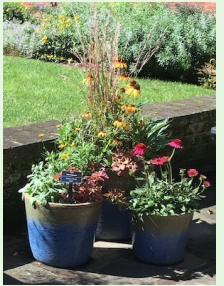
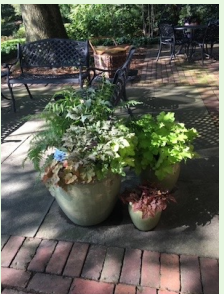
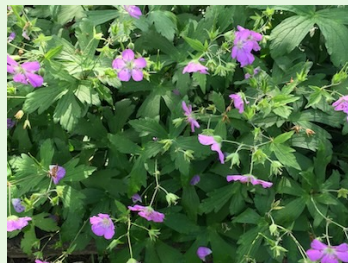


# Container Gardening with Native Plants



Sustainable Landscaping 2025



# Collaborators

**Alyssa Ford Morel**



**Glencarlyn Demo Garden**

**Leslie Cameron**



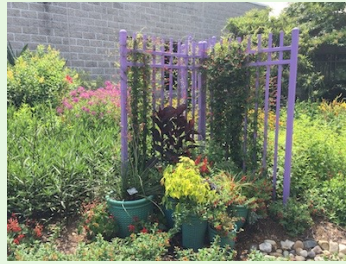
**Small Space Demonstration Garden**

**Benton Murphy**



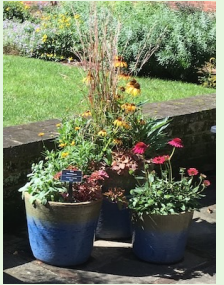
**Angela  
McNamara**



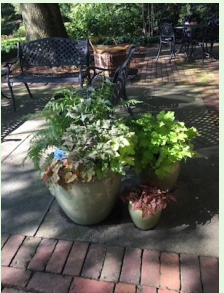
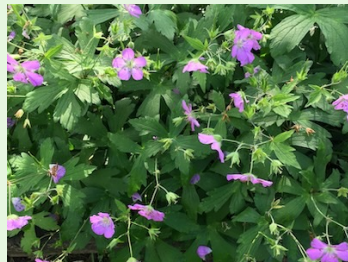


# Overview

- Benefits of container gardening
- Tips on containers & soil
- Guidance on native plant selection
- Stand-alone pots & plant combinations
- Resources

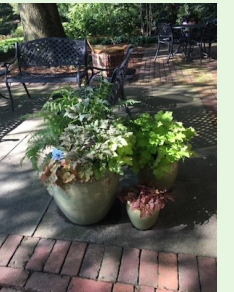


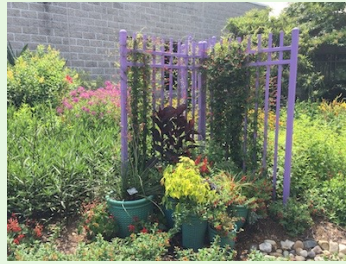
Unless credited, all photos by Elaine L. Mills. See sources for credited photos on final Photo Credits slide.



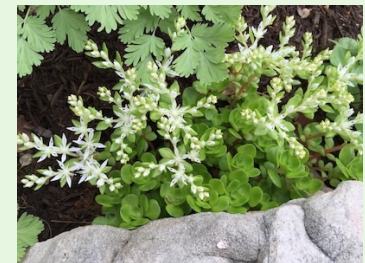
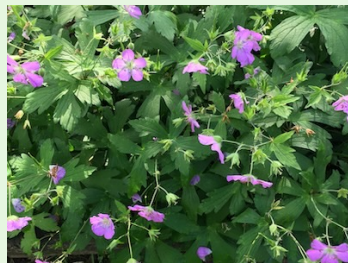
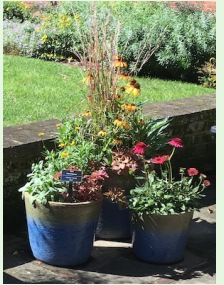
# Benefits of Container Gardening

- Ideal for gardeners with limited space
- Variety of locations: window boxes, doorways, steps, small decks or patios, balconies, rooftops
- Grow plants with different soil requirements from garden
- Move plants to change sun exposure, protect from weather
- Protect vulnerable plants from deer & rabbits
- Transfer plants to a new home
- By incorporating native plants, can create miniature habitats for pollinators and birds



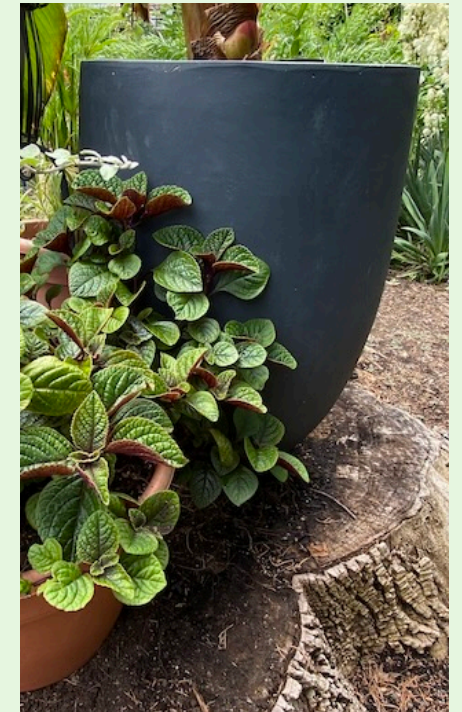
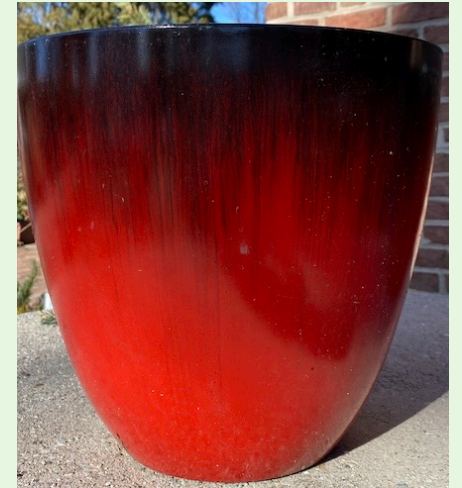


# Tips on Containers & Soil



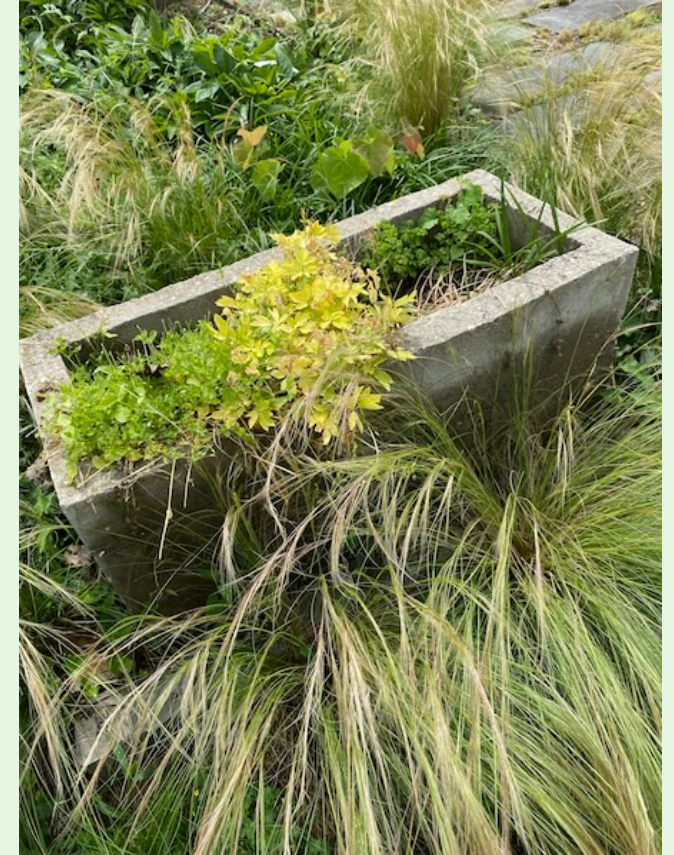
# Material

- **Terra-cotta:** good air circulation, but can dry out quickly & susceptible to winter damage
- **Plastic:** light-weight, various shapes & colors, but less aeration
- **Ceramic:** aesthetic, glazed for protection, provide insulation, stable, but heavy & may break
- **Fiberglass:** strong, light, weather-resistant, but more expensive & color may fade



# Material

- **Metal:** stylish & durable, but very hot in direct sun, can rust
- **Wood:** natural material, insulates roots, but require liners, prone to decay
- **Cement:** insulate roots, stable, various shapes, but heavy, can increase alkalinity of soil



# Color

- Color of outdoor pots significantly impacts soil temperature
- Dark colors absorb more sunlight & heat up soil
- Light colors reflect most heat to keep soil cooler



# Shape

- Shape of pots impacts amount of soil held & room for root growth
- Wide, shallow pots best for shallow-rooted plants (cactus & succulents)
- Wide & square pots hold more soil; require less frequent watering (monitor for overwatering)
- Tall pots allow for better drainage & aeration
- Tall pots best for deep-rooted plants (many native plants)



# Style



**Whimsical**



**Elegant**



**Understated**

For single plant,  
choose pot 1-2 inches  
larger in diameter than  
that of plant's root ball



Small plant: 12-24" pot  
Medium: 18-24" pot  
Large: 36-48" pot

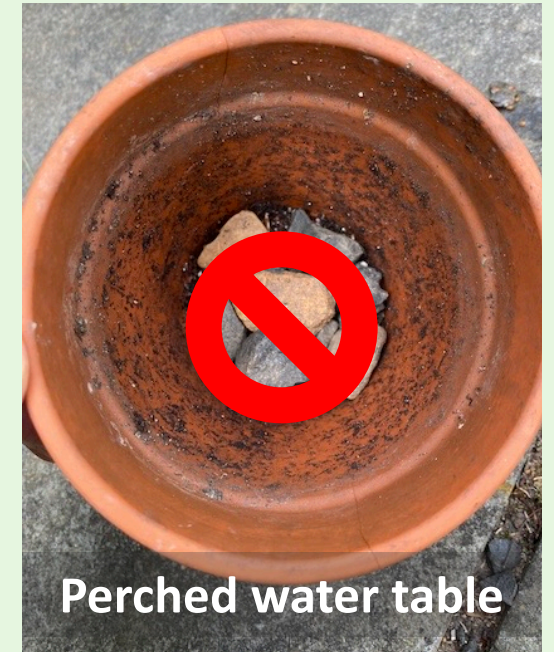


# Size

For multiple plants,  
measure the  
diameter of each  
root ball  
+ 2 inches each

# Drainage

- Pots **MUST** have holes in the bottom
  - Except for cachepot/decorative outer pot
- Pot too small – soil drains & dries quickly; plant becomes root-bound & stunted
- Pot too large – soil drains & dries slowly; plant susceptible to root rot
- Potshards, gravel, rocks **NOT** needed
  - Water does not move easily across interface between layers of different textures
  - Leads to wet soil pooling at bottom of pot
  - Rocks for top-heavy pots?
- Improve drainage with pot feet
  - Some are decorative



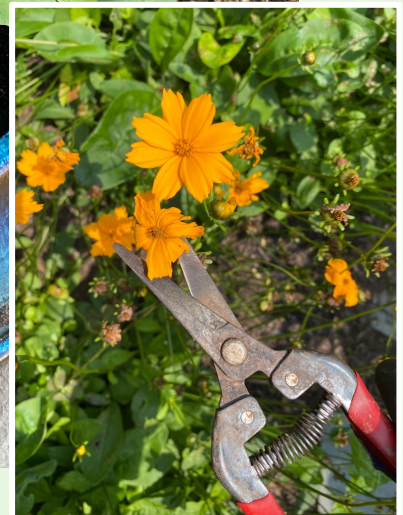
# Tips on soil for containers

- Organic potting soil best
  - Garden soil in a pot loses natural characteristics
  - Unamended garden soil will compact & become heavy
- Use a commercial mix or make your own
  - Peat moss a non-renewable resource
  - Coco coir has issues, but considered more sustainable
  - Pine fines another good organic option
  - Other ingredients: sand, perlite, vermiculite, and compost
- Avoid polymers to retain moisture
  - Pull moisture away from tiny root hairs
- Mulch as appropriate in spring and fall with compost or leaf mulch to add nutrients
- Check roots periodically and repot with fresh soil



# Pot maintenance

- Place soil 1 inch below pot rims
- No chemical fertilizers; use compost
- Richer soil for shade plants; leaner soil for grasses & prairie natives
- Pay attention to weather to determine watering
- Deadhead flowers & prune to control height, maintain definition
- Divide crowded plants and share!



# Pot care tips

- Container plants more vulnerable to winter cold
  - Group and shield plants on south side of building
  - Heel-in with leaves or cover with blankets
- If reusing an old pot,
  - Wash & disinfect to prevent spread of disease-causing fungi or insects
  - Remove mineral deposits that desiccate plant stems



Courtesy of Gardeners Supply Company

# Pot placement

- Place pots where roots remain cool, but leaves receive sun
- May need to shift locations with seasons for proper sun exposure
- Think about portability

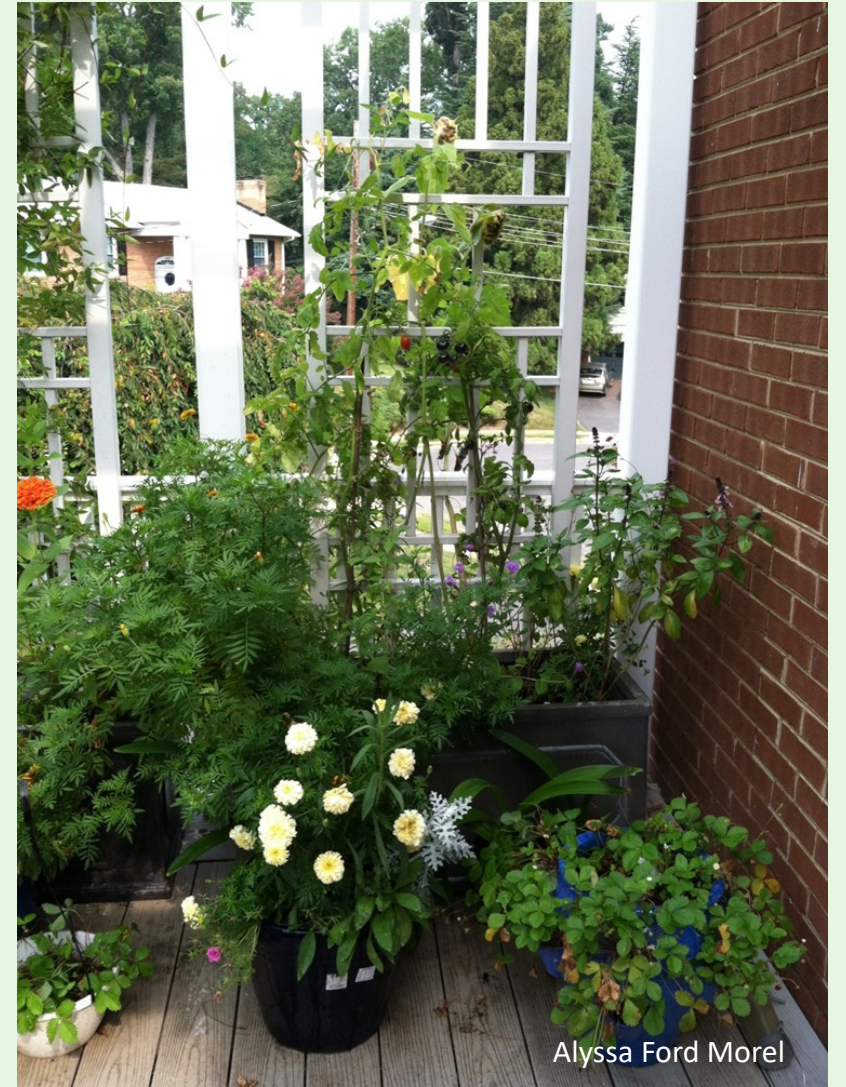


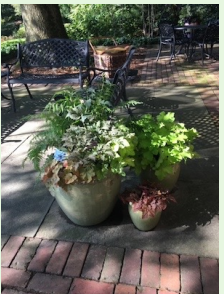
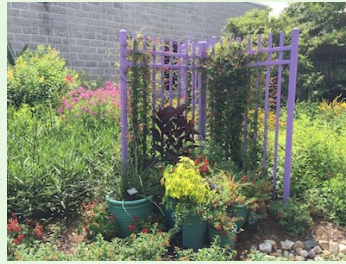
Plant caddies with casters



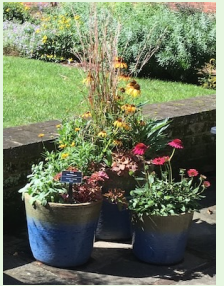
# Special considerations for balconies

- Confirm building regulations
- May need light-weight pots
- Use trellises for vines & brackets for hanging baskets, if permitted
- Critical to determine amount of sun exposure each day
- Be aware of wind gusts
- Bees, butterflies & hummers can fly up to 150 feet in search of provisions





# Guidance on Plant Selection



# Native plants in containers

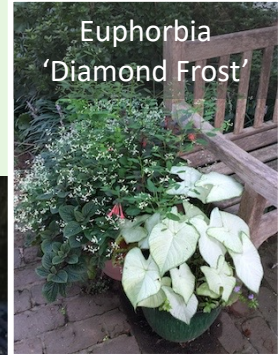
- Reliance on perennials vs annuals
- Rely more on foliage color and texture
- Use more compact cultivars when appropriate
  - Retain flower color and shape of species
  - Retain foliage color of species
- Feel free to mix with friendly non-natives for color, fun, or food
- Match plants carefully to growing conditions



Persian Shield



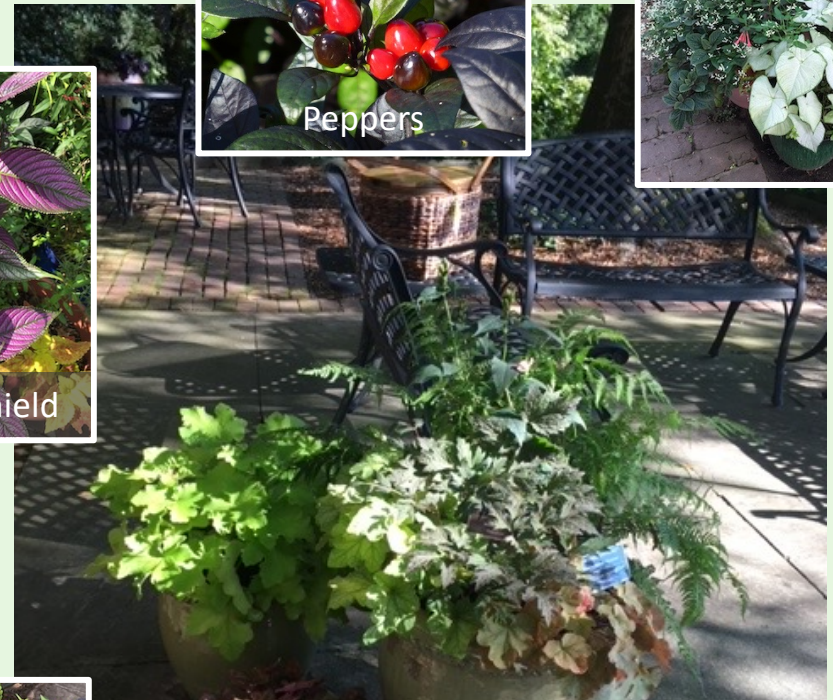
Peppers



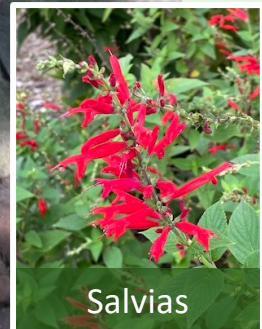
Euphorbia  
'Diamond Frost'



