

# West Virginia Native Plants with Good Landscape Potential

Assembled by William N. Grafton  
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West Virginia University Extension Service  
Wildlife Specialist  
Forester and Botanist Extraordinaire  
CoEditor: *Checklist and Atlas of the Vascular Flora of West Virginia*

Common Name  
Generic Name  
Description

## Golden Aster

*Heterotheca mariana*

Perennial of dry openings; 1' tall; showy 1" wide, golden-yellow flowers in autumn; single stems

## Stiff Aster

*Aster linariifolius*

Perennial of dry open woods and moist, sandy riverbanks; 1' tall; showy 2" flowers that are violet or white in autumn; grows in clumps of 5-20 stems

## Rocktwist

*Draba ramosissima*

Perennial of rock outcrops and open barren soil; 6-8" tall; small clusters of white flowers; leaves with interesting jagged margins and seed pods strongly twisted

## Goat's Rue

*Tephrosia virginiana*

Perennial legume of dry open soils; 1' tall; plants covered with long white hairs; flowers yellowish-white and marked with purple, about 1" across, very showy, bloom during summer; bean-like pods in showy whorls

### **Wild Liveforever**

#### ***Sedum telephioides***

Tufted perennials of barren dry soils or rock outcrops; fleshy, purplish leaves; evergreen; flowers pinkish and not especially showy

### **Fern-leaved Yellow Foxglove**

#### ***Gerardia pedicularia***

Perennial clumps of 3-6 stems; 2-4' tall; dry soil; shade to open sunlight; bright yellow flowers are about 1" wide and bloom during autumn; leaves with delicate fern-like pattern

### **Downy Yellow Foxglove**

#### ***Gerardia virginica***

Perennial clumps of 3-6 stems; 2-4' tall; dry soil; shade to open; large 1-2" wide bright yellow flowers bloom for 1-2 months in autumn

### **Mosspink**

#### ***Phlox subulata***

Low matted perennial of dry, poor openings and banks; frequently planted but is a native plant; can provide spectacular splashes of pink, purple or white flowers

### **Shale Bindweed**

#### ***Convolvulus purshianus***

Perennial of dry, open soils that spreads from deep rootstocks to form colonies; 1-2' tall, light green hairy leaves; large, showy white "morning glory" type flowers

### **Orange Puccoon**

#### ***Lithospermum canescens***

Perennial 1' tall in dry open soils; orange flowers in mid-spring

### **Galax**

#### ***Galax aphylla***

Perennial evergreen plant about 1' tall; dark green, heart-shaped leathery leaves frequently turn reddish in late winter; 2-5" spike of small white flowers appears in summer to provide a nice splash of color; dry to moist soils, shade

**Box Huckleberry*****Gaylussacia brachycera***

Perennial, evergreen woody shrub 1-2 feet tall; dry soils, shade to partial sunlight; shiny dark green leaves make this an excellent medium sized ground cover for small mammals and songbirds

**Shale Evening-Primrose*****Oenothera argillicola***

Scraggly perennial 2-3' tall of very poor and dry soils; large bright yellow flower that blooms during autumn more than make up for a shabby looking plant

**Birdfoot Violet*****Viola pedata***

Perennial from rootstock; dry soils; leaves deeply cut into 3-7 sections; showy flowers usually with 2 upper petals being dark violet and 3 lower a lighter blue color; blooms in early to mid-spring

**Crossvine*****Bignonia capreolata***

Woody vine climbing 10-40' up in trees by tendrils; rich soil; shade or open; interesting leaves in pairs; orange or reddish showy tubular flowers, 1-2" long, in spring; semi-evergreen

**Virginia Creeper*****Parthenocissus quinquefolia***

Woody vine climbing by tendrils to 40-60' height in trees; seeds eaten by songbirds and wildlife; fall foliage often a spectacular red in autumn

**Climbing Bittersweet*****Celastrus scandens***

Woody vine climbing 20-40' up in trees by twining which can eventually choke and kill the host; yellow and orange capsules split to reveal showy scarlet seeds in autumn

**Great Blue Lobelia*****Lobelia siphilitica***

Perennial of stream banks and wet soils; 1-2' tall; spike of bright blue or bluish-white flowers at top of stem; blooms late-summer and fall

**Cardinal-flower*****Lobelia cardinalis***

Perennial of stream banks and wet soils; 1-3' tall; spike of brilliant, bright scarlet flowers at top; blooms in late-summer and fall

**Purple-stem Aster*****Aster puniceus***

Tall perennial aster of saturated soils; red or purple stem, showy white to lilac flowers on 3-6' tall stem during autumn

