



Balsam Fir

Abies balsamea

This native fir is an easy-to-grow tree, known for its blue-green foliage and evergreen aroma. The narrow, pyramid shape makes it a natural choice for windbreaks. It requires almost no care when used as a hedge or screen, only occasional waterings. And single trees soften house corners.

Mature Size:

A large evergreen tree reaching 50 to 75 feet high and 20-25 feet wide. Older trees develop an oval habit with lateral branches that start relatively low to the ground.

Growth Speed: Moderate Growth Rate

This tree grows at a slow rate, increasing at about one foot each year. They will reach their mature size anywhere from 15 to 30 years.

Sun Preference

It does well in full or partial sunlight. Newly started trees prefer sheltered area for the first year of growth.

Soil Preference

Prefers a dry, loose, sandy soil with a low pH in full sun. Water consistently and slowly.

Attributes

- Grows in a pyramidal shape.
- Develops blisters of resin (balsam) along the trunk.
- Long, dark, 1 inch needles in pairs, with blunt tips.

Wildlife Value

The seeds and buds are food for birds including grouse, squirrels, mice and voles. Moose and white-tailed deer use the balsam fir for food, cover and shelter. The bark is browsed by black bears. Beavers occasionally use the wood for dam building.



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Eastern White Pine

Pinus strobus

Eastern white pine forests originally covered much of north-central and northeastern North America. Only one percent of the old-growth forests remain after the extensive logging operations of the 18th century to early 20th century. Mature trees are often 200–250 years old, and some live to over 400 years. The Native American Haudenosaunee denominated it the “Tree of Peace”.

Mature Size:

The eastern white pine grows to a height of 50–80’ and a spread of 20–40’ at maturity.

Growth Speed: Fast Growth Rate

This tree grows at a fast rate, with height increases of more than 24” per year.

Sun Preference:

Full sun and partial shade are best for this tree. It prefers a minimum of four hours of direct, unfiltered sunlight each day.

Soil Preference:

The eastern white pine grows in acidic, moist, well-drained and dry soils. While it does best in moist soil, the tree can have been known to tolerate everything from dry, rocky ridges to bogs.

Attributes:

- Grows in an oval, pyramidal shape. Transplants easily.
- Is sensitive to air pollution, road salt and soil compaction.

Wildlife Value:

Eastern white pine seeds are favored by black bears, rabbits, red squirrels and many birds, especially red crossbills. While potentially damaging to the trees, the bark is eaten by mammals such as beavers, snowshoe hares, porcupines, rabbits and mice. White pines provide nesting sites as well for many birds including woodpeckers, common grackles, mourning doves, chickadees and nuthatches.



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White Spruce

Picea glauca

A straight, tall tree easily recognized by its needles. Cones always hang down. Beautiful year-round color.

Mature Size:

The white spruce grows to a height of 40–60' and a spread of 10–20' at maturity.

Growth Speed: Medium Growth Rate

This tree grows at a medium rate, with height increases of 13–24" per year.

Sun Preference:

Full sun is the ideal condition for this tree, meaning it should get at least six hours of direct, unfiltered sunlight each day.

Soil Preference:

The white spruce grows in acidic, loamy, moist, sandy, well-drained and clay soils. It has some drought tolerance.

Attributes:

- Transplants readily.
- Can withstand wind, heat, cold, drought, crowding and some shade.
- Works well in cities and rural windbreaks.

Wildlife Value:

Besides providing nesting sites and shelter, white spruces provide food for many kinds of wildlife. Crossbills, evening grosbeaks and red-breasted nuthatches prefer the seeds. The foliage is eaten by grouse, rabbits and deer. Red squirrels cut open cones to eat the seeds, and they feast upon young, tender spruce shoots. The bark is enjoyed by both porcupines and black bears, sometimes to the detriment of the trees.



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New England Aster

Symphiotrichum novae-angliae

Symphiotrichum novae-angliae, commonly called New England aster, is a native perennial which occurs in moist prairies, meadows, thickets, low valleys and stream banks. It is a stout, leafy plant typically growing 3-6' tall with a robust, upright habit. Features a profuse bloom of daisy-like asters (to 1.5" diameter) with purple rays and yellow centers from late summer to early fall. Rough, hairy, lance-shaped leaves (to 4" long) clasp stiff, hairy stems. Flowers are attractive to butterflies.