Coleus



Alyssa Ford Morel



Salvias

# Plant selection

- Perennials, ferns, grasses, sedges, rushes, small shrubs, vines
- For sun: choose plants native to prairies and open fields

Ex: Grasses, asters, goldenrods, sunflowers

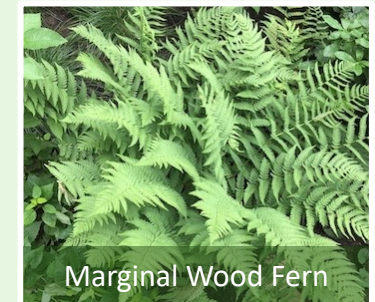
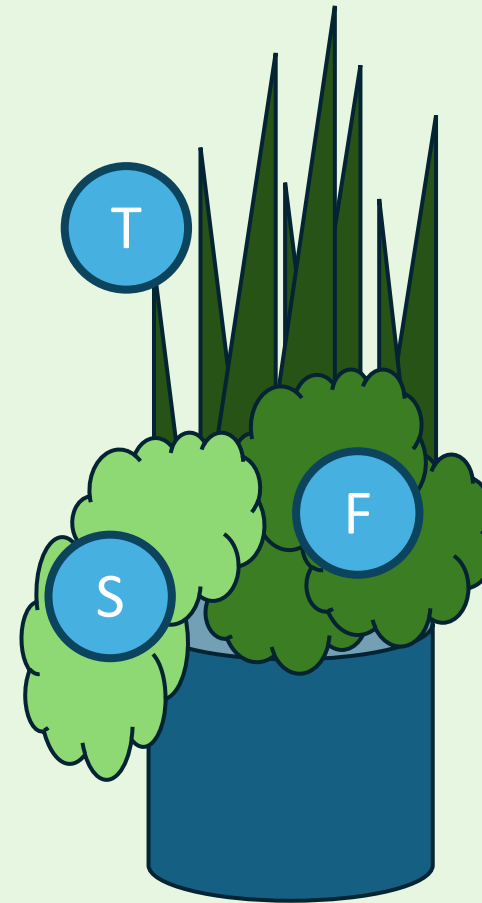
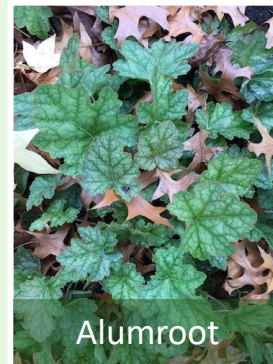
- For shade: choose woodland natives growing in dappled shade

Ex: Wildflowers, ferns, sedges, Heucheras



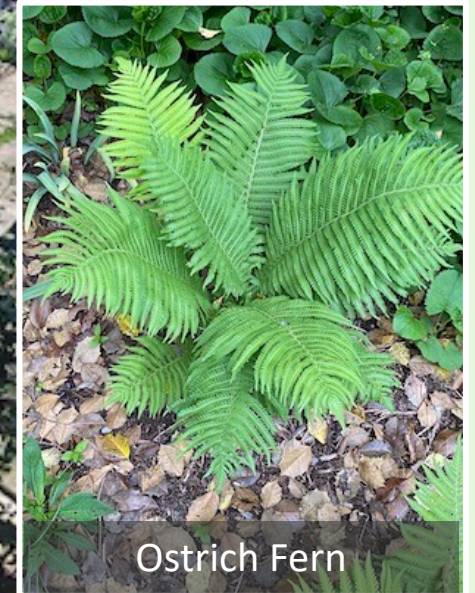
# Creating plant combinations

- Use familiar combination formula:
  - Thriller – single upright specimen with striking characteristics
  - Filler – plants that add mass to container
  - Spiller – plants that trail over the edge of the container
- Group plants with same cultural requirements in single container
- Select plants with contrasting forms & textures



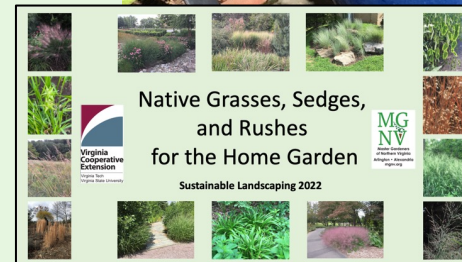
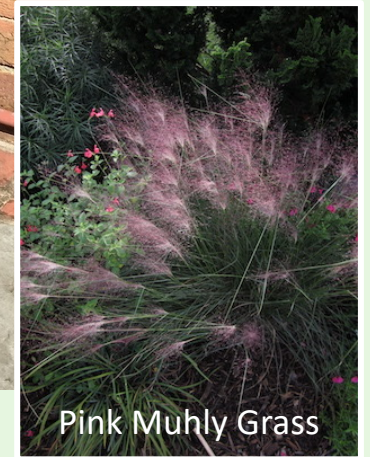
# Ferns\*

- Use in pots for shade
- Christmas Fern & Marginal Wood Fern evergreen, good for combination pots
- Royal Fern back of wet pots
- Ostrich Fern in solo pot
- Non-flowering, no support for pollinators
- Plant parts used in nest construction by birds



# Grasses

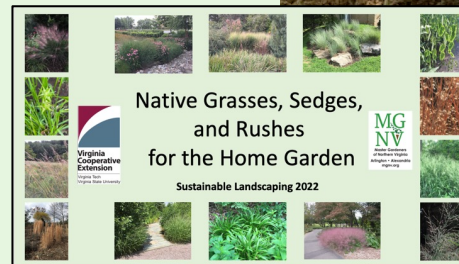
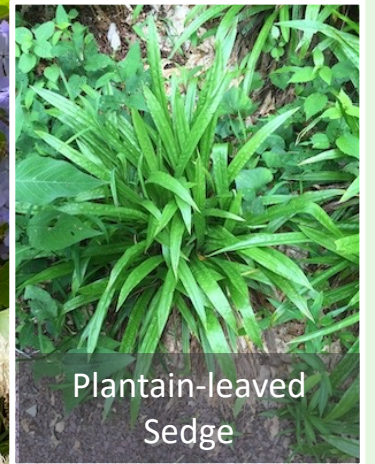
- Long roots; use in deep pots
- Interest of movement, sound, light, lingering seed heads
- Warm-season grasses in sun
- Purple Lovegrass as filler
- Pink Muhly Grass as solo plant
- Cool-season grasses in shade
- Seed for birds & larval host support for skippers



Alyssa Ford Morel

# Sedges

- Generally, best in shade
- Subtle inflorescences
- Low, spreading or clumping species for base layer
- Larger, ornamental species as fillers or solo accent plants
- Seed for birds & larval hosts for skippers and satyrs



# Perennials

- Wide variety of plants
- Most flower for 3-4 weeks; plant for successive bloom
- Can be used individually or combined with other plants
- Use depends on size, sun & soil moisture preferences
- Offer floral resources & seed; many larval host plants



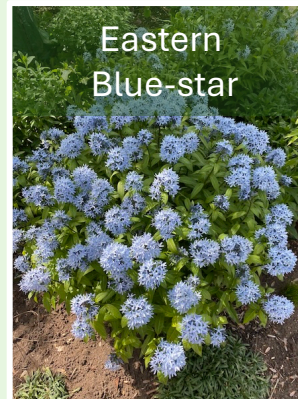
Blue Wild Indigo



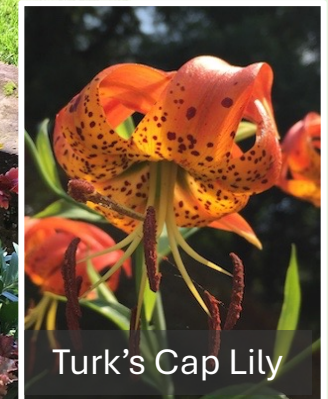
Garden Phlox



Beebalm



Eastern Blue-star



Turk's Cap Lily



Native Blooms for the Summer Garden



Native Flowers, Fruit & Foliage for Fall



Alyssa Ford Morel





Oxeye

# Keystone plants for Lepidoptera


Perennials most supportive of butterflies/moths based on work of entomologist Doug Tallamy

**8.3 Southeastern USA Plains**


Examples



*Oenothera biennis*





*Rudbeckia hirta*




*Solidago rugosa*

**8.4 Ozark, Ouachita-Appalachian Forests**


Examples



*Helianthus mollis\**



*Solidago nemoralis*





*Symphyotrichum lateriflorum*


*\*Not native to eastern half of ecoregion*

**8.5 Mississippi Alluvial and Southeast USA Coastal Plains**


Examples



*Chrysopsis mariana*



*Helianthus divaricatus*



*Rudbeckia hirta*

Ecoregions encompassing the East Coast states  
(on Homegrown National Park website)

# Keystone plants for pollen specialists

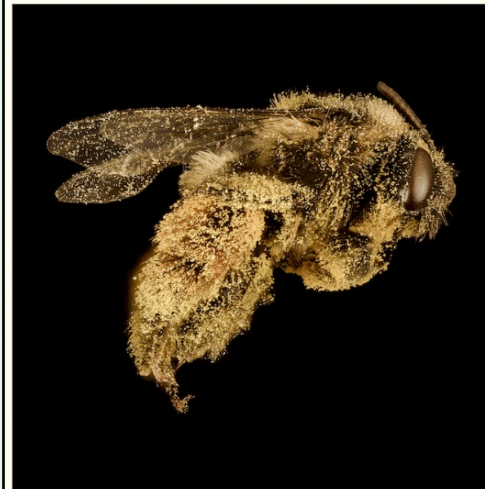
## Plants that are most supportive of bees

 **Top 30 Native Host Plants for Pollen Specialist Bees**

Genus	Common Plant Name	# of Pollen Specialist Bee Species Relying on this Plant
<i>Helianthus</i>	sunflower	50
<i>Solidago</i>	goldenrod	42
<i>Symphotrichum</i>	aster	33
<i>Grindella</i>	gumweed	31
<i>Rudbeckia</i>	black eyed susan	29
<i>Heterotheca</i>	goldenaster	24
<i>Coreopsis</i>	tickseed	22
<i>Chrysopsis</i>	goldenaster	20
<i>Verbesina</i>	wingstem	17
<i>Bidens</i>	beggartick	15
<i>Cirsium</i>	thistle	15
<i>Salix</i>	willow	14
<i>Vaccinium</i>	blueberry, cranberry, deerberry	14
<i>Erigeron</i>	fleabane	12
<i>Vernonia</i>	ironweed	12
<i>Pityopsis</i>	silkgrass	11
<i>Ratibida</i>	prairie coneflower	11
<i>Silphium</i>	rosinweed	10
<i>Baccharis</i>	baccharis	8
<i>Euthamia</i>	goldentop	8
<i>Dalea</i>	prairie clover	7
<i>Oenothera</i>	evening primrose	7
<i>Echinacea</i>	coneflower	6
<i>Gaillardia</i>	blanketflower	6
<i>Balduna</i>	honeycombhead	5
<i>Helenium</i>	sneezeweed	5
<i>Helopsis</i>	helopsis	5
<i>Pectis</i>	chinchweed	5
<i>Cornus</i>	dogwood	4
<i>Lyonia</i>	staggerbush	4

### Pollen Specialist Bees of the Eastern United States

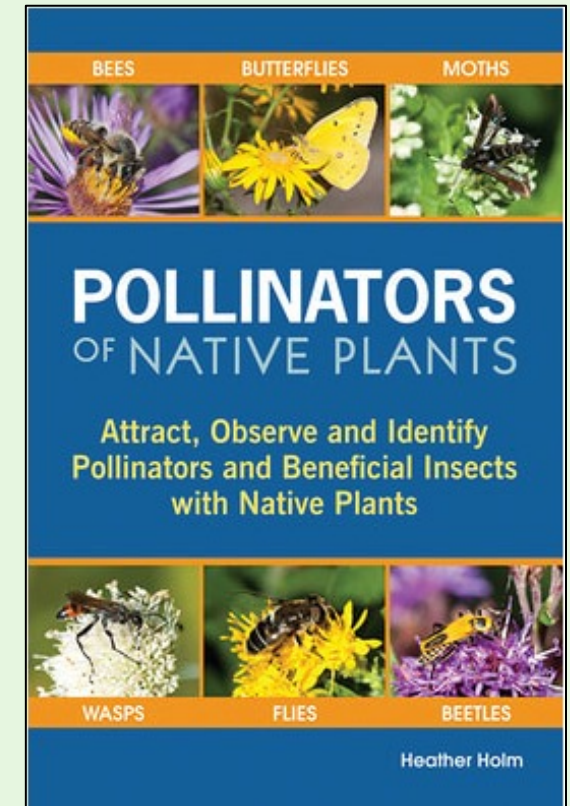
Jarrold Fowler & Sam Droege (2020)



*Melissodes desponsus*



*Macropis ciliata*

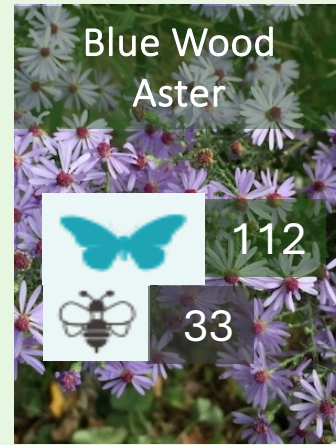


# Top keystone plants for container gardening

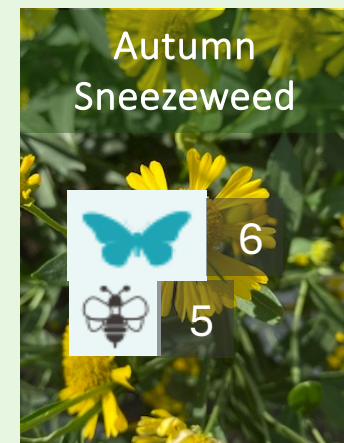
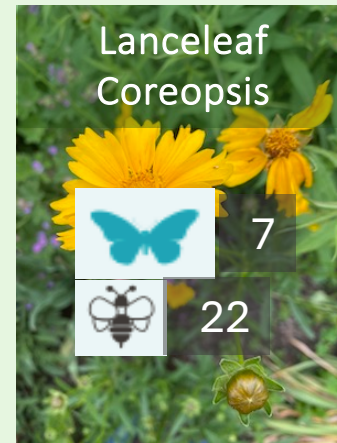
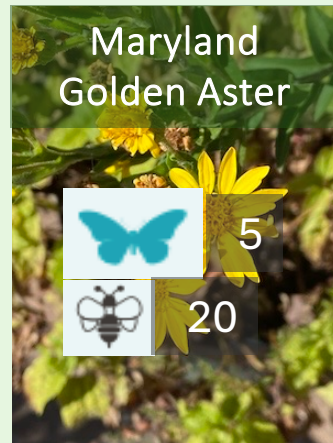
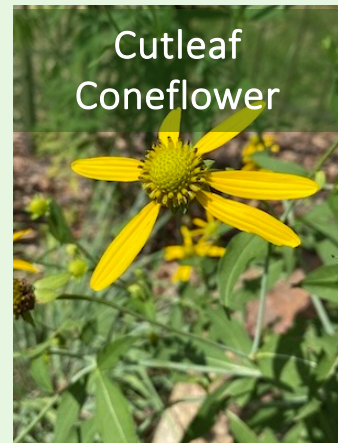
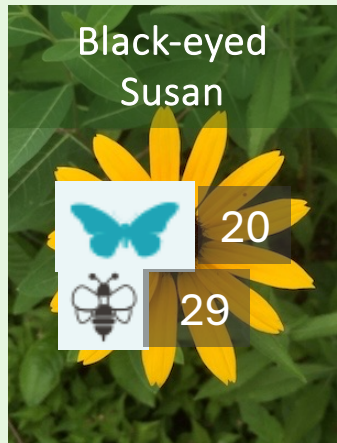
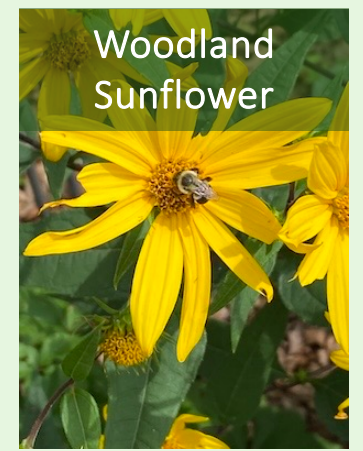
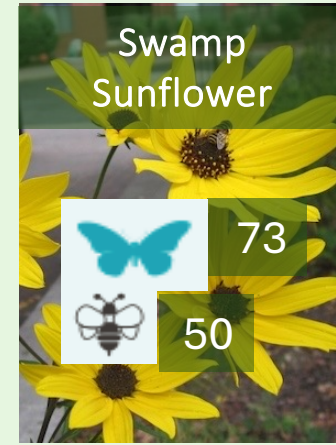
## *Solidago*



## *Symphotrichum*



## *Helianthus*



## *Rudbeckia*

## *Chrysopsis*

## *Coreopsis*

## *Helenium*

# Bog Plants

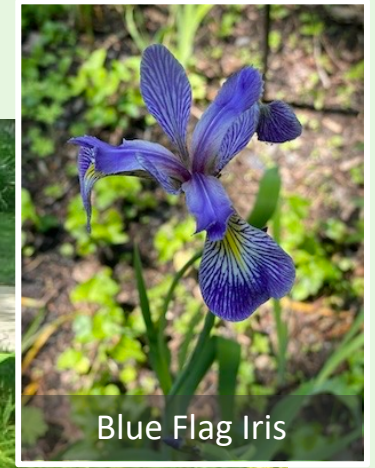
- Site in full sun
- Container with liner
- Some can grow in standing water
- Others require consistently moist soil
- For Pitcher Plant:
  - Require full sun to develop color & remain erect
  - Peat/sand mix
  - Water only with rainwater or distilled water



Soft Rush



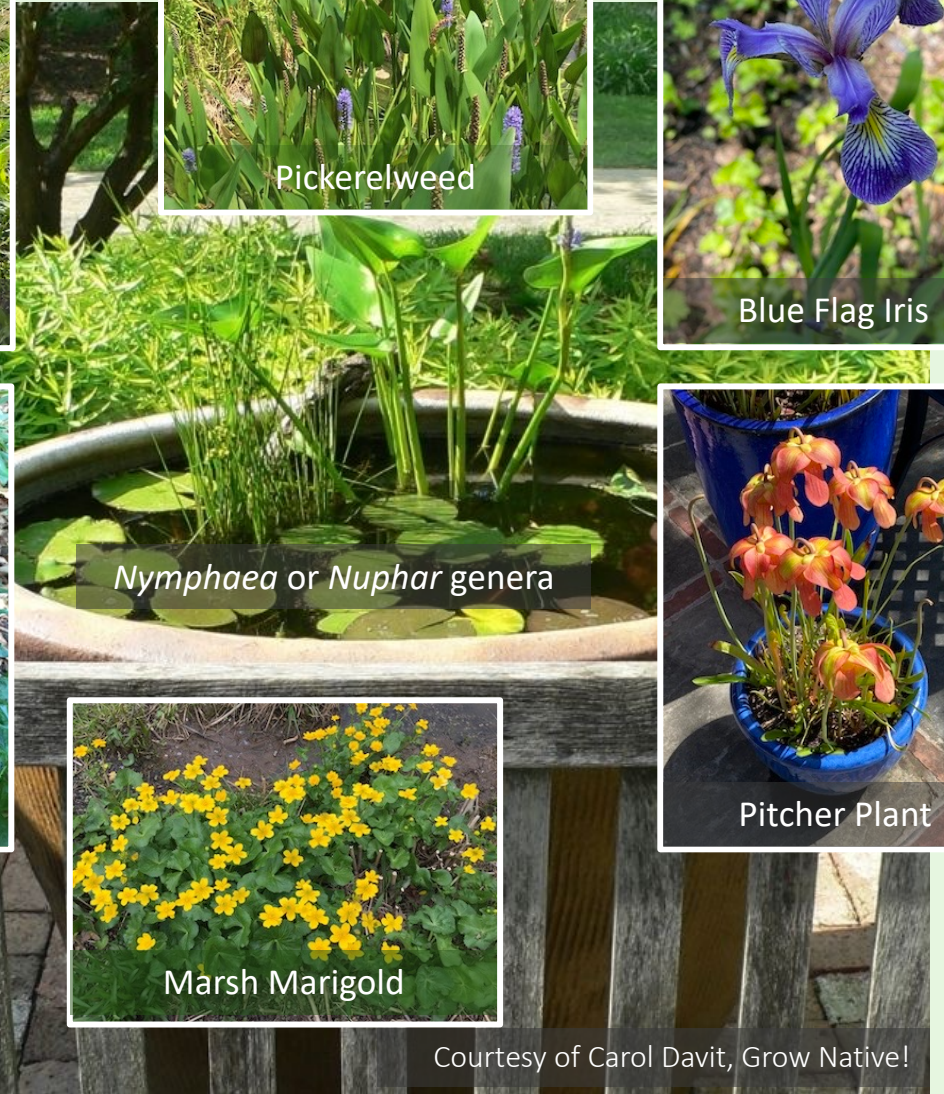
Pickerelweed



Blue Flag Iris



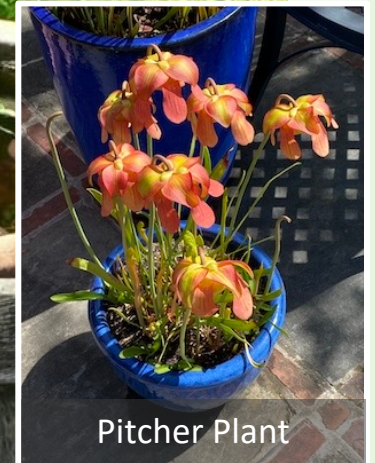
Cardinal Flower



*Nymphaea* or *Nuphar* genera



Marsh Marigold



Pitcher Plant

Courtesy of Carol Davit, Grow Native!

