birds
	Oxeye sunflower	<i>Helopsis helianthoides</i>	--	X	Jul-Sep	yellow							1-5	Long bloom time; butterfly plant
	Alum-root	<i>Heuchera americana</i>	X	X	May-Aug	greenish							1-2	Long bloom time; many cultivars and hybrids
	Cardinal flower	<i>Lobelia cardinalis</i>	--	X	Jul-Sep	scarlet							2-5	Long bloom time; butterfly and hummingbird plant
	Great blue lobelia	<i>Lobelia siphilitica</i>	--	X	Jul-Oct	blue							1-3	Long bloom time; white cultivars; hummingbirds
	Monkey-flower	<i>Minutula ringens</i>	X	X	Jul-Sep	violet							2-3	Grows in moist places; interesting flowers
	Partridge-berry	<i>Mitchella repens</i>	X	X	Jun-Jul	white							<1	Evergreen; ground cover; berry edible and showy
	Bee-balm	<i>Monarda didyma</i>	X	--	Jul-Aug	red							2-5	Showy flowers; aromatic; butterfly plant; herbal uses
	Bee-balm	<i>Monarda fistulosa</i>	--	--	Jul-Aug	violet							2-5	Aromatic; tolerates dry soils; herbal uses
	Sundrops	<i>Oenothera fruticosa</i>	--	X	Jun-Sep	yellow							1-3	Bright flowers; long bloom time
	Sundrops	<i>Oenothera perennis</i>	X	X	Jun-Aug	yellow							1-2	Bright flowers; long bloom time
	Beard-tongue	<i>Penstemon digitalis</i>	--	X	May-Jul	white							2-5	Colored cultivars; hummingbirds
	Phlox	<i>Phlox divaricata</i>	--	--	May-Jun	lilac							1-2	Aromatic; butterflies
	Phlox	<i>Phlox maculata</i>	--	X	Jun-Sep	purple							1-3	Aromatic; showy flowers; butterflies
	Phlox	<i>Phlox paniculata</i>	--	X	Jul-Oct	pink							2-5	Aromatic; showy flowers; butterflies
	May-apple	<i>Podophyllum peltatum</i>	--	X	May	white							1-2	Ground cover; edible fruit; mottled foliage
	Spreading Jacob's ladder	<i>Polemonium reptans</i>	--	--	Apr-Jun	blue							1-2	Attractive flowers; slow spreader; herbal uses
	Solomon's seal	<i>Polygonatum pubescens</i>	--	X	Apr-Jun	yellow							1-3	Not fussy; blue berries; herbal and edible uses
	Black-eyed Susan	<i>Rudbeckia hirta</i>	X	X	May-Sep	orange							2-3	Bright daisy-like flowers; long bloom time; many cultivars
	Cutleaf coneflower	<i>Rudbeckia laciniata</i>	X	X	Jul-Sep	yellow							2-6	Tall daisy; tolerates wet soil; herbal
	Bloodroot	<i>Sanguinaria canadensis</i>	--	X	Mar-May	white							<1	Red juice; herbal uses
	Golden ragwort	<i>Senecio aureus</i>	--	X	May-Jul	yellow							1-2	Wetland plant; long bloom time; early daisy-like flowers
	False Solomon's seal	<i>Smilacina racemosa</i>	X	X	May-Jul	white							1-2	Flume like flower; red berries; herbal uses
	Winkie-leaf goldenrod	<i>Solidago rugosa</i>	X	X	Jul-Nov	yellow							2-6	Aggressive; tough plant; butterflies
	Nodding ladies-tresses	<i>Spiranthes cernua</i>	--	--	Aug-Oct	white							1-2	Likes moist, acid soil; orchid flowers; herbal uses
	Tall meadow-rue	<i>Thalictrum pubescens</i>	X	X	May-Jun	white							2-8	Wet to moist soil; tall plant; delicate flowers
	Foamflower	<i>Tiarella cordifolia</i>	X	--	Apr-Jul	white							<1	Attractive, long-blooming flower; many cultivars
	Tillium	<i>Tillium grandiflorum</i>	--	--	Apr-Jun	white							1-2	Showy flowers; common in western PA
	Blue vervain	<i>Verbena hastata</i>	X	X	Jun-Sep	blue							2-5	Wet-moist soils; bright flowers; herbal uses