Common Name: New England aster

Type: Herbaceous perennial

Family: Asteraceae

Zone: 4 to 8

Height: 3-6 feet

Bloom Time: August to September

Bloom Description: Deep pink-purple

Sun: Full sun

Water: Medium

Maintenance: Medium

Suggested Use: Naturalize, Rain Garden

Flower: Showy, Good Cut

Attracts: Butterflies and bees

Culture: Easily grown in medium, well-drained soil. Prefers moist, rich soils. Good air circulation helps reduce incidence of foliar diseases. Pinching back stems several times before mid-July will help control plant height, promote bushiness and perhaps obviate the need for staking. Pinching back will also delay flowering.

Uses: Effective naturalized in drifts in meadows or in native or wildflower gardens.

Of Note: Susceptible to powdery mildew. Aster wilt can also be an occasional problem, particularly if plants are grown in poorly-drained clay soils.



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Golden Alexander

(*Zuzua aurea*)

Zizia aurea, commonly called golden Alexander, is a native perennial which occurs most often in small colonies in moist woods and meadows, thickets, glades and prairies. Features flat-topped clusters (compound umbels) of tiny yellow flowers in late spring atop stems growing to 3' tall. Distinguished from other carrot family members by the absence of a flower stalk on the central flower of each umbel. Both basal and stem leaves are compound biternate with toothed leaflets. The similar *Zizia aptera* has simple, heart-shaped basal leaves.



Common Name: Golden Alexander

Type: Herbaceous perennial

Family: Apiaceae

Native Range: Eastern Canada to southern United States

Zone: 3 to 8

Height: 1.50 to 3.00 feet

Spread: 1.50 to 2.00 feet

Bloom Time: May to June

Bloom Description: Yellow

Sun: Full sun to part shade

Water: Medium

Maintenance: Medium

Suggested Use: Naturalize, Rain Garden

Flower: Showy, Good Cut

Attracts: Butterflies

Garden locations: Grows best in the full sun; in pine woods, in mixed hardwood forests, in sandhills, and roadside banks.

Uses: Best massed in open woodland or prairie areas, wild or native plant gardens.

Of Note: No serious insect or disease problems. Foliage tends to depreciate as the summer progresses. In ideal conditions can reseed heavily.



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Common Ironweed

Vernonia fasciculata

Vernonia fasciculata, is a Wisconsin native plant named for its tough stem, Ironweed has excellent upright form in the garden. The intense purple bloom color stands out in the late summer landscape, attracting many butterflies and other pollinators. While this tall stately plant occurs naturally in moist soils and tolerates brief flooding, it grows equally well in average garden soils. The plant height may be reduced by cutting-back the stems in late spring. Ironweed can be an aggressive spreader by seed and may not be suitable for smaller settings, but is very effective in background borders, cottage gardens, rain gardens and wildflower meadows.



Common Name: Ironweed

Type: *Vernonia fasciculata*

Family: Asteraceae

Native Range: Southeast US

Zone: 3 to 7

Height: 4.00 to 6.00 feet

Spread: Far

Bloom Time: July to September

Bloom Description: Purple

Sun: Full sun

Water: Medium

Maintenance: Low

Flower: Showy

Attracts: Butterflies

Tolerate: Drought, Clay Soil

Garden locations

Grows best in the full sun; in pine woods, in mixed hardwood forests, in sandhills, and roadside banks.



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Marsh Blazing Star

(*Liatris spicata*)

Liatris spicata, commonly known as blazing star, dense blazing star, or marsh blazing star, is a tall, upright, clump-forming perennial native to moist low grounds, meadows, and marsh margins in the Eastern United States. In Missouri, it's only been found in Oregon County near the Arkansas border. It typically grows 2–4 feet tall in cultivation, but can reach up to 6 feet in native habitats. It produces tall spikes (6–12") of fluffy, red-purple flower heads that attract hummingbirds, butterflies, and other pollinators. The small seeds also appeal to songbirds.



Common Name: Blazing Star

Type: Herbaceous perennial

Family: Asteraceae

Native Range: Eastern United States

Zone: 3 to 8

Height: 2 to 4 feet

Spread: 0.75–1.5 feet

Bloom Time: July to August

Bloom Description: Red-purple, fluffy flower heads on tall stalks

Sun: Full sun

Water: Medium

Maintenance: Low

Suggested Use: Pollinator Garden, Rain Garden

Flower: Showy, Good Cut, Good Dried

Attracts: Birds, Hummingbirds, Butterflies

Garden locations: Commonly featured in native plant gardens, prairie restorations, and public rain garden displays throughout its native range.

Uses: Adds vertical interest to rain gardens and native plantings. Excellent for pollinator support and late-summer color.

Of Note: Belongs to the aster family, but produces only disk flowers (no ray flowers). Popular cultivar *L. spicata* 'Kobold' offers a more compact, easily managed form.



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