# Vines

- Control for vigorously-growing plants; spread by root suckers
- Place container at base of arbor or other structure
- Varied flower color; some are semi-evergreen
- Provide floral resources, seeds & nutritious fruit
- Serve as larval host plants
- Offer nesting sites for birds



# Small shrubs

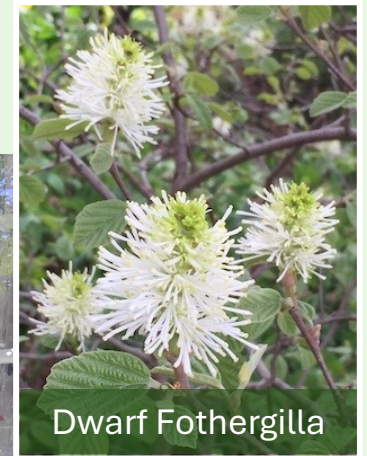
- Naturally small: Wild Hydrangea, Common Yucca, New Jersey Tea, Fothergilla
- Flower color often white
- Some have bright fall foliage or seeds for winter interest
- Provide floral resources, seeds & nutritious fruit
- Serve as larval host plants



Common Yucca



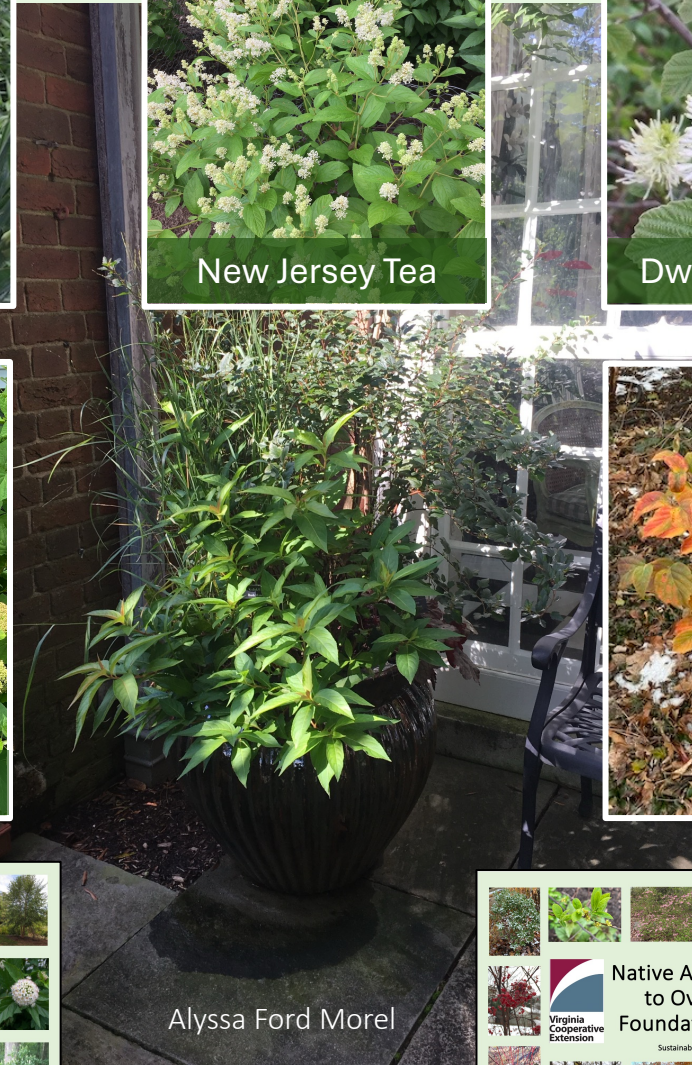
New Jersey Tea



Dwarf Fothergilla



Wild Hydrangea

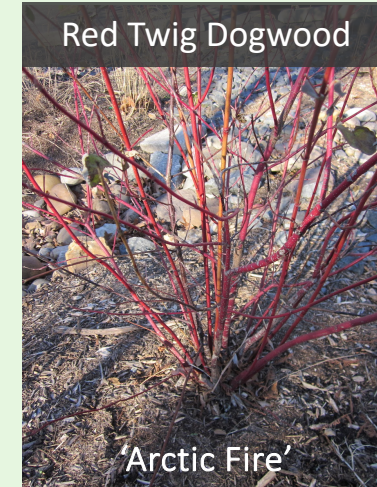


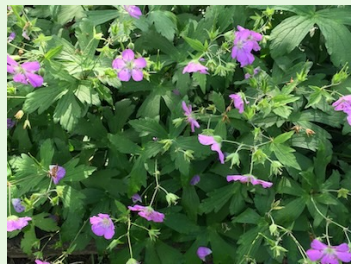
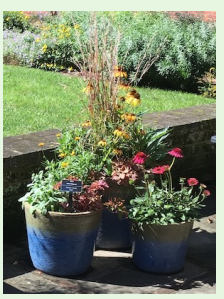
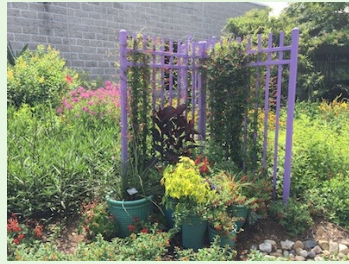
Alyssa Ford Morel



# Cultivars of taller shrubs

- Small-size cultivars of natives
- Same flowers & fruit as species
- Retain natural green foliage for use as larval host plants
- Inkberry & Yaupon evergreen
- Those hollies & Winterberry are dioecious
- Multiple cultivars of Dogwood, Chokeberry & VA Sweetspire





# Stand-Alone Pots

# Controlling spreaders

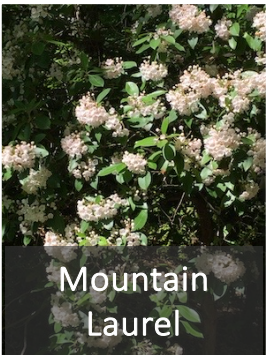


# Special situations

Corral a prickly plant



Control soil pH for acid-loving plants



# Specimen plants



Jacob's Ladder



Eastern Blue-star



Culver's-root

# Specimen plants



Common Moonseed



Pitcher Plant



Foamflower  
'Running Tapestry'



# Specimen plants



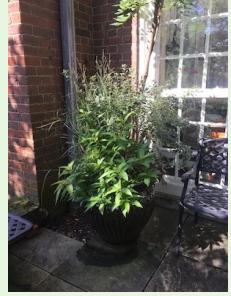
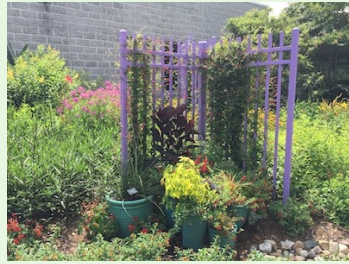
American Beauty-berry



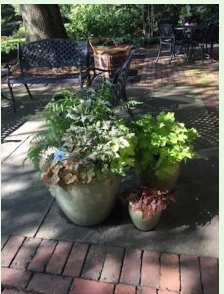
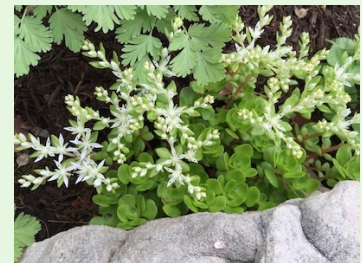
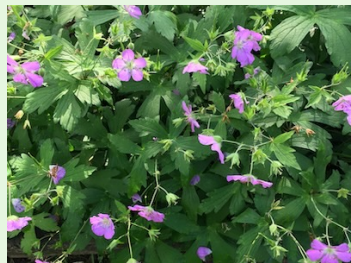
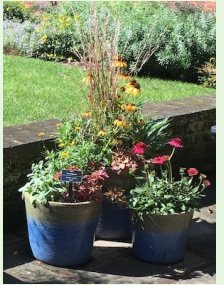
Ostrich Fern



Pink Muhly Grass



# Single-season Plant Combinations



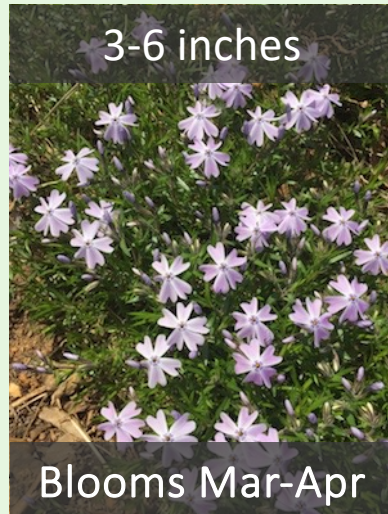
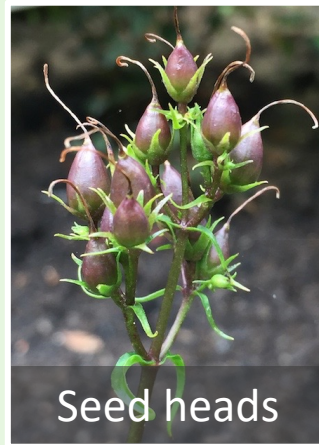
# Plant NoVA Natives