	New York ironweed	<i>Veronica noveboracensis</i>	--	X	Jul-Sep	purple							3-6	Tall plant of wet-moist soils; brilliant flowers
	American dog violet	<i>Viola canpersa</i>	--	X	Apr-May	violet							<1	Delicate plant and flower; edible
Common blue violet	<i>Viola sororia</i>	--	X	Apr-May	violet							<1	Delicate plant and flower; edible	
Golden-Alexanders	<i>Zizia aurea</i>	--	--	Apr-Jun	gold							1-2	Not fussy; attracts good insects	
Grasses	Big bluestem	<i>Andropogon gerardii</i>	--	--	Jun-Sep								3-5	Clump forming; attractive, with winter interest
	Lurid sedge	<i>Carex lurida</i>	X	X	Jun-Oct								1-2	Wetland plant; interesting seeds
	Bottlebrush grass	<i>Elymus hystrix</i>	--	X	Jun-Aug								2-4	Grass which grows in shade
	Riverbank wild-rye	<i>Elymus riparius</i>	X	X	Jul-Sep								3-5	Good for streambank conditions
	Virginia wild-rye	<i>Elymus virginicus</i>	X	X	Jul-Sep								2-4	Grass which tolerates a wide range of conditions
	Switch grass	<i>Panicum virgatum</i>	--	--	Aug-Sep								3-6	Clump grass; can help control erosion
	Little bluestem	<i>Schizachyrium scoparium</i>	--	X	Jul-Sep								2-4	Clump grass; tolerates poor soil; winter interest
Indian grass	<i>Sorghastrum nutans</i>	--	--	Aug-Sep								3-6	Clump grass; tall with beautiful flowers	
Ferns	Maidenhair fern	<i>Adiantum pedatum</i>	X	X									1-2	Grows in clumps; delicate texture; herbal uses
	Evergreen shield fern	<i>Dryopteris marginalis</i>	X	X									1-3	Evergreen; clump-former; attractive
	Interrupted fern	<i>Osmunda claytoniana</i>	X	X									2-4	Grows in clumps; distinctive fronds
	Christmas fern	<i>Polystichum acrostichoides</i>	X	X									1-2	Evergreen; grows in clumps

Woody Plants

	Common Name	Scientific Name	Zone Preference		Bloom Period	Wildlife Value	Light Preference			Moisture Preference			Height In Feet	Notes
			5	6			Sun	Med	Shade	Wet	Moist	Dry		
Medium to Large Trees	Red maple	<i>Acer rubrum</i>	X	X	Mar-Apr	very high							40-60	Red flowers; adaptable; fall color
	Sugar maple	<i>Acer saccharum</i>	X	X	Apr-May	very high							60-75	Yellow flowers in spring; fall color; maple syrup
	Yellow birch	<i>Betula alleghaniensis</i>	X	--	Apr-May	very high							60-80	Catkins in winter
	Black birch	<i>Betula lenta</i>	--	--	Apr-May	very high							45-55	Catkins in winter
	River birch	<i>Betula nigra</i>	--	--	Apr-May	very high							60-80	Catkins; striking bark; grows in eastern & central PA
	American beech	<i>Fagus grandifolia</i>	X	X	Apr-May	high							50-70	Beautiful tree; edible nuts; attractive bark
	White ash	<i>Fraxinus americana</i>	--	X	Apr-May	intermediate							50-80	Fast growth; fall color
	Green ash	<i>Fraxinus pennsylvanica</i>	--	--	Apr-May	intermediate							30-50	Fast growth; fall color
	Tulip poplar	<i>Liriodendron tulipifera</i>	--	X	May-Jun	intermediate							75-100	Green flowers in early summer; fast growth
	Black-gum	<i>Nyssa sylvatica</i>	--	X	Apr-May	high							30-60	Outstanding fall color
	Eastern white pine	<i>Pinus strobus</i>	X	X		very high							50-80	Evergreen conifer
	Sycamore	<i>Platanus occidentalis</i>	--	--	Apr-May	low							75-100	Showy bark; drops fruits
	White oak	<i>Quercus alba</i>	--	X	Mar-May	very high							50-100	Edible nuts; majestic
