

# Native Plants

*All organisms that have occurred, now occur or may occur through natural processes.*

Before we can plan a native plants project, we must define “**native**”.

Each ecosystem has its own distinct set of native species. Only plants here **before European colonization** can be considered native.

Was it here at the time of colonization? Yes, it's native.

Did it appear later but by natural means, IE: wind, birds etc? Yes, it's native.

Did a human bring it here? If not for humans, would it not be here? Not native.

*A native species is a plant currently living in an area due to naturally occurring acts without human involvement.*

**Human are seperated from nature. Both definitions discount native Americans who did manipulate their environments. Our benchmark is European colonization.**

Native must be geographically qualified.

Native east of the Mississippi

Native to West Virginia

Native to the county

Native to woodland edges in Marion County, West Virginia, but only on north facing slopes where soils are moist but well drained.

This level of detail is necessary for choosing plants for a project.

**Non native** is any plant that grows where they don't naturally exist. They may have been well intentioned by humans or accidentally introduced. Examples: dandelions, Queens Anne Lace, crabgrass, Tree of Heaven.

**Invasive** causes harm to the environment ...Bradford pear, Garlic mustard,barberry, autumn olive.....because they push out native plants and destroy ecosystems.

### **How all this affects us in our project planning.**

1. Be very specific in your goals.
2. Be very specific in your geography and climatology

### **Why use natives?**

They are:

Adapted to your local conditions

Birds and insects are adapted to them and are in declining numbers that need and deserve our support.

Native plants are much better at nourishing the soil and preventing erosion.

Biodeversity makes an ecosystem much less likely to decline or crash.

Natives require less added resources,ie: fertilizers and water to thrive.

### **Natives are a WIN-WIN for our environment.**

All definitions are from the National Park Service and WVU School of Forestry and Department of Agriculture