For sun in spring

Thriller: Beardtongue

Filler: Blue-eyed Grass

Spiller: Moss Phlox



**All foliage semi-evergreen to evergreen**

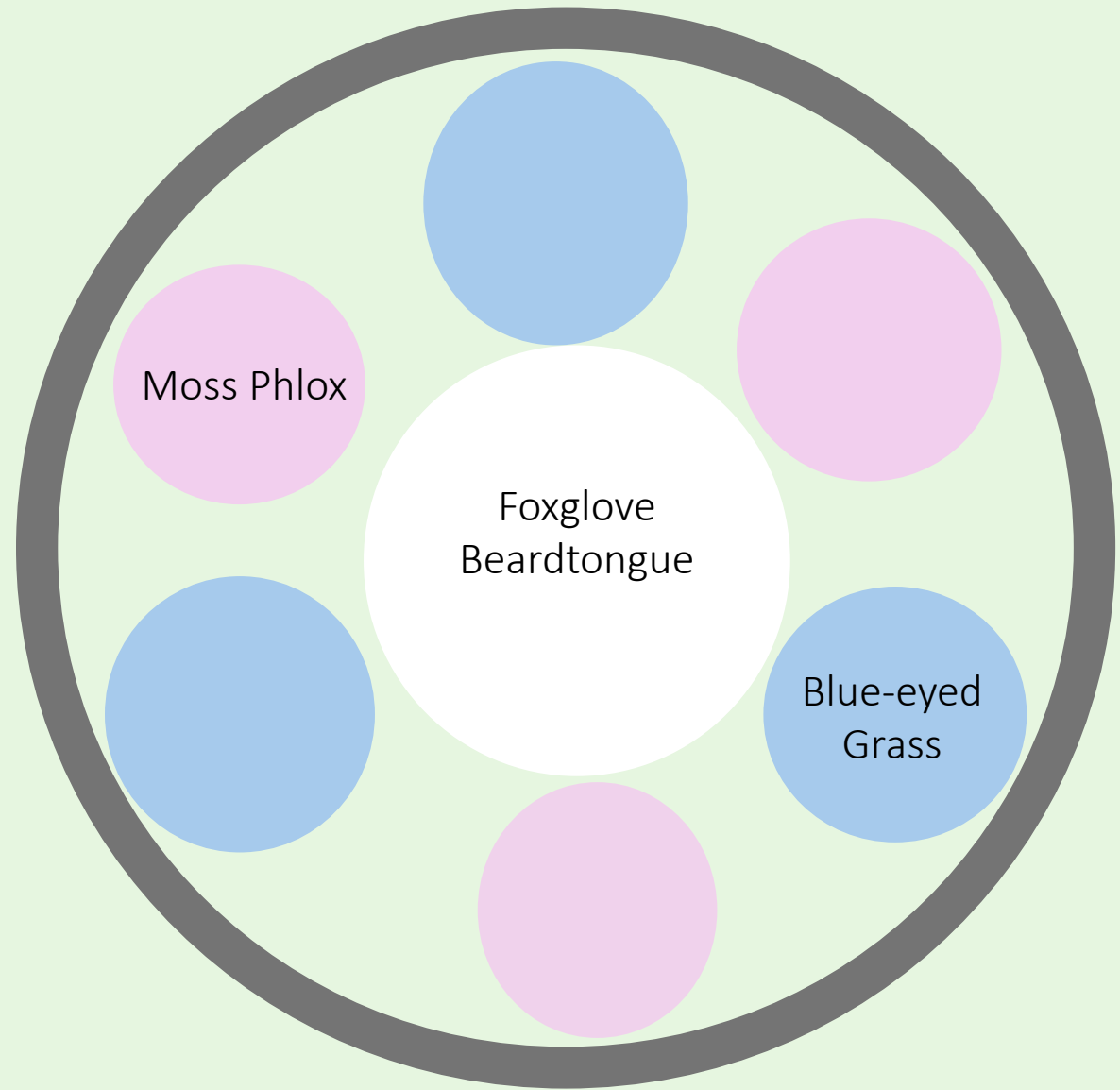
# Plant NoVA Natives

For sun in spring

Thriller: Foxglove Beardtongue

Filler: Blue-eyed Grass

Spiller: Moss Phlox



**Alternative with multiple plants**

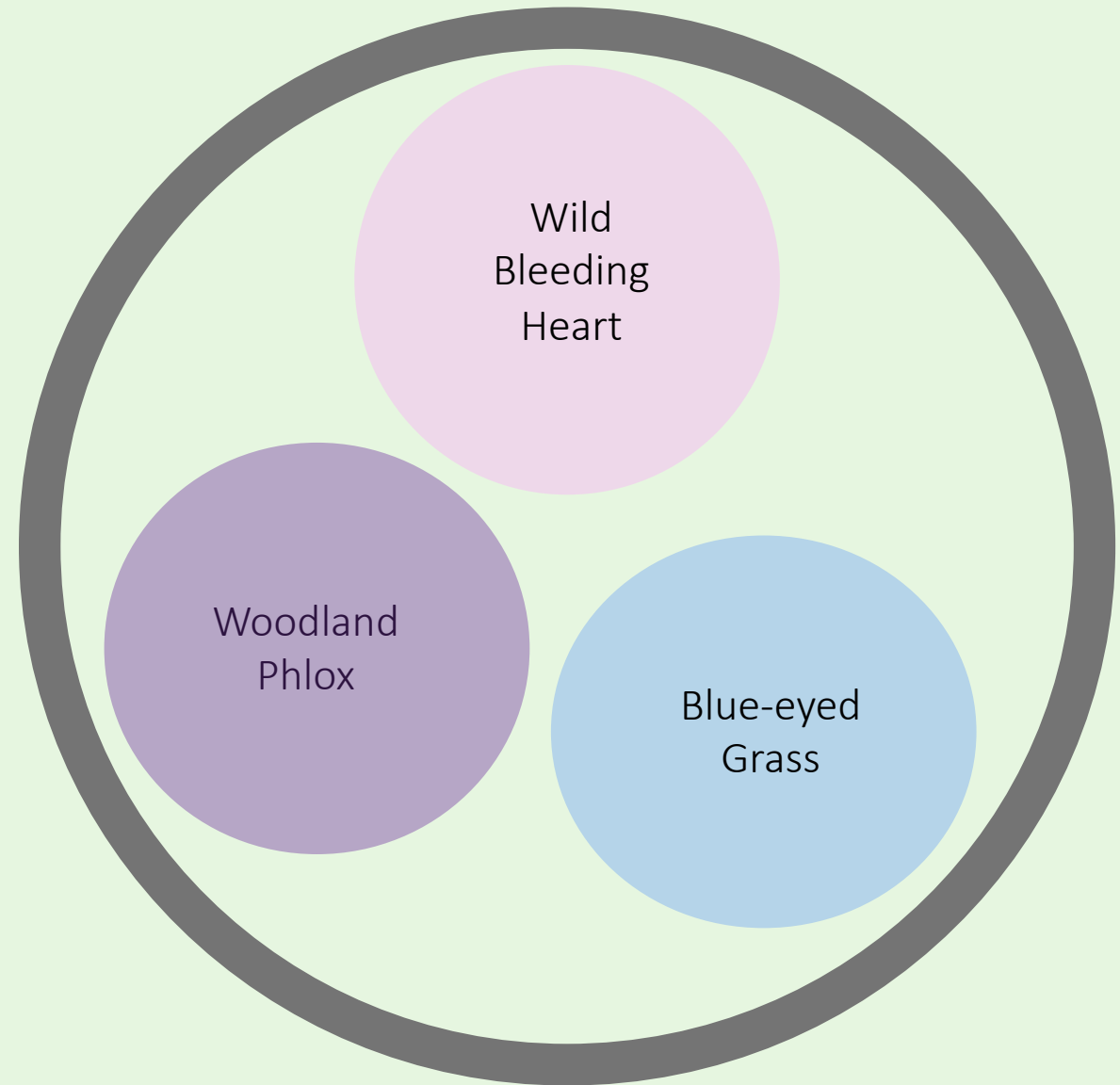
# Plant NoVA Natives

For part-shade to shade in spring

Thriller: Wild Bleeding Heart

Filler: Woodland Phlox

Spiller: Blue-eyed Grass



**Phlox & Blue-eyed Grass have semi-evergreen foliage**

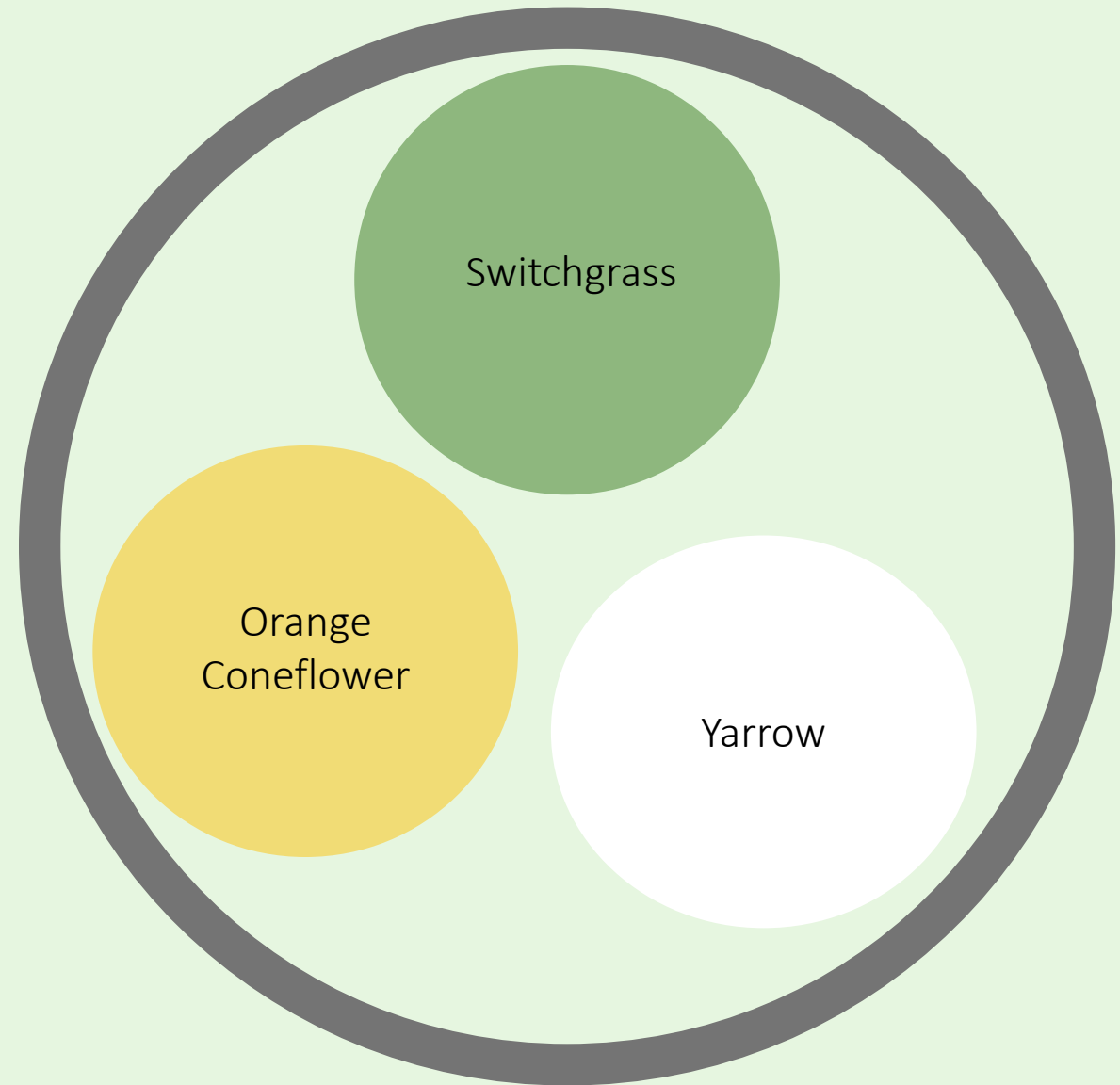
# Plant NoVA Natives

For sun in summer

Thriller: Switchgrass

Filler: Orange Coneflower

Spiller: Yarrow



**Grass turns tan in winter, retains seed heads**  
**Keep coneflower seeds for birds**

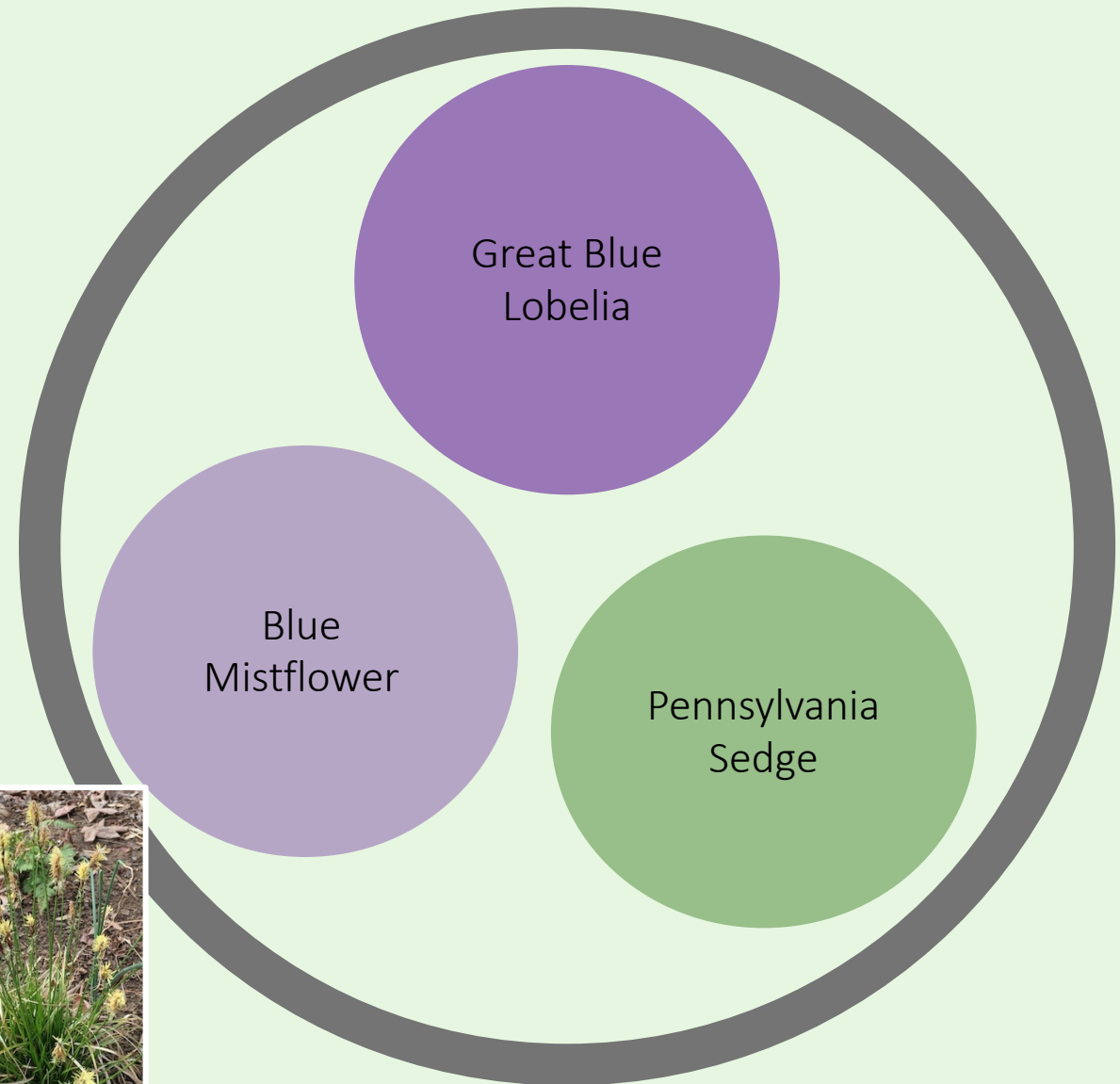
# Plant NoVA Natives

For part-shade to shade in summer

Thriller: Great Blue Lobelia

Filler: Blue Mistflower

Spiller: Pennsylvania Sedge



**Lobelia & Sedge foliage evergreen**

# Plant NoVA Natives

For sun in fall

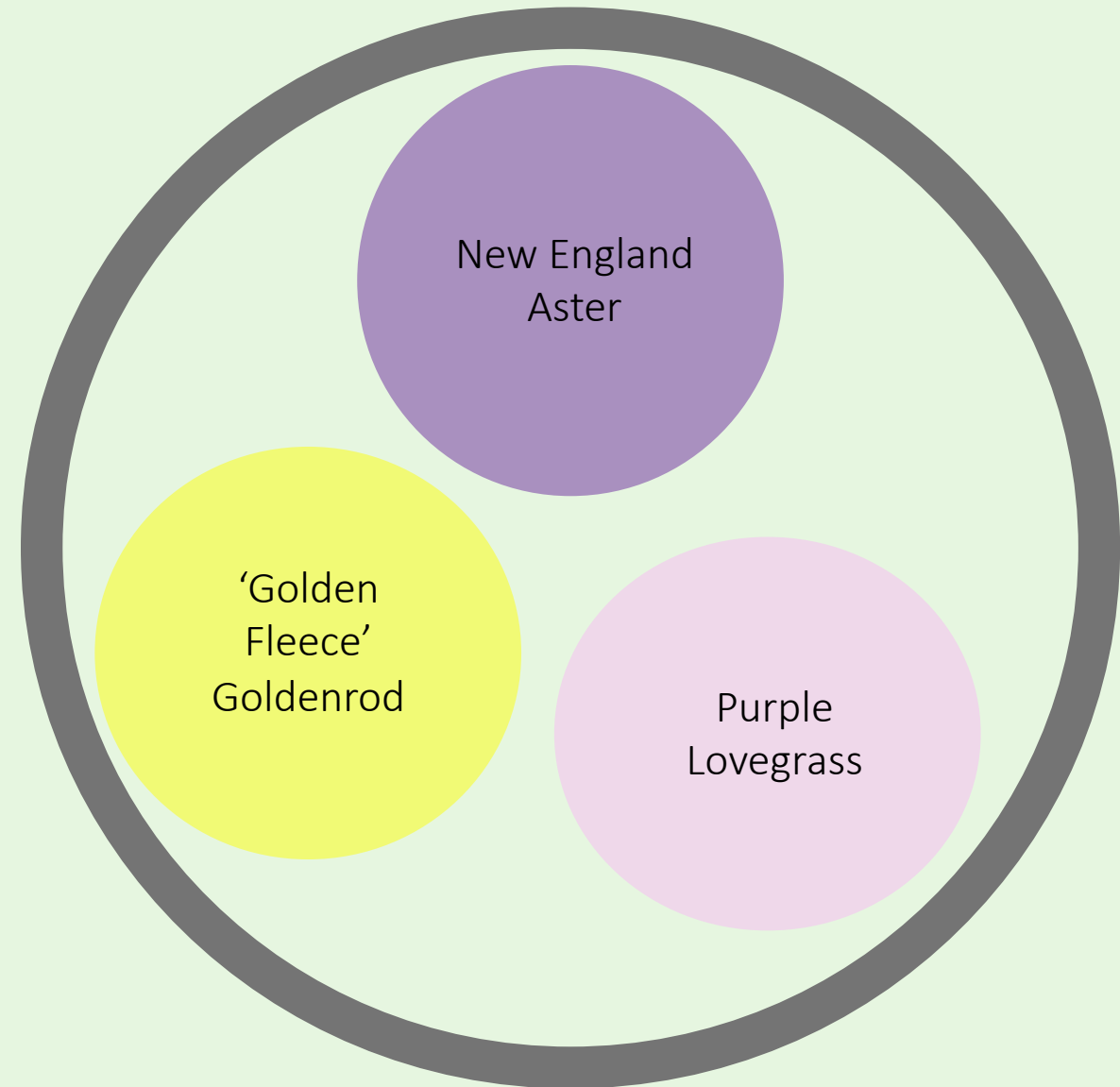
Thriller: New England Aster

Filler: 'Golden Fleece' Goldenrod

Spiller: Purple Lovegrass



## Possible plant substitutions



**Goldenrod has evergreen basal foliage**

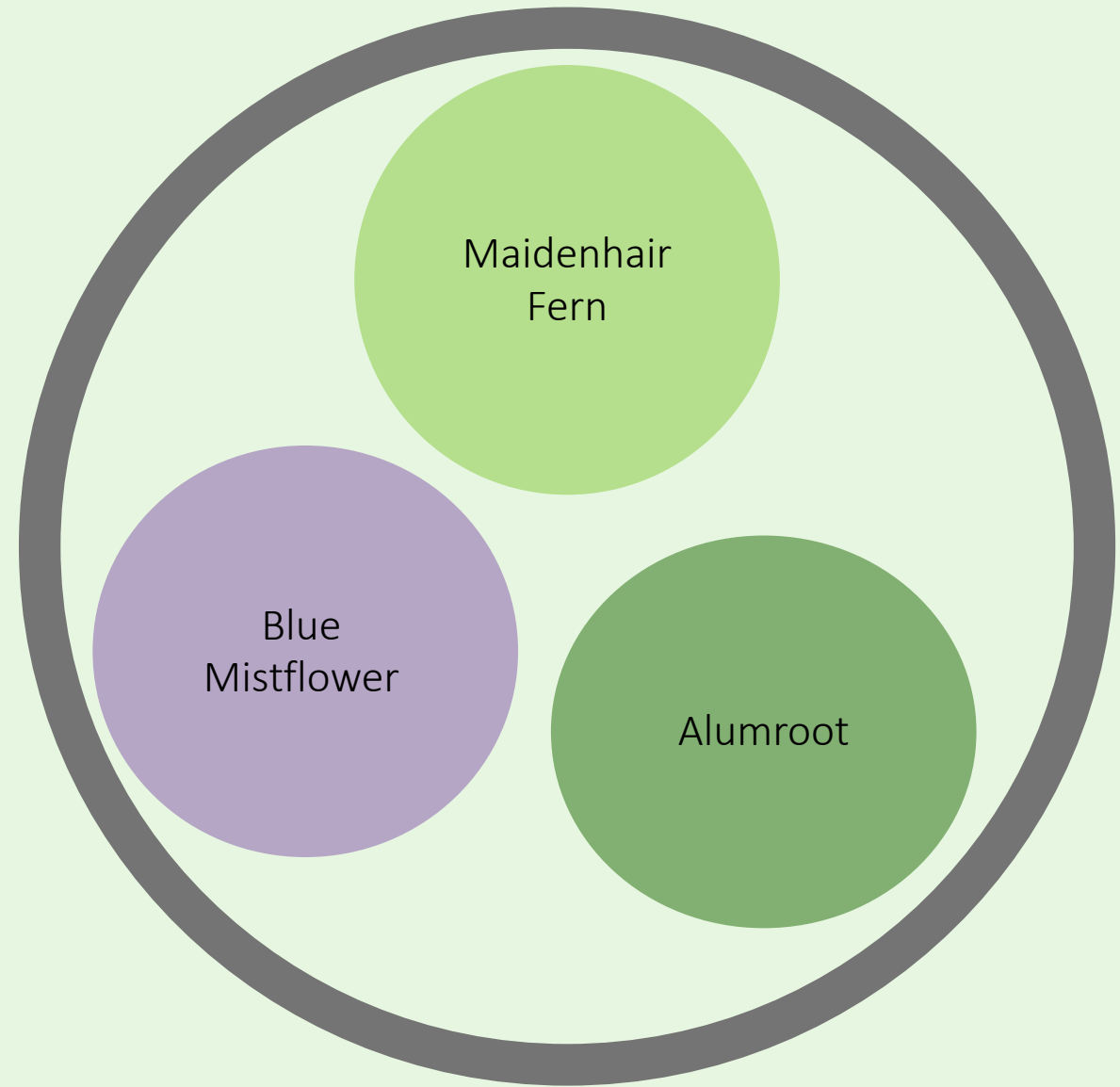
# Plant NoVA Natives

For part-shade to shade in fall

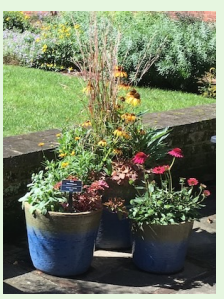
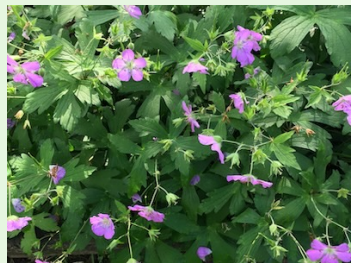
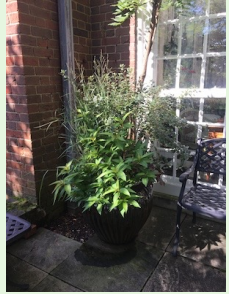
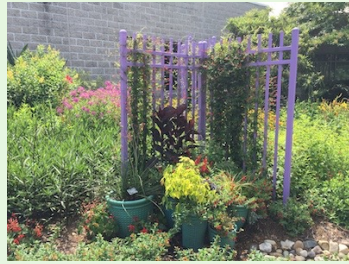
Thriller: Maidenhair Fern

