

Container-Friendly Native Plants

For Barnstable County & Cape Cod



Growing plants native to the Northeast and Cape Cod is a great way to support local wildlife and the environment, even if you don't have room or permission to grow them in the ground. Local species are hardy to our climate and many smaller species can be grown in patio containers.

Milkweed (*Asclepias* spp.)

Best known as the perennial required host plant for monarch butterflies and as attractive pollinator plants, various milkweed species also provide services for beneficial predatory insects and their prey.

Swamp Milkweed

(*Asclepias incarnata*)

Full sun, 3-5 feet tall
Blooms June - October
(light pink to light purple)

Food source for monarch butterfly, bees, hummingbirds
Crucial host plant for monarch caterpillars



Whorled Milkweed

(*Asclepias verticillata*)

Full Sun to Partial,
1-2 feet tall
Medium to dry soils
Blooms July & August

Attracts monarch butterflies to lay eggs,
Flowers attract other pollinators



Butterfly Weed

(*Asclepias tuberosa*)

Full sun, 1-2 feet tall & wide
Soils: Poor, well-drained
Blooms June, July, August
(Orange to yellow)

Host plant for the monarch butterfly caterpillar
Offers nectar for hummingbirds, bumble bees, and other insects



Common Milkweed

(*Asclepias syriaca*)

Full sun to part shade, 3-4 feet tall
Well-drained sandy soils
Blooms June-August (Pink to purple)
Size: 3-4 feet in height

Attracts a variety of insects including Milkweed Bugs and Oleander Aphids that don't hurt the plant.
Host plant for the caterpillars of the Monarch Butterfly and the Tussock Moth.



Clasping Milkweed

(*Asclepias amplexicaulis*)

Full Sun, Average to dry soil, 1-2ft high & wide
Blooms May-June (Purple to rose with green)

Special value to bumble bees
Supports other insects that are predators of pest insects
Host to monarch butterflies



Aster (*Symphyotrichum* spp., *Eurybia* spp.)

Asters appeal to both pollinators and seed-eating species as well as various caterpillars. Cape Cod is home to many aster species suited to different lights and soils for fall blooms.

New England Aster

(*Symphyotrichum novae-angliae*)

Sun-Part Shade, Average to moist soil,
3-4 feet tall; Blooms August-September
(deep violet to pink)

Supports pollinators in late
summer & fall when they
need sustenance most,
seeds feed small
mammals and songbirds.
Host plant for the
caterpillars of the Pearl
Crescent.
Supports bee specialists in
the Adrena genus



Blue Wood Aster

(*Symphyotrichum cordifolium*)

Full sun to partial shade, 2-4 feet tall,
1-2 feet wide; Blooms August-October

Late season food
source for bees and
butterflies. Host
plant for the Pearl
Crescent butterfly.
Songbirds and
small mammals eat
the seeds.



New York Aster

(*Symphyotrichum novi-belgii*)

Sun-Part Shade, 2-4 feet tall,
1-2 feet wide
Blooms July-October

Host plant for Pearl
Crescent Butterfly,
important late-season
food source for
pollinators and seed
source for songbirds.



White Heath Aster

(*Symphyotrichum ericoides*)

Part Shade to Shade
1-2 feet tall
Blooms August-September

Host plant for the
caterpillar stage of the
Pearl Crescent and
Checkerspot
butterflies, provides
nectar for pollinators.



Aromatic Aster

(*Symphyotrichum oblongifolium*)

Full Sun, 2 feet tall
Blooms September-November

Highly resistant to deer and rabbits
A favorite for butterflies and bees.
Many butterfly and moth species feed on the foliage and other parts, including the caterpillars of Silvery Checkerspot.



Smooth-leaved Aster

(*Symphyotrichum laeve*)

Full Sun-Part Shade,
2-3 feet tall
Well-drained sandy soils
Blooms August-September

Host plant for the Pearl Crescent butterfly and Silvery Checkerspot butterfly, Attracts many different native bees and butterflies.



Showy Aster

(*Eurybia spectabilis*)

Part Shade-Shade,
1-2 feet tall, 2 feet wide
Medium to dry soil
Blooms August-September

Attracts pollinators,
nectar for hummingbirds.
Extremely drought-tolerant.



White Wood Aster

(*Eurybia divaricate*)

Part Shade-Shade, 1-2
feet tall
Blooms August-September

Host plant for Pearl
Crescent &
Checkerspot butterfly,
great choice for dry
shady spots.



Lobelia (*Lobelia spp.*)

Lobelia bloom in late summer to fall in long, tall racemes and provide nectar to insects and is especially attractive to hummingbirds. They could make for a thrilling display for a container garden, especially on a porch or balcony.

Great Blue Lobelia

(*Lobelia siphilitica*)

Sun-Shade, 1-3 feet tall
Prefers moist soil
Blooms July to October
(vivid blue)

Hummingbird and native
bees, especially bumble
bees, and butterflies



Red Cardinal Flower

(*Lobelia cardinalis*)

Sun-Shade, 2-3 feet tall
Prefers Moist Soil
Blooms July to September

Nectar source for
hummingbirds, Eastern
Tiger Swallowtail,
Spicebush Swallowtail
and Cloudless Sulphur
butterflies



Goldenrod (*Solidago spp.*)

A tall, showy fall perennial, goldenrod is in the same family as Asters. Spreading readily and attractive to many kinds of insects, these shorter species could become a valuable and low-maintenance part of your container garden.

Sweet Goldenrod

(*Solidago odora*)

Sun-Part Shade,
2-3 feet tall
Sandy, well-drained soil
Blooms July-October

Provides important
nectar and pollen for
native bees.
Attracts birds, ladybugs,
lacewings and other
beneficial insects.



Silver Rod

(*Solidago bicolor*)

Full-Part Sun-Shade,
1-3 feet tall
Blooms July-October

Attracts a wide variety
of pollinators,
including specialized
bees.
Host plant for
caterpillars of brown-
hooded owlet, wavy-
lined emerald, and
other moths.



Beebalm (*Monarda spp.*)

A pollinator magnet, beebalms occur naturally in fields and clearings. Excellent for a container, as they're from the mint family, which has a reputation of spreading rapidly. Flowers grow tall and in interesting shapes, and the plant is very drought-tolerant and resistant to powdery mildew.

Wild Bergamot

(*Monarda fistulosa*)

Sun-Part shade,
1-3 feet tall
spreads up to 3 feet
blooms July-September

Attracts long-tongued
bees, bee flies, butterflies,
skippers, and
hummingbird moths
Birds eat the seeds
Host plant for the
Raspberry Pyrausta Moth



Spotted Beebalm

(*Monarda punctata*)

Full sun-Part shade
2-3 feet tall
Blooms June-October
Dry to moist soils
Thrives in poor soils

Attracts native bees
and butterflies
Host plant for the
Raspberry Pyrausta
Moth caterpillar



Raspberry Pyrausta Moth (*Pyrausta signatalis*)