**Swamp Milkweed*****Asclepias incarnata***

Perennial of wet saturated soils; 3-4' tall; attractive to butterflies; numerous bunches of small pink or purple flowers in late summer

**Blue Vervain*****Verbena hastata***

Perennial with square stem, 3-5' tall, wet or moist soils; 10-20 spikes of small blue flowers that bloom in the autumn season; blooms over a period of 1-2 months

**Marsh Marigold*****Caltha palustris***

Perennial clumps to 15" tall; bright yellow flowers spring; wet saturated soils

**Burnet*****Sanguisorba canadensis***

Perennial of wet meadows and low ground, 2-4' tall, dense showy 3-6" long spikes of white flowers in late summer and autumn; large compound leaves with toothed margins

**Swamp Rose Mallow*****Hibiscus moscheutos***

Perennial of set areas and shallow water or stream banks; to 7' tall; very large (4-6" wide) white or creamy flowers in autumn, flowers in bloom for several weeks

### **Swamp Candles or Bulbous Loosestrife**

#### ***Lysimachia terrestris***

Perennial of wet openings and swamps; to 2' tall; 2-6" spike of light yellow flowers at top of plant

### **Giant Sunflower**

#### ***Helianthus giganteus***

Tall perennial (5-10' tall); wet openings; yellow flowers, 1-2" wide, bloom in autumn, numerous flowers per plant

### **Duck Potato**

#### ***Sagittaria latifolia***

Perennial from a bulb; prefers mud or shallow water; large shiny triangular leaf, dark green; 1" wide showy white flowers on a separate stalk from leaves, bloom late summer; food source (bulbs) for waterfowl and wetland wildlife

### **Christmas Fern**

#### ***Polystichum acrostichoides***

Evergreen perennial; prefers moist soils, open or shade; to 2' tall, 10-20 leaves per clump

### **Royal Fern**

#### ***Osmunda regalis***

Perennial clump, to 4' tall; moist to wet soils, open sunlight best, usually 5-8 leaves per clump; spores green-brown at top of leaf; beautiful fern with numerous small leaflets

### **Cinnamon Fern**

#### ***Osmunda cinnamomea***

Perennial clump, up to 3' tall; moist to wet soils; shade or open; usually 6-10 leaves per clump; spore stalk separate from leaves; stalks covered with cinnamon hairs in spring

### **Interrupted Fern**

#### ***Osmunda claytoniana***

Perennial clump to 3' tall; moist to wet soils; shade or open; usually 6-10 leaves in a clump, spores are a green-brown interruption of green leaf

### **Ostrich Fern**

#### ***Matteuccia pensylvanica***

Perennial clump, up to 4' tall; moist soils; usually 6-15 tall green leaves and a spore stalk per clump; very attractive

### **Black-eyed Susan**

#### ***Rudbeckia hirta***

Biennial (lives 2 years), to 2 or 3 feet tall; large orange or yellow flowers with dark purple center, 2-3 inches wide that blooms throughout autumn; moist and dry soils in full sunlight.

### **Rose Pink**

#### ***Sabatia angularis***

Annual; 1-1.5 feet tall - with many colorful pink flowers in July and August, needs open sunlight, readily reseeds itself where competition from other plants is light.

### **Plumelily, False Solomon's Seal**

#### ***Smilacina racemosa***

Perennial 10-20 inches tall, normally grows in a long arch; large plume of small white flowers at tip in May and June; berries are showy and are greenish-yellow with showy flecks of red in autumn; prefers open areas and rich, moist soils; nice ornamental.

### **Fireweed**

#### ***Epilobium angustifolium***

Perennial 3-6 feet tall; 4-6 inch strap-shaped leaves; very showy purplish-pink flowers in a long spike at top; blooms over a 2-4 week period in July and August; needs open sunlight.

### **Great Solomon's Seal**

#### ***Polygonatum canaliculatum***

Perennial from long tuberous roots, 2-3 feet tall; grows in a long arch, showy leaves are whitish-green; many round blue fruits hang underneath the arching stem in late summer and fall; partial shade to full sunlight; interesting ornamental.

## **Wake Robin**

### ***Trillium erectum***

Perennial 8-15 inches tall with a dark red flower atop 3 large leaves; blooms in early spring, can grow in shady or partial shade areas of moist rich soil; nice ornamental.

## **Indian Cucumber-root**

### ***Medeola virginiana***

Delicate perennial from a long white root that tastes like cucumber, (it is edible); flowers are small greenish-yellow; young plants have a circle of 6-8 leaves 6 inches above the ground; older plants will have a second set of 3 leaves above the first, which will have scarlet tips as the autumn colors appear (very showy); grows in rich soil and shady areas.