Filler: Blue Mistflower

Spiller: Alumroot



**Alumroot has evergreen basal foliage**



# Multi-season Plant Combinations

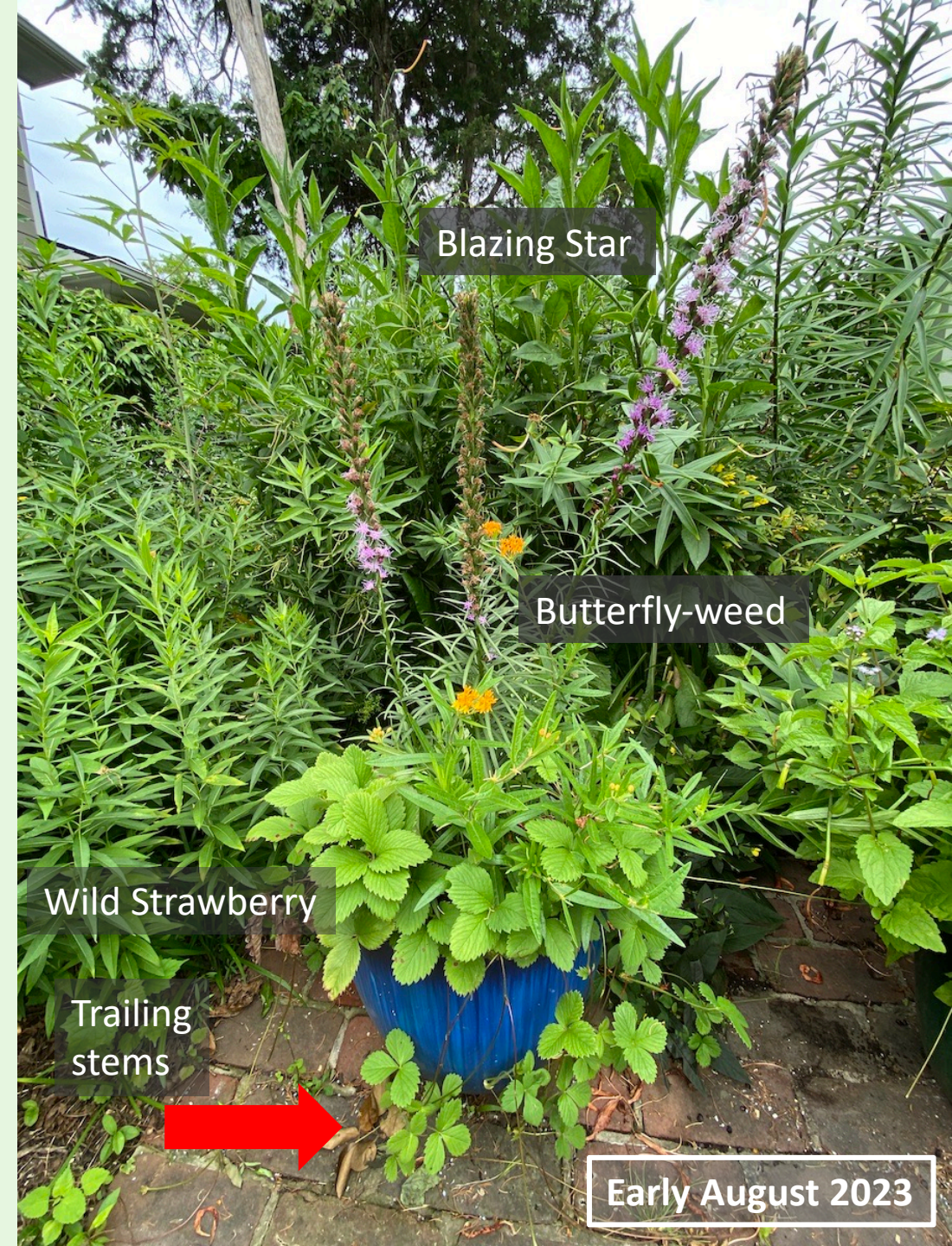
# Glencarlyn Garden

For sun

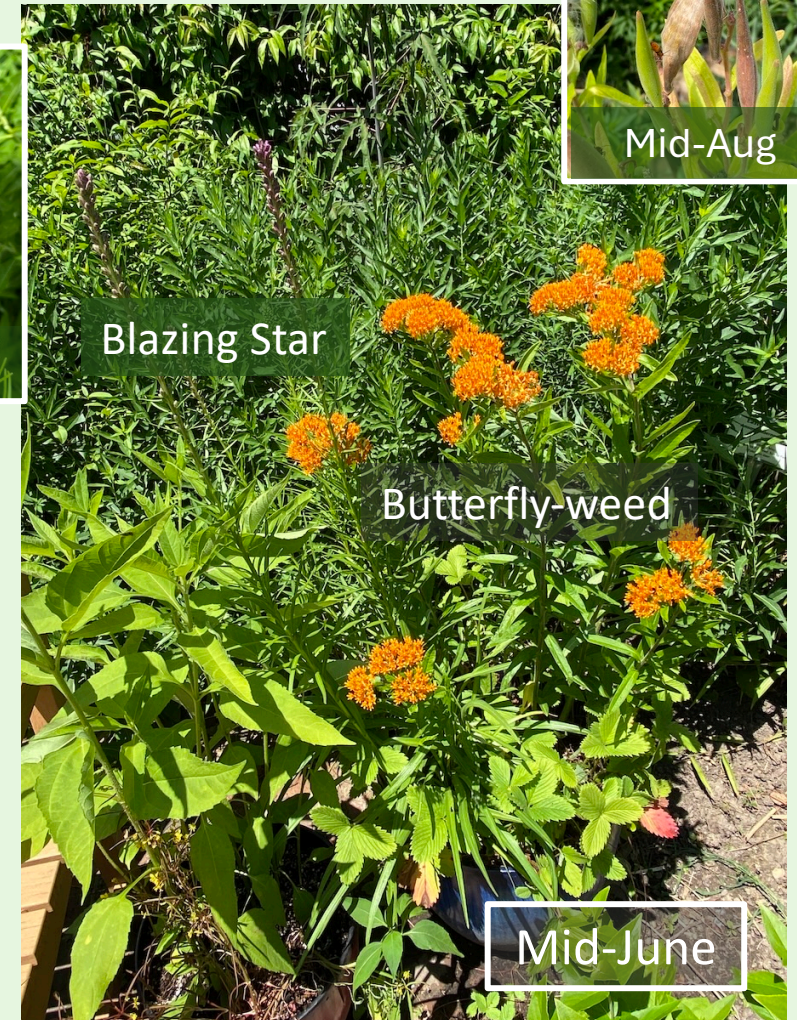
Thriller: Blazing Star

Filler: Butterfly-weed

Spiller: Wild Strawberry



# Development through seasons



# Two years later



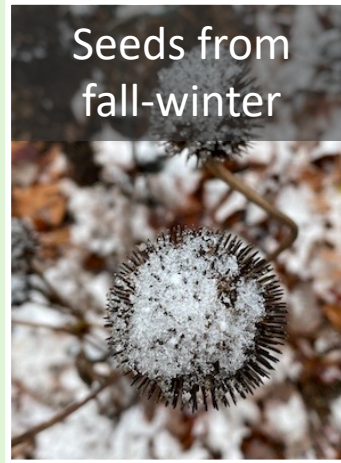
# Glencarlyn Garden

For sun

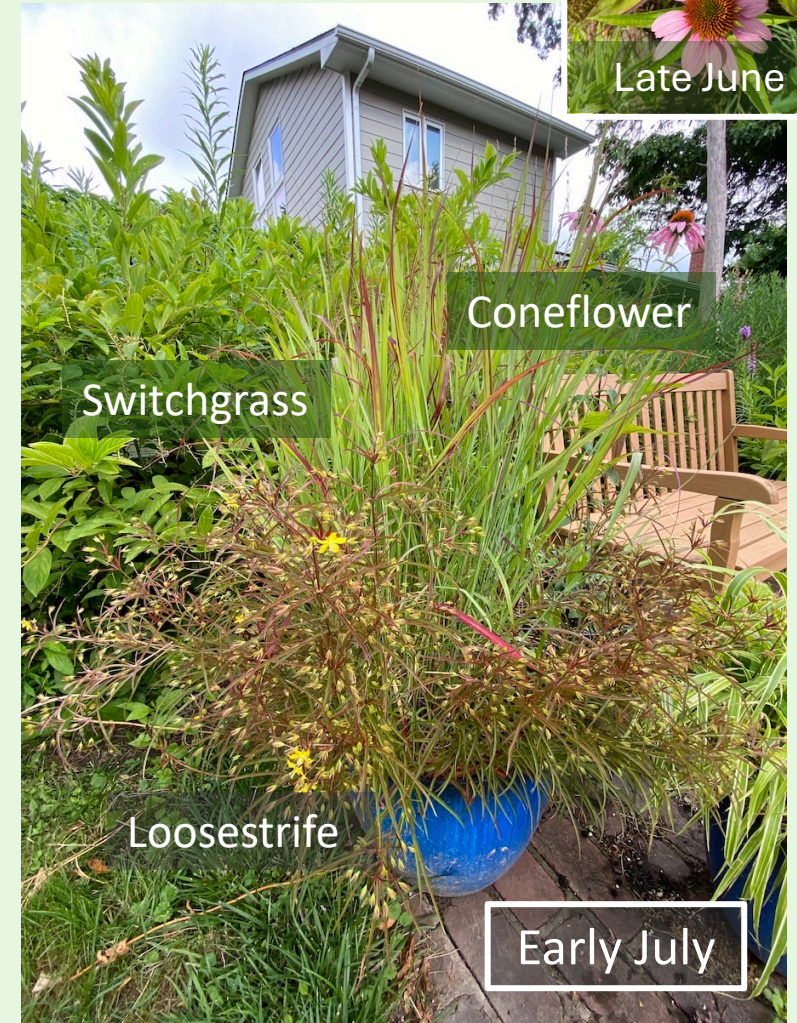
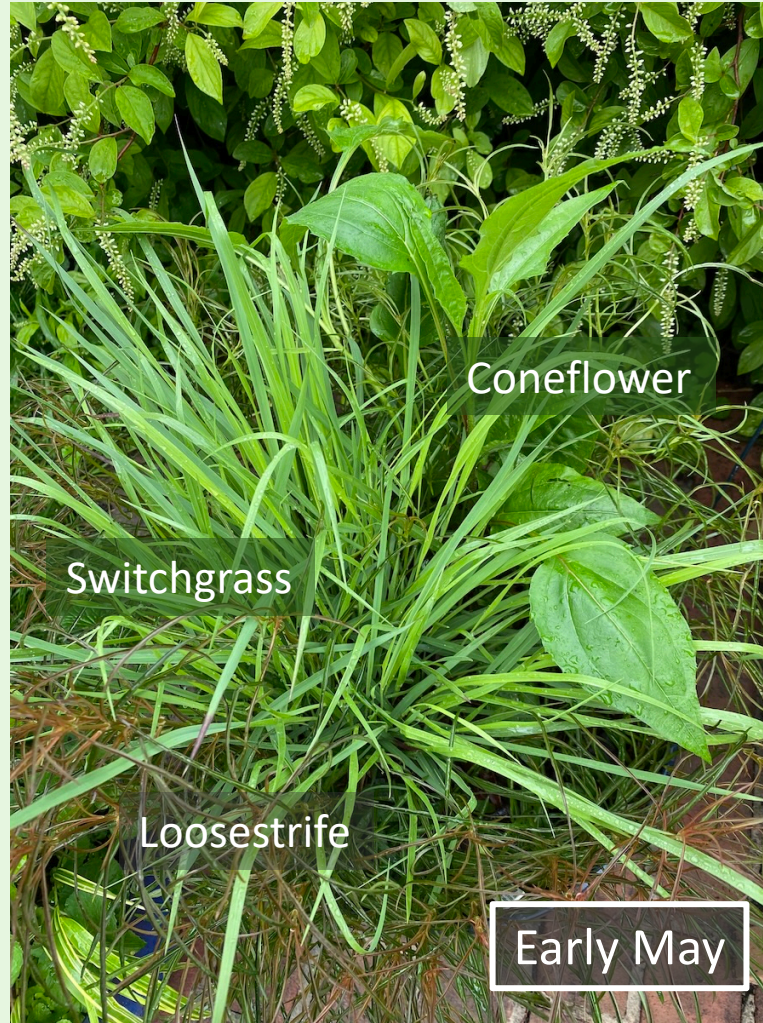
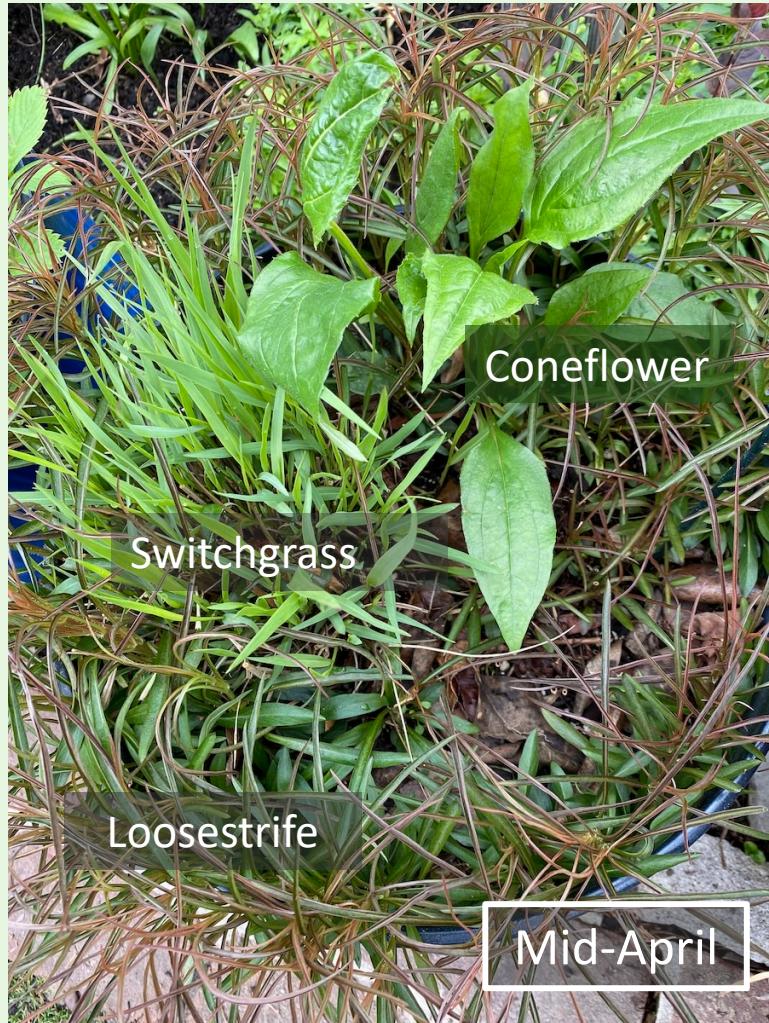
Thriller: Purple Coneflower

Filler: 'Shenandoah' Switchgrass

Spiller: 'Burgundy Mist' Lanceleaf Loosestrife



# Development through seasons



# Glencarlyn Garden

For sun

Thriller: Clustered Mountain-mint

Filler/Spiller: Virginia Creeper



# Glencarlynn Garden

For part-shade to shade

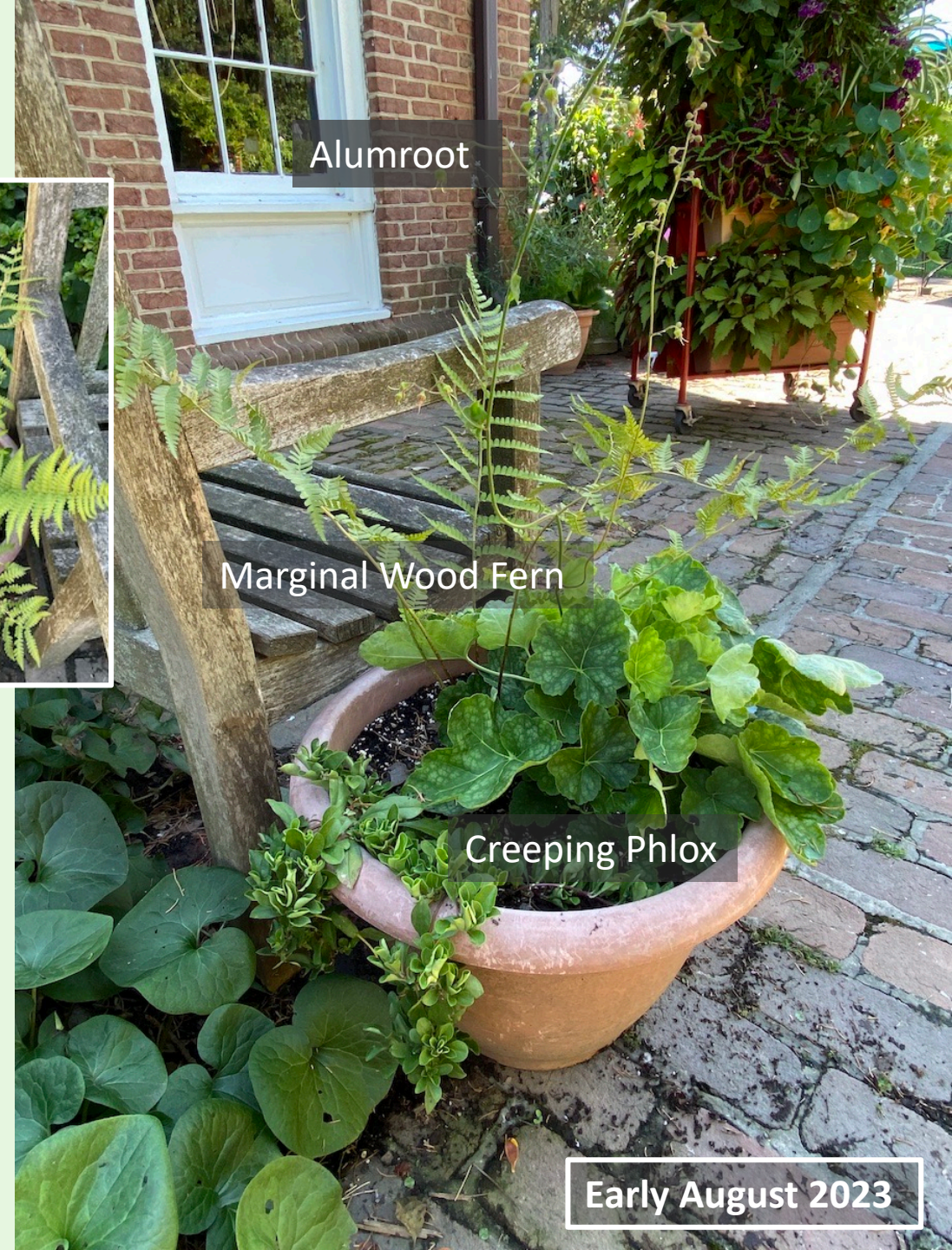
Thriller: Alumroot

Filler: Marginal Wood Fern

Spiller: Creeping Phlox



Marginal Wood Fern



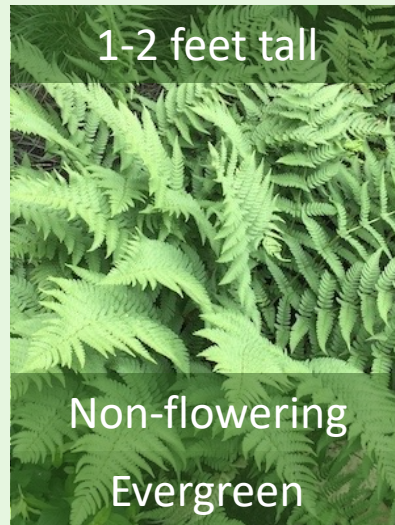
Alumroot

Creeping Phlox



9- 24 inches tall

Blooms in June



1-2 feet tall

Non-flowering  
Evergreen



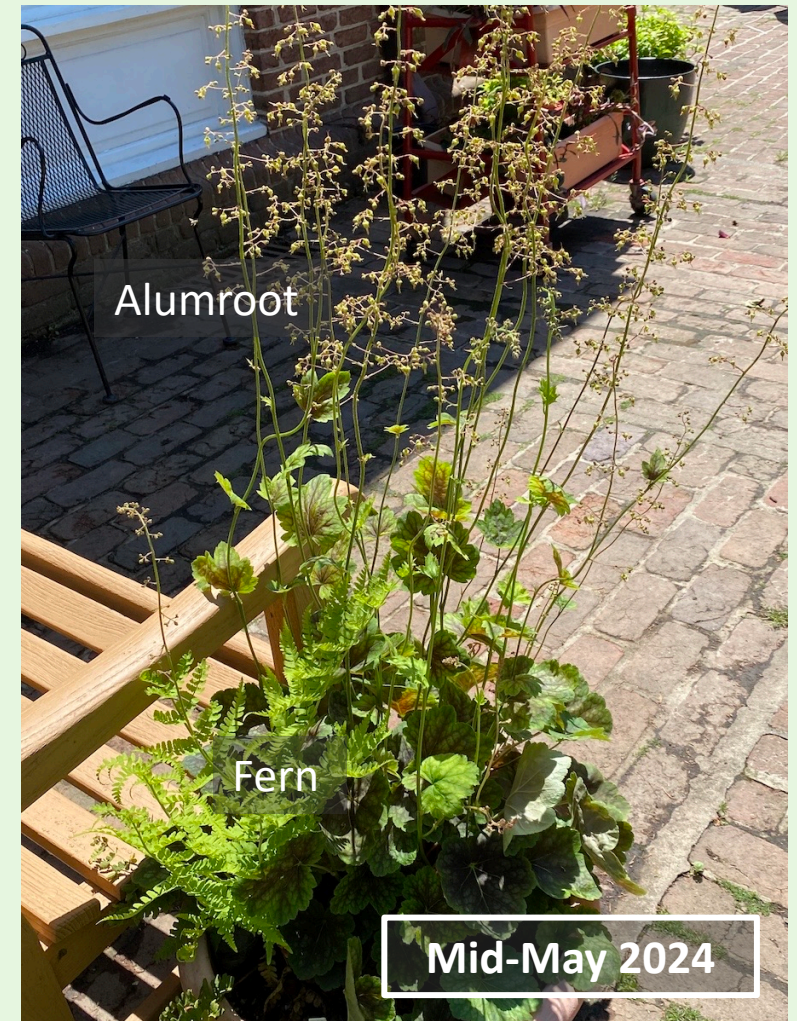
6-12 inches tall

Blooms in April

Early August 2023

# Change over time - 1 year later

- Alumroot foliage variation more marked
- Alumroot flowers more abundant
- Evergreen fern put on luxuriant new growth
- Phlox has died out due to loss of shade tree
- Be aware of environmental impacts