	Chesnut Oak	<i>Quercus montana</i>	--	X	May-Jun	very high							40-75	Fall color; nuts attractive to wildlife
	Pin Oak	<i>Quercus palustris</i>	X	X	Apr-May	very high							60-70	Common ornamental street trees; fall color
Red Oak	<i>Quercus rubra</i>	X	X	Apr-May	very high							60-80	Hardy and long-lived tree; fall color	
Sassafras	<i>Sassafras albidum</i>	--	X	April	high							30-50	Edible and medicinal uses; fall color	
Basswood	<i>Tilia americana</i>	X	X	May-Jun	very low							60-80	Flowers aromatic; with herbal uses; multiple trunks	
Canada hemlock	<i>Tsuga canadensis</i>	X	X		high							40-70	Evergreen conifer; PA state tree	
Small Trees and Shrubs	Smooth alder	<i>Alnus serrulata</i>	--	X	Mar-Apr	high							6-10	Yellow catkins; multi-stemmed; needs wet soil
	Serviceberry	<i>Amelanchier alba</i>	--	X	Mar-May	high							15-25	White flowers in spring; edible berries; fall color
	Black chokeberry	<i>Aronia melanocarpa</i>	--	--	Mar-Jul	intermediate							3-6	White flowers; multi-stemmed; berries; fall color
	New Jersey tea	<i>Ceanothus americanus</i>	--	X	May-Sep	intermediate							<3	White flowers; multi-stemmed; tough; fixes nitrogen
	Buttonbush	<i>Cephalanthus occidentalis</i>	--	X	Jun-Sep	intermediate							6-15	White flowers; multi-stemmed; interesting fruit
	Redbud	<i>Cercis canadensis</i>	--	--	April	very low							20-35	Purple flowers in spring; fixes nitrogen
	Alternate-leaved dogwood	<i>Cornus alternifolia</i>	X	X	May-Jun	very high							15-25	White flowers in early summer; blue berries
	Silky dogwood	<i>Cornus amomum</i>	--	X	May-Jul	very high							6-12	White flowers in summer; blue berries; multi-stemmed
	Flowering dogwood	<i>Cornus florida</i>	--	X	Apr-Jun	very high							10-30	White bracts in spring; red berries; diseases
	Witch-hazel	<i>Hamamelis virginiana</i>	X	X	Sep-Nov	low							20-30	Yellow flowers; multi-stemmed; fragrant; medicinal
	Wild hydrangea	<i>Hydrangea arborescens</i>	--	X	Jun-Jul	low							3-5	White blooms in mid-summer; multi-stemmed
	Wineberry	<i>Ilex verticillata</i>	--	X	May-Jun	high							6-10	Showy berries in winter; multi-stemmed
	Mountain laurel	<i>Kalmia latifolia</i>	--	X	May-Jul	very low							7-15	White fl.; evergreen; multi-stemmed; PA state flower
	Spicebush	<i>Lindera benzoin</i>	--	X	Mar-May	high							6-12	Berries and foliage in fall; multi-stemmed; herbal uses
	Ninebark	<i>Physocarpus opulifolius</i>	--	X	May-Jul	intermediate							5-10	Pink flowers; papery bark; multi-stemmed
	Wild plum	<i>Prunus americana</i>	--	X	Apr-May	high							15-25	White flowers; edible fruit; multi-stemmed
	Rosebay	<i>Rhododendron maximum</i>	--	--	Jun-Jul	very low							10-30	Rose flowers; evergreen; multi-stemmed
	Pinxter-flower	<i>Rhododendron periclymenoides</i>	--	X	May-Jun	low							4-8	White-pink flowers; multi-stemmed
	Black willow	<i>Salix nigra</i>	--	X	Apr-May	intermediate							30-50	Catkins in spring; needs wet to moist soil
	Silky willow	<i>Salix sericea</i>	X	X	May	intermediate							<12	Catkins; needs wet conditions; multi-stemmed
	Elderberry	<i>Sambucus canadensis</i>	X	X	Jun-Jul	very high							5-15	White fl.; multi-stemmed; edible berries & flowers
	Lowbush blueberry													