# Two years later

Plant moved to shade



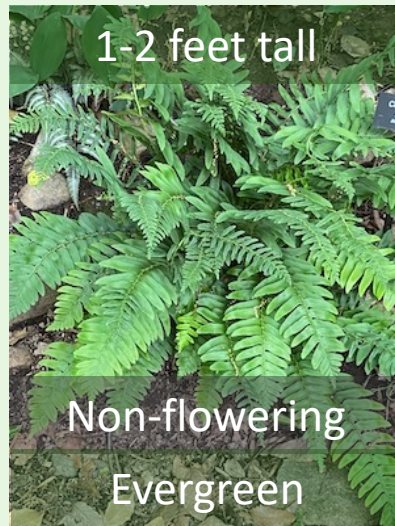
# Glencarlyn Garden

For part-shade to shade

Thriller: Thimbleweed

Filler: Christmas Fern

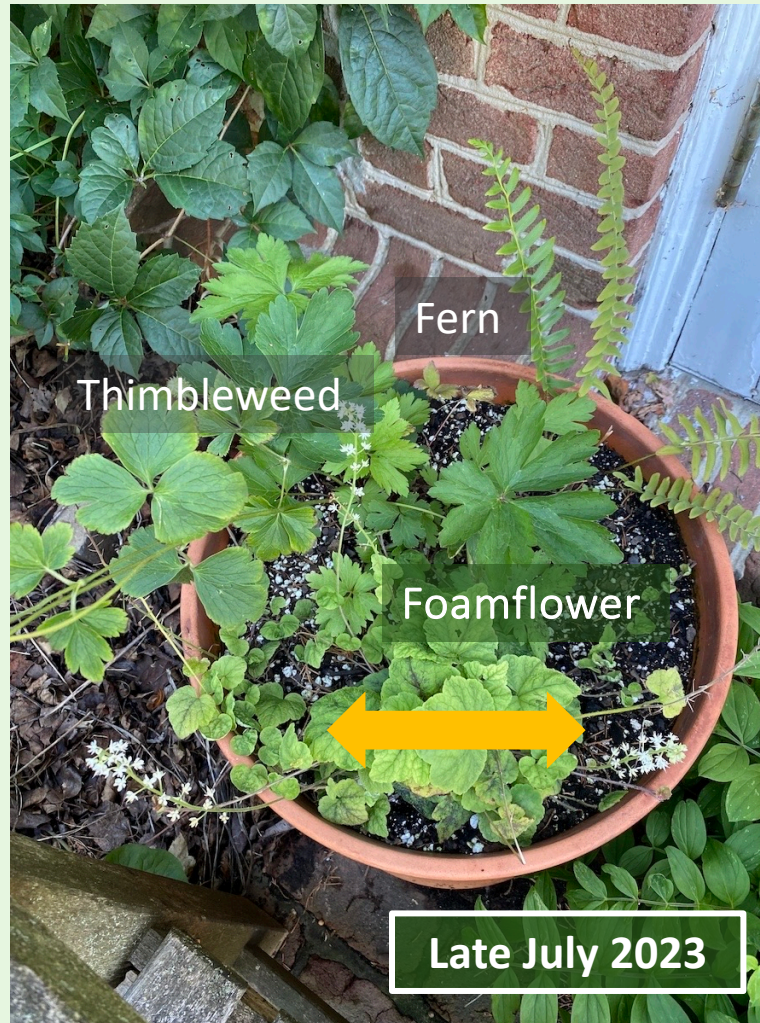
Spiller: 'Running Tapestry' Foamflower



Late June 2024

# Change over time - 1 year later

- Foliage of Thimbleweed fuller
- Foamflower foliage variation more marked
- Foamflower spreading by stolons in 1<sup>st</sup> year
- Foamflower spilling over edge by mid-June



# Change over time - 1 year later

- Need to tidy up dead foliage from 1<sup>st</sup> year
- Evergreen fern sends up fiddleheads in April
- Fronds lush in May
- Flower stalks of Thimbleweed need support



# Two years later

Moved to shade



Dramatic seed heads



Trailing stems



# Small Space Garden

For sun

Thriller: Orange Coneflower

Filler: Butterfly-weed

Spiller: 'Snow Flurry' Heath Aster



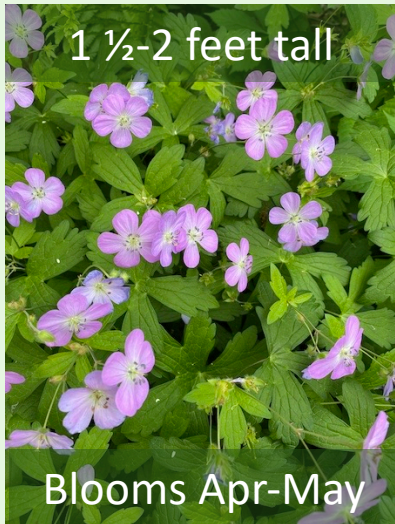
# Small Space Garden

For part-shade

Thriller: Wild Geranium

Filler: Alumroot

Spiller: Blue-eyed Grass



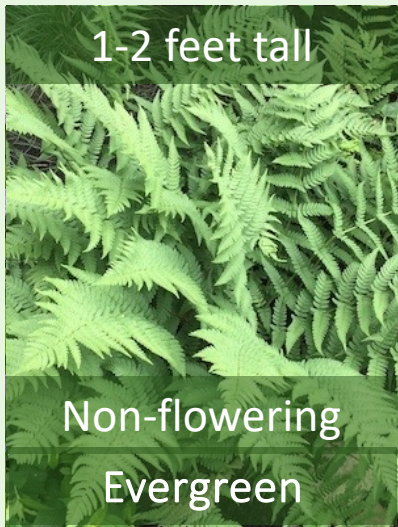
# Small Space Garden

For Shade

Thriller: Marginal Wood Fern

Filler: Foamflower

Spiller: Wild Stonecrop



# Mt. Cuba Center

For sun

Thriller: 'Shenandoah' Switchgrass

Filler: 'Avondale' Blue Wood Aster

Spiller: 'Citronelle' Coral Bells



# Mt. Cuba Center

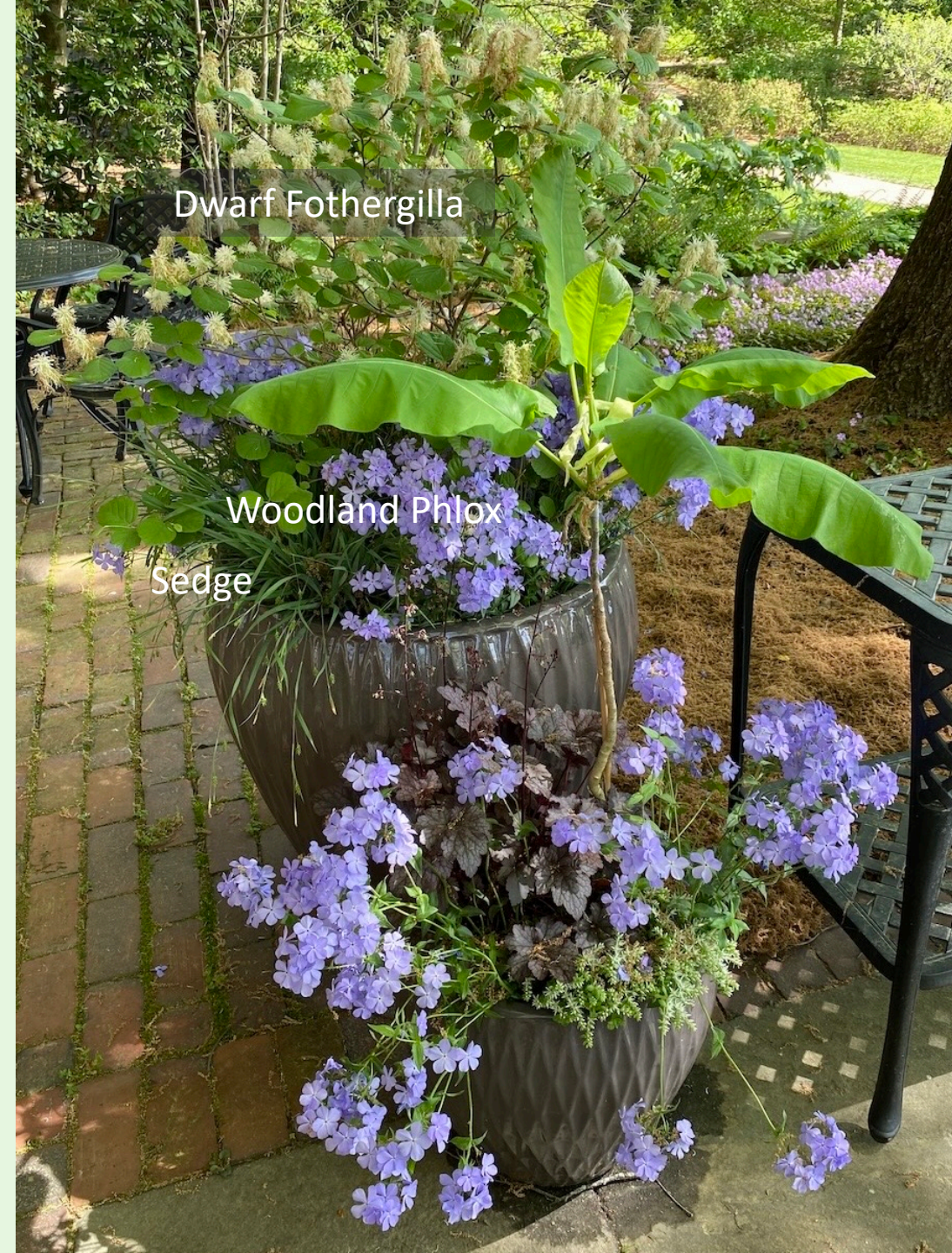
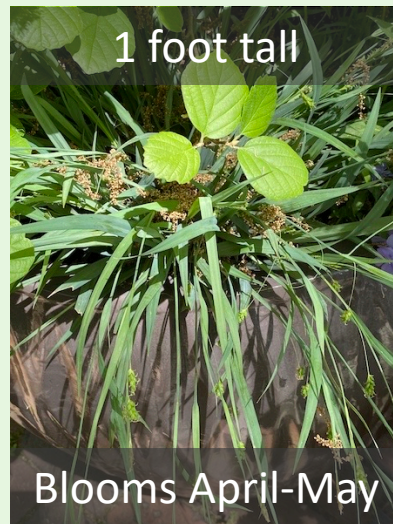
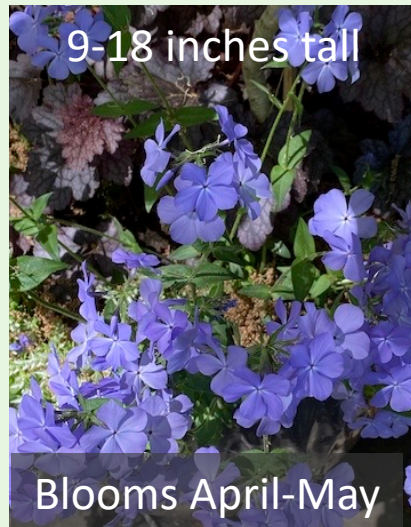
Pair of combination pots for shade:

*Larger pot*

Thriller: Dwarf Fothergilla

Filler: Woodland Phlox

Spiller: Sedge (Cherokee Sedge?)



# Mt. Cuba Center

*Smaller pot*

Thriller: Dwarf Bigleaf Magnolia

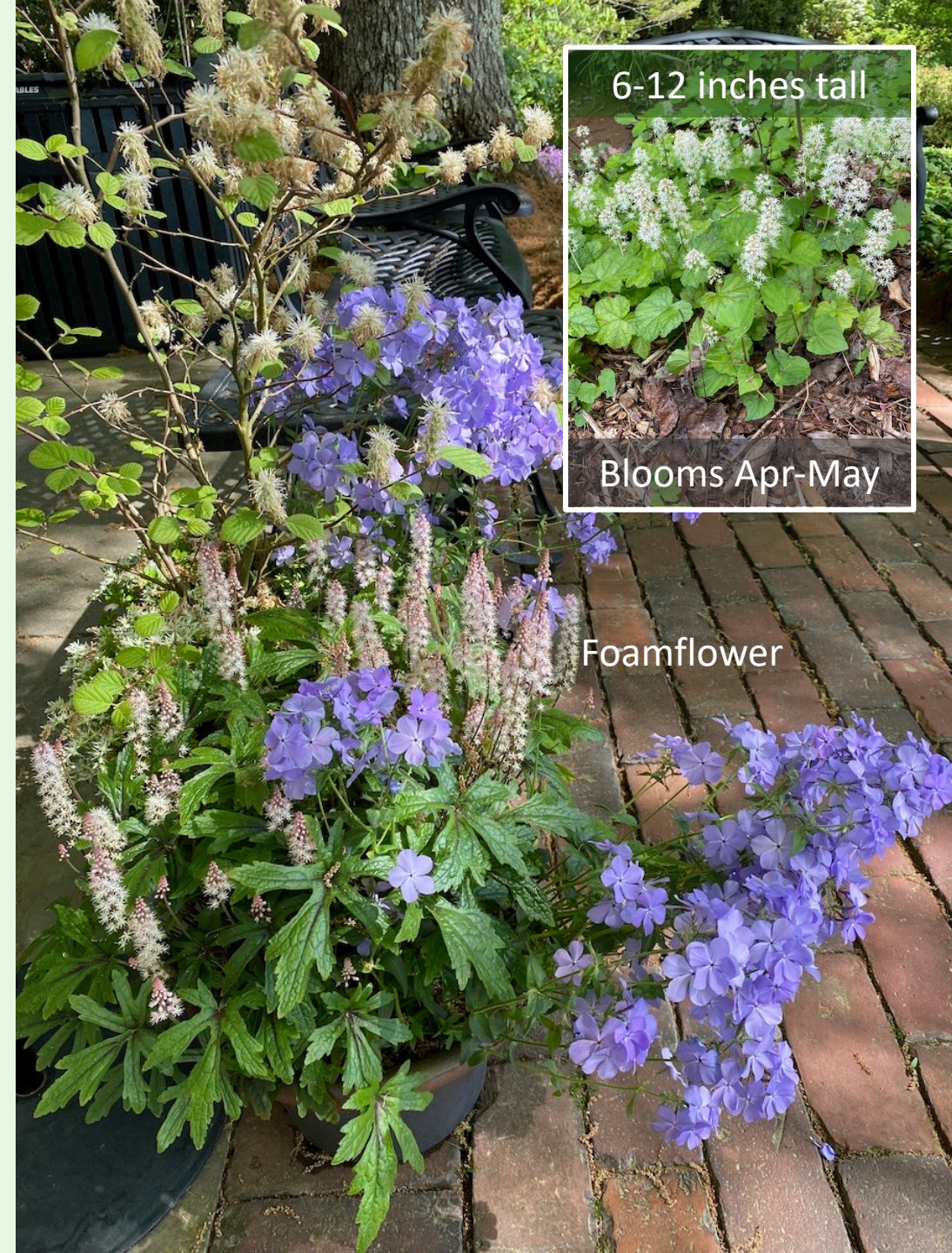
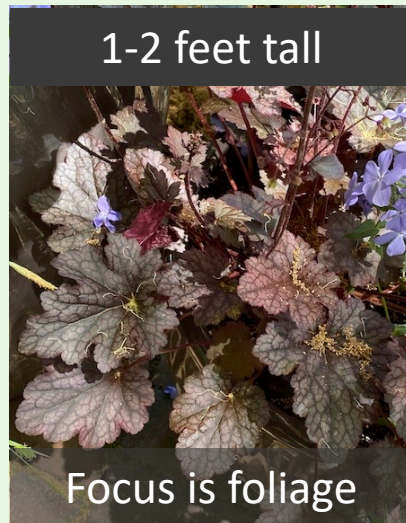
Filler: Woodland Phlox

+ 'Palace Purple' Coral Bells

Spiller: Wild Stonecrop



Scott Zona



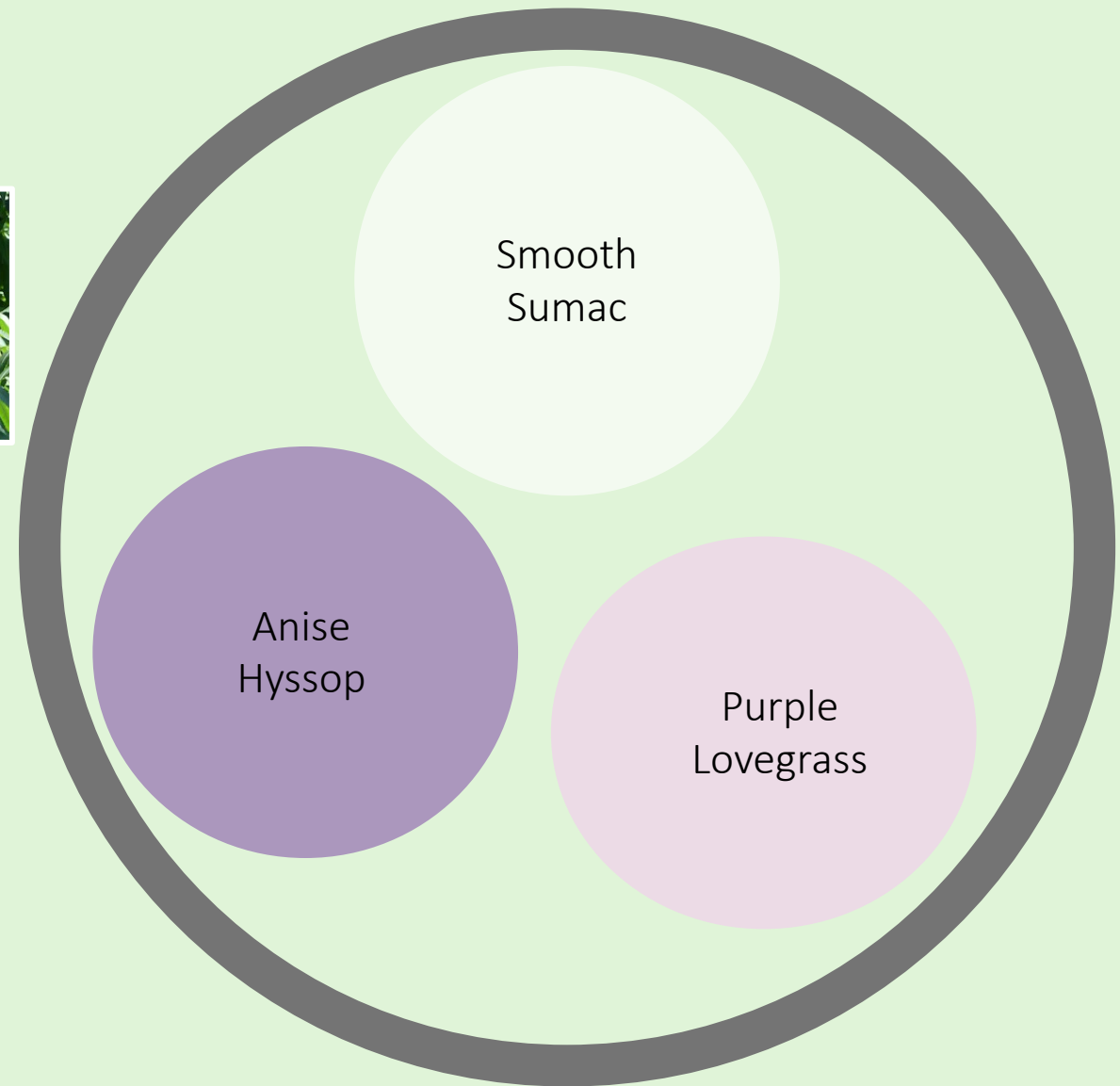
# NoVA Bird Alliance

Shrub/perennial combination  
for sun

Thriller: Smooth Sumac

Filler: Anise Hyssop

Spiller: Purple Lovegrass



**Shrub has fruit & fall color.**

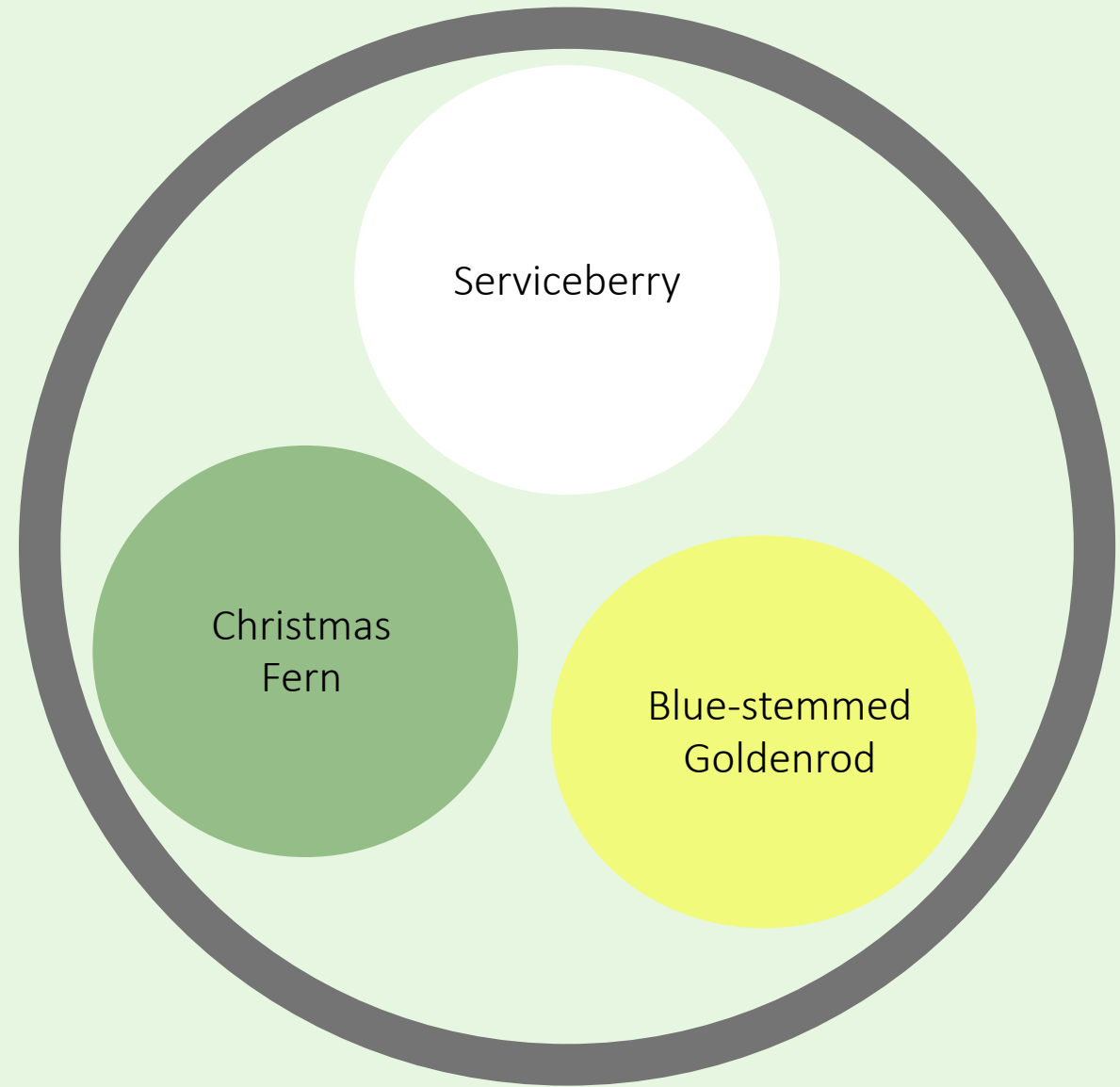
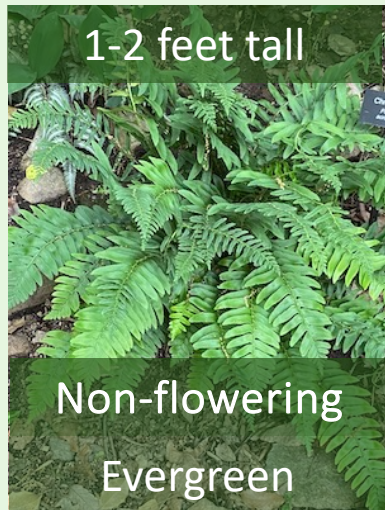
# NoVA Bird Alliance

Small tree/perennial combination for part-sun to part-shade

Thriller: Serviceberry

Filler: Christmas Fern

Spiller: Blue-stemmed Goldenrod



**Tree has fruit & fall color.**

# NoVA Bird Alliance

Shrub/perennial combination for part-shade to shade

Thriller: Flowering Raspberry

Filler: Bottlebrush Grass

Spiller: Blue Wood Aster



3-6 feet tall



Blooms Jun-Aug



2-4 feet tall

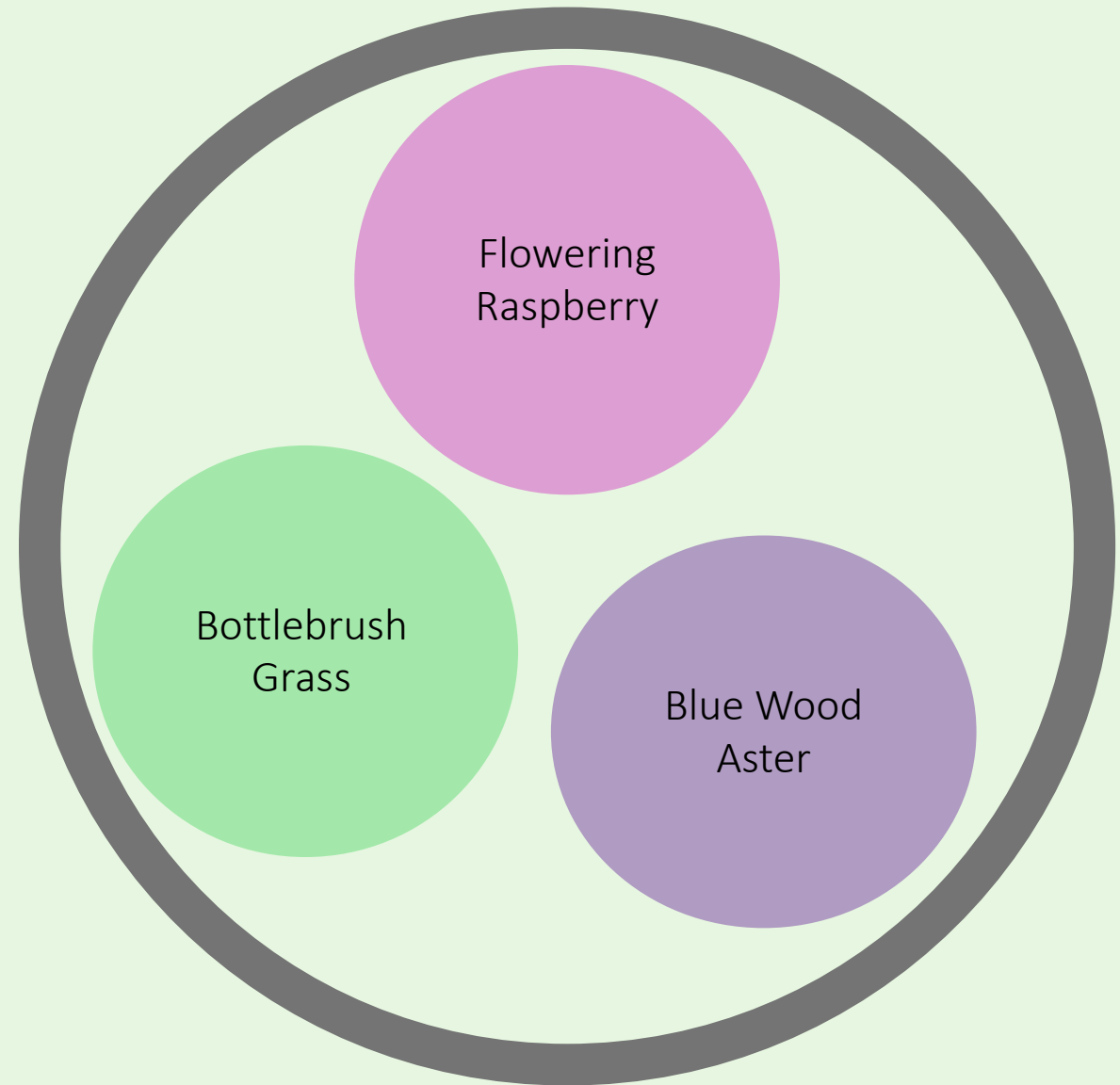
Blooms Jun-Feb



2-3 feet tall

Blooms Sep-Oct

Stephanie Brundage



**Grass turns tan & retains seed heads**

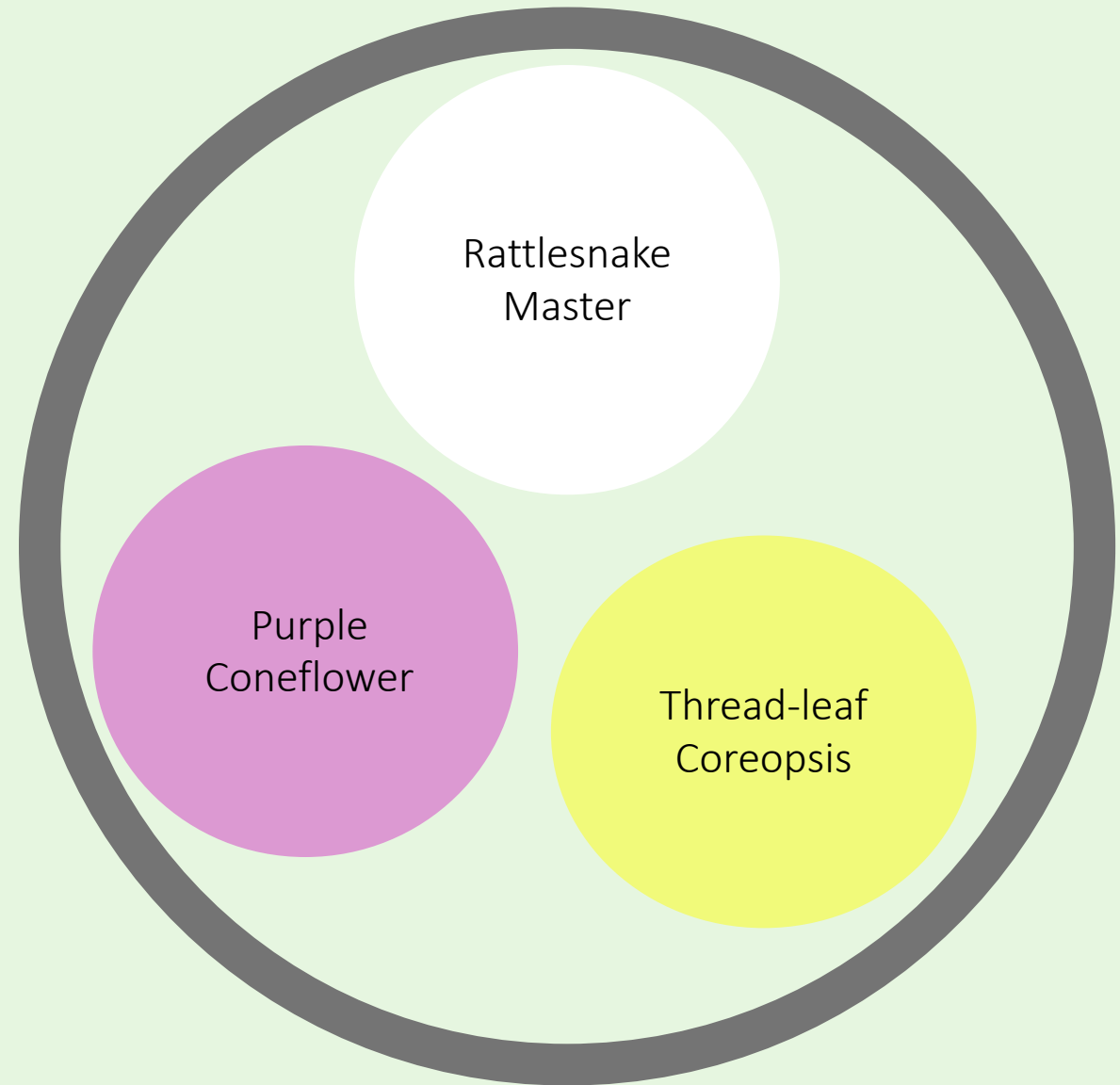
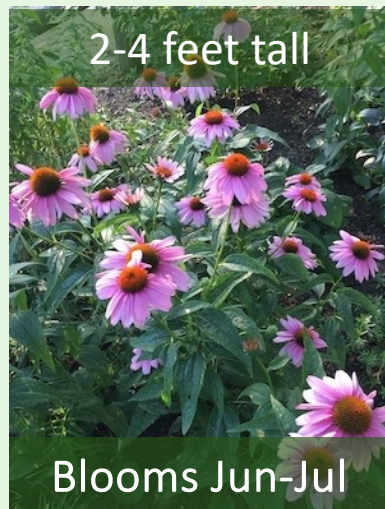
# NoVA Bird Alliance

Perennial combination for sun

Thriller: Rattlesnake Master

Filler: Purple Coneflower

Spiller: Thread-leaf Coreopsis



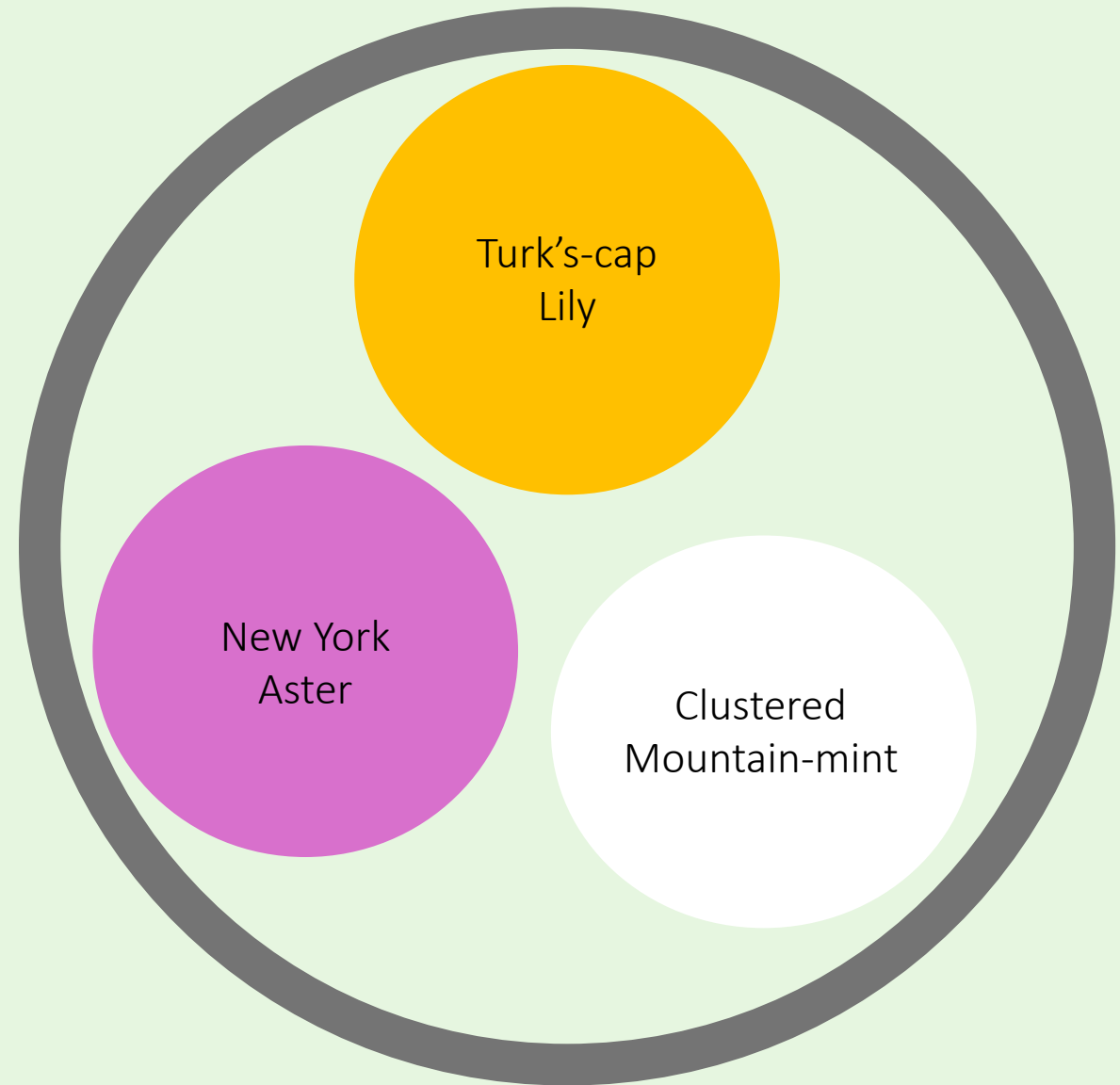
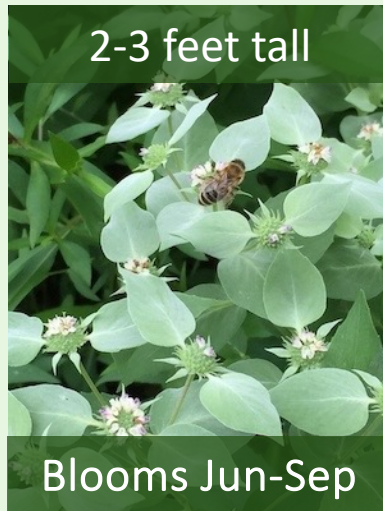
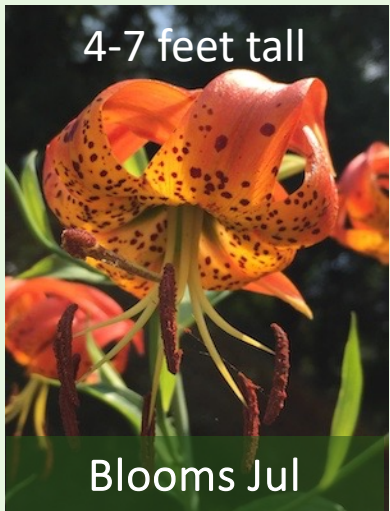
# NoVA Bird Alliance

Perennial combination for sun

Thriller: Turk's-cap Lily

Filler: New York Aster

Spiller: Clustered Mountain-mint

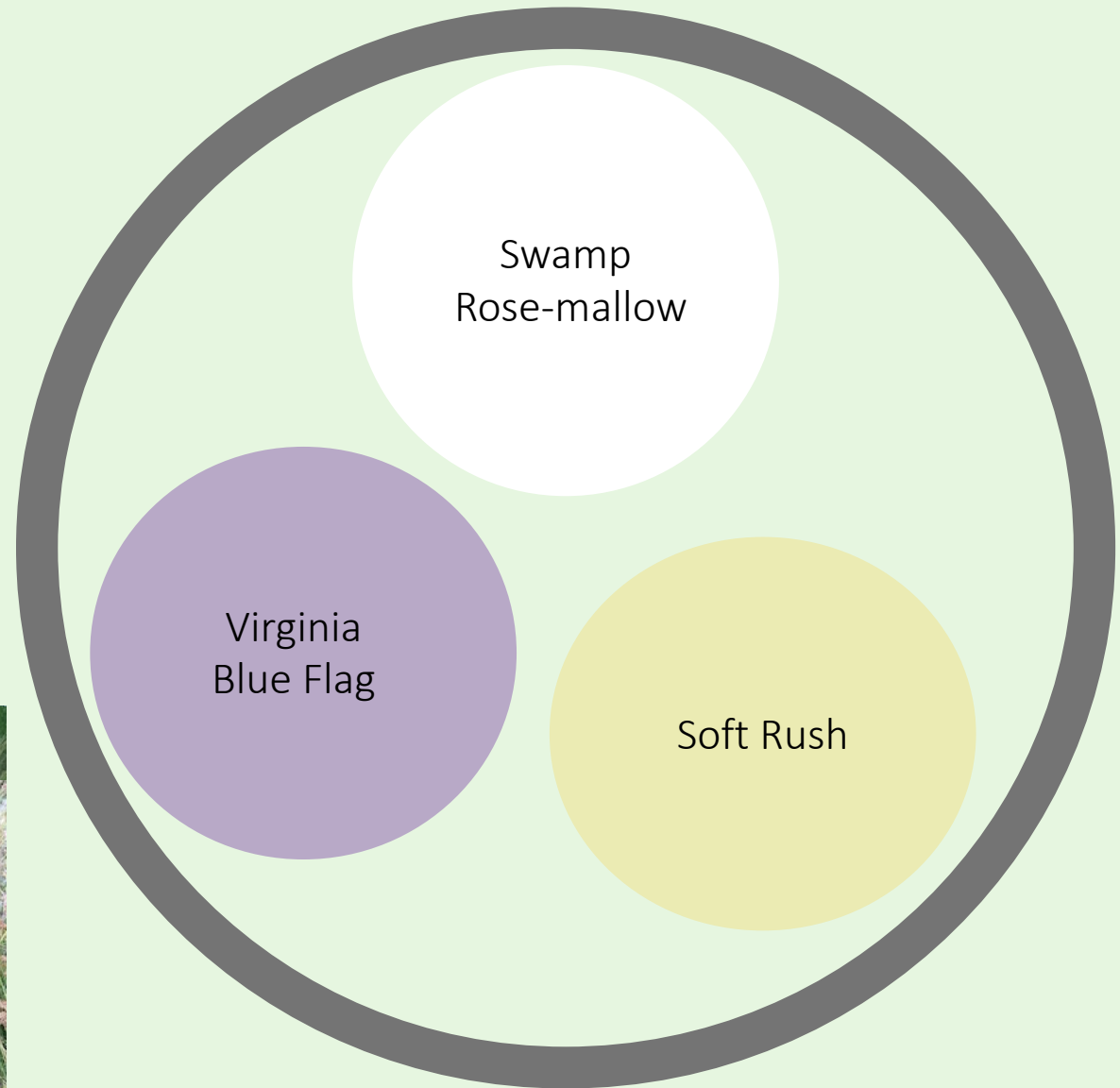
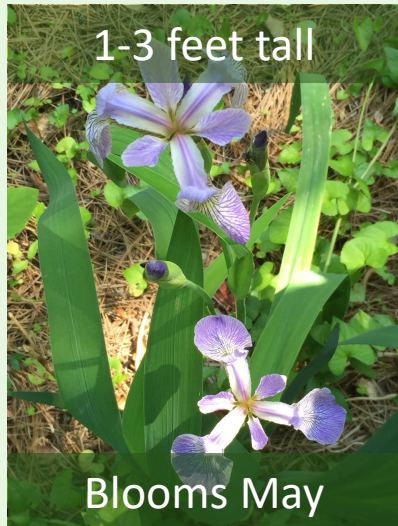


**Mint is highly-rated pollinator plant.**

# NoVA Bird Alliance

## Wetland planter for sun:

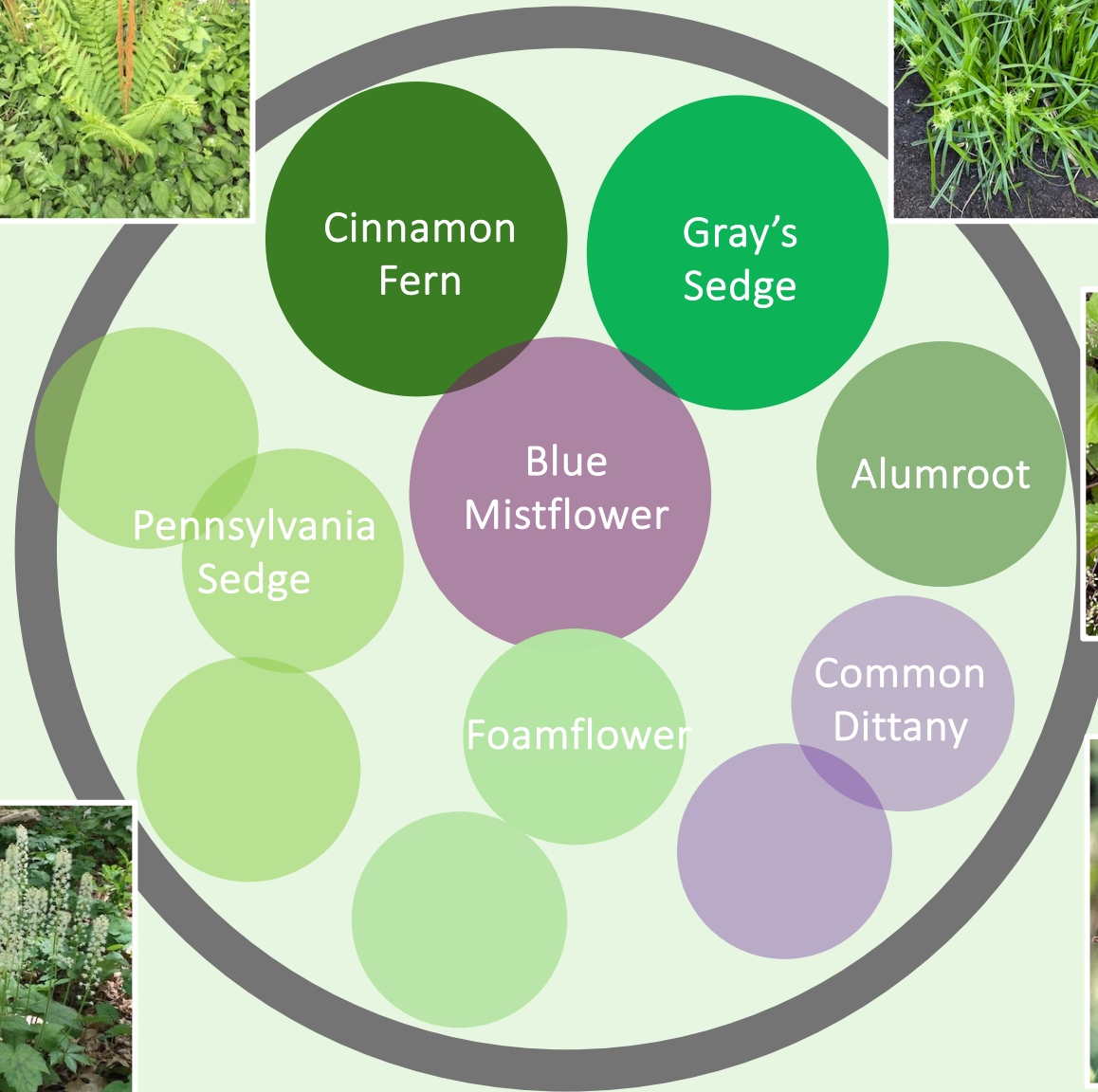
- Thriller: Swamp Rose-mallow
- Filler: Virginia Blue Flag
- Spiller: Soft Rush



# Missouri Botanical Garden

Perennial combination for shade

- Cinnamon Fern
- Gray's Sedge
- Blue Mistflower
- Alumroot
- Common Dittany
- Foamflower
- Pennsylvania Sedge



# Grouping pots



Group with contrasting textures



Grouped pots of different sizes



Different heights



Identical pots arranged for dramatic effect

# Thematic grouping for hummingbirds

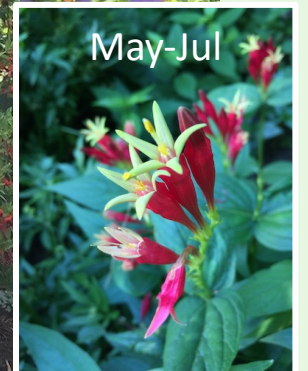
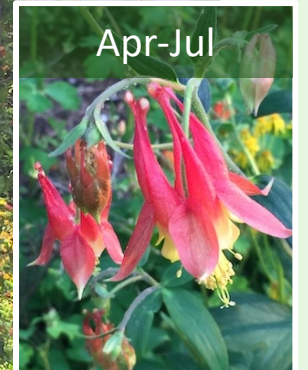
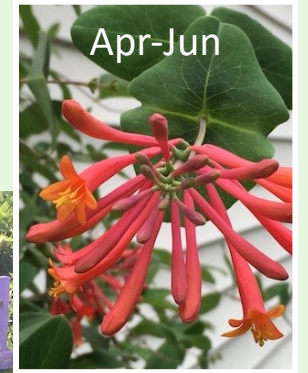
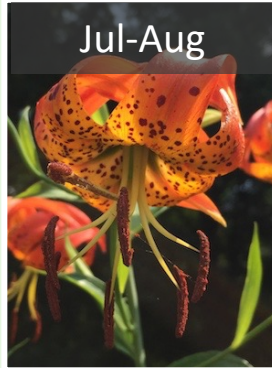
Hummingbirds present in Mid-Atlantic:  
April-October in VA, MD, DE & NJ  
Mid-April to late September in PA

## On trellis:

- Trumpet Honeysuckle

## In containers:

- Wild Columbine
- Indian Pink
- Scarlet Beebalm
- Turk's Cap Lily
- Cardinal Flower



# Kusamono containers

- Japanese botanical art form creating miniature scenes of nature
- Displayed alone or as accent to bonsai
- Capture essence of a particular season or habitat
- Potted arrangements of wild plants: Mosses, ferns, grasses, sedges, flowers



# Resources on container gardening

## Homegrown National Park

Get on the MAP! HOME GROWN NATIONAL PARK HNPark.org

### Container Gardening Keystone Plants List

#### 8.3 Southeastern USA Plains

**Lanceleaf Coreopsis**  
(*Coreopsis lanceolata*)



**LIGHT:** Full sun  
**WATER:** Low  
**SEASON OF INTEREST:** Late spring through mid summer  
**HEIGHT:** 1-2 ft  
**DURATION:** Perennial  
Relatively free of pests and naturally resistant to deer, this attractive yellow flower draws a wide array of native pollinators. In the right conditions, this plant grows quickly and can self seed.  
\*Not native to PA or NJ

**Swamp Sunflower**  
(*Helianthus angustifolius*)



**LIGHT:** Full sun to partial sun  
**WATER:** Average to high  
**SEASON OF INTEREST:** Fall  
**HEIGHT:** 5-8 ft  
**DURATION:** Perennial  
This late blooming sunflower is an important resource of food in the fall. This species is deer resistant, should be grown with support, and is branching when pruned in early summer.  
\*Not native to northern parts of ecoregion

**Common Evening Primrose**  
(*Oenothera biennis*)



**LIGHT:** Full sun to partial sun  
**WATER:** Low to average  
**SEASON OF INTEREST:** Summer through fall  
**HEIGHT:** 3-5 ft  
**DURATION:** Perennial  
This fragrant flower produces a profusion of yellow flowers that open in the evening and close in the morning. This species blooms in its second year, and the whole plant is edible.

**Black-Eyed Susan**  
(*Rudbeckia hirta*)



**LIGHT:** Full sun  
**WATER:** Low to average  
**SEASON OF INTEREST:** Summer through fall  
**HEIGHT:** 2-3 ft  
**DURATION:** Short-lived perennial  
This short-lived perennial with 3 inch blooms self seeds and can tolerate a wide range of growing conditions. It has no serious pests or diseases and is deer resistant.

**Wreath Goldenrod**  
(*Solidago caesia*)



**LIGHT:** Full sun to partial sun  
**WATER:** Low to average  
**SEASON OF INTEREST:** Late summer through fall  
**HEIGHT:** 1-3 ft  
**DURATION:** Perennial  
This plant bears a profusion of flowers in late summer that are highly attractive to a variety of species. This less aggressive goldenrod is deer resistant with no serious pests or diseases.

**Old Field Goldenrod**  
(*Solidago nemoralis*)



**LIGHT:** Full sun  
**WATER:** Low to average  
**SEASON OF INTEREST:** Summer through fall  
**HEIGHT:** 1-2 ft  
**DURATION:** Perennial  
This plant is a less-aggressive, shorter alternative to tall goldenrod. Its showy, yellow flowers are attractive to birds and pollinators and provides a splash of color to the late season. It can tolerate poor, dry soil.


### AAH Wildlife Waystations: Captivating Containers with Native Plants

By Leigh Pickering, ARMN co-coordinator for Audubon at Home Wildlife Sanctuary Certification Program

#### Overview/Introduction

If you live in an apartment or townhouse with a balcony, patio, or very small yard space to connect to the natural world around you. In order to attract and support a garden comprised largely of native plants in containers or small planting areas solution. A surprising number of insects, birds and even small mammals are drawn to these gardens.

The Audubon at Home program encourages you to beautify and increase the wildlife spaces. Although much of this content is directed to container gardening, patios and larger extensions of the same concept, with the possible advantage of natural soil replenishment.



Ten bees and a Skipper forage on Agastache

#### General considerations on gardening with native plants in

Many native plants make excellent specimens for container and small space garden planting, limitations include: site conditions such as sun and wind exposure, size of container, and attractiveness of the plant's appearance over time. Other factors include appropriate initial soil mix and ongoing maintenance needs. All of these factors are important to consider when selecting plants for your container garden.

Care in plant species selection can result in a more successful planting from the perspective of wildlife. The biomass of plants in containers can have a big impact in attracting wildlife to container plantings. The biomass of plants in containers can have a big impact in attracting wildlife to container plantings. The biomass of plants in containers can have a big impact in attracting wildlife to container plantings.

MISSOURI BOTANICAL GARDEN

Visit Things To Do Learn & Discover Gardens & Gardening Sustainability Plant Conservation Plant Science

Gardens & Gardening > Your Garden > Help for the Home Gardener > Advice, Tips & Resources > Visual Guides > Container Gardening with Native Plants

### Gardening Help

Plant Finder  
Lawn, Landscape & Garden Design  
Edible Gardening  
Advice, Tips & Resources

### Container Gardening with Native Plants

by Anne Kirkpatrick

Virtually any native plant that captures your fancy can be grown in containers if you understand its natural environment. Following is a selection of native plants that make excellent plants to start with. They are divided into "Fillers" – good plants to add mass to your container, "Thrillers" – plants with some striking characteristics that will draw attention to your container, and "Spillers" – plants that will drape over the sides of your container. Water gardens are also included.

### Container Gardening for Earth Renewal

Growing native plants in containers is surprisingly easy and provides plenty of useful wildlife habitat. Bees, butterflies, and hummingbirds will happily find your balcony. Imagine the potential if every city dweller with a front stoop or balcony put out containers with native plants!

If you live in a neighborhood with high deer or rabbit pressure, your deck might be the place to grow those more vulnerable plants you have been yearning for.

Containers can bring needed height to a garden bed or a woodland path. They can also elevate and showcase small species that might otherwise get lost in a fully planted setting.

#### A few easy plant combinations for a medium sized pot (1-2 feet in diameter)

**For sun**  
Spring - Moss Phlox, Foxglove Beardtongue, Blue-eyed Grass (*Phlox subulata*, *Penstemon digitalis*, *Sisyrinchium angustifolium*)  
Summer - Orange Coneflower, Switchgrass, Yarrow (*Rudbeckia fulgida*, *Panicum virgatum*, *Achillea millefolium*)  
Fall - Aromatic Aster, Muhly Grass, Rough Goldenrod 'Fireworks' - (*Symphotrichum oblongifolium*, *Muhlenbergia capillaris*, *Solidago rugosa* 'Fireworks')



Aromatic Aster, Muhly Grass, Rough Goldenrod

**For shade or part shade**  
Spring - Woodland Phlox, Fringed Bleeding Heart, Blue-eyed Grass (*Phlox divaricata*, *Dicentra eximia*, *Sisyrinchium angustifolium*)  
Summer - Blue Mistflower, Great Blue Lobelia, Pennsylvania Sedge (*Conoclinium coelestinum*, *Lobelia siphilitica*, *Carex pensylvanica*)  
Fall - Northern Maidenhair Fern, Blue Mistflower, Coral Bells (*Adiantum pedatum*, *Conoclinium coelestinum*, *Heuchera americana*)

**For butterflies**  
For sun - Butterfly Weed, Thread-leaf Coreopsis, Wild strawberry, Spike Gayfeather (*Asclepias tuberosa*, *Coreopsis verticillata*, *Fragaria virginiana*, *Liatris spicata*)

**For hummingbirds**  
For part sun - Dwarf Crested Iris, Foxglove Beardtongue, Beebalm, Purple Giant Hyssop (*Iris cristata*, *Penstemon digitalis*, *Monarda didyma*, *Agastache scrophulariifolia*)



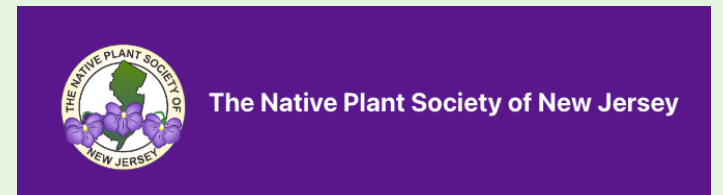
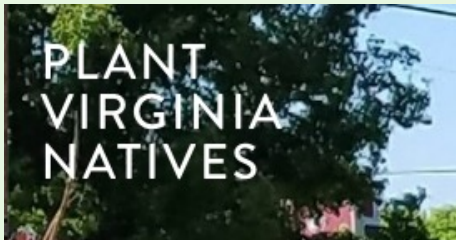
Containers with native plants but do follow the same principles as plants in your landscape and another plant in your landscape and another plant that can be grown from seed or cuttings.

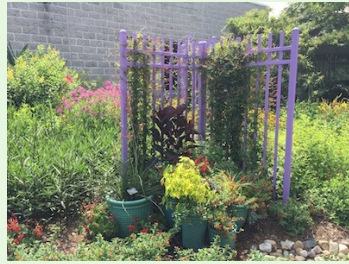
Containers is Shaw Nature Reserve's combination of plants in colorful planters in hollow stumps and sections of water garden plants, require planters depend on plant requirements. Plants that appeal to you and will grow in your landscape.

Grow Native: Missouri Native Plant -

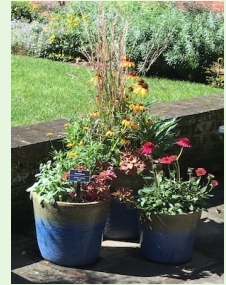
average, dry to medium soil in full sun. Plants typically grow 12-18" tall. Stumps of flat, narrow, grass-like (l) and tiny bell-shaped, pink to lilac (lily white) flowers which appear in clusters atop erect leafless scapes. Summer.

# Where to buy native plants





Thank you  
for attending  
today's presentation!



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