## **American Lily-of-the-valley**

### ***Convallaria montana***

Perennial from a long root; 2 basal upright leaves 4-8 inches long that remain through the growing season; a stalk of white flowers blooms in May and June; partial to full sunlight, in moist to dry soils; eventually forms a nice ground cover.

## **Spring Iris**

### ***Iris verna***

Perennial from creeping roots that will partially cover an area; 4-8 inches tall with large showy flowers of fragrant blue flowers with yellow-orange bases that bloom in April and May; moist to dry soils in partial to full sunlight.

## **Crested Dwarf Iris**

### ***Iris cristata***

Perennial from creeping roots that eventually cover the area; 6 inches tall with large flowers of blue petals with orange-yellow bases; very showy; moist soils in partial shade or full sunlight; colorful ornamental in April and May.

## **Wild Ginger**

### ***Asarum canadense***

Perennial from "ginger flavored" roots; large dark-green, heart-shaped leaves will form a dense ground cover in partial or complete shade; moist, rich soils; the brownish-purple flowers can be found at ground level or under old leaves in early spring.

## **Coltsfoot Ginger**

### ***Asarum virginicum***

Perennial from 'ginger flavored' roots, evergreen leathery leaves grow in partial to full shade; moist, rich soils; the brownish-purple flowers can be found at ground level or under old leaves in early spring.

## **Twinleaf**

### ***Jeffersonia diphylla***

Perennial wildflower 8-12 inches tall; grows with a clump of whitish-green, 2-lobed leaves on long stems; showy white flowers 1 inch across that last about 2 weeks; grow in rich, moist soil in partial shade, blooms in April and May.

## **Bloodroot**

### ***Sanguinaria canadensis***

Low perennial from a large red root that provides red juice for an excellent dye and for medicine; large 2-inch white flowers bloom in late March and April; leaves are 2-5 inches across, 4-8 inches tall, light green with many "U" shaped lobes; grows in moist, rich soil in partial to complete shade.

## **Mayapple**

### ***Podophyllum peltatum***

Perennial from long roots that will form colonies; plant 1 foot tall; young plants (up to 5-7 years old) have a single umbrella-like leaf; older mature plants fork and have two "half umbrella" leaves; showy white, 1-inch flower forms in the base of the fork and may grow into a 1-inch yellowish edible fruit; moist, rich soil in partial to full shade; blooms in May.

### **Dwarf Larkspur**

#### ***Delphinium tricorne***

Perennial 6-12 inches tall, large spike of showy blue, violet or whitish flowers with an unusual hood-shaped top; moist, rich soil in partial to full shade; showy ornamental wildflower in early spring.

### **Leatherflower**

#### ***Clematis viorn***

Perennial vine usually 10-15 feet long; vine dies back to ground each year; showy dull purple 1-inch flowers; moist soil in full sunlight; excellent places for songbird nests and shelter.

### **Goatsbeard**

#### ***Aruncus dioicus***

Tall perennial 2-3 feet tall; very large (12-18 inch long) spike of many small white flowers in June and July; moist to wet soils in partial to full sunlight; attracts many nectar insects.

### **Dwarf Cornel, Bunchberry**

#### ***Cornus canadensis***

Perennial woody shrub 6-12 inches tall; large 1-2 inch white flower; leaves turn bright red in autumn and have red berries widely eaten by birds and animals; moist soils in partial to dense shade; will make a nice ground cover after several years.

### **Greek Valerian**

#### ***Polemonium reptans***

Perennial wildflower 8-12 inches tall; dark green leaves that are semi-evergreen, numerous light blue, bell-shaped flowers in April-June; moist, rich soil in partial to dense shade.

### **Bluebells**

#### ***Mertensia virginica***

Perennial wildflower 1-2 feet tall with bluish-green leaves (almost purplish when first sprouting); many showy flowers that are first pink, then turn blue; entire plant dies to ground level by mid-summer; prefers moist, rich soils in partial shade to light sun; blooms in April and May.

## **Meehania**

### ***Meehania cordata***

Low perennial that creeps along the ground; showy light blue flowers in June and July; prefers rich, moist soils in partial to full shade.

## **Blue-eyed Mary**

### ***Collinsia verna***

Annual wildflower 8-20 inches tall; weak stem so plants often partially fall over; attractive flowers with 2 white upper petals and 3 blue lower petals; moist, rich soil in partial shade to light sun; blooms April-June.

## **Butterfly-weed**

### ***Asclepias tuberosa***

Perennial from a deep taproot, up to 30 inches tall; attractive orange "milkweed" flowers in June-August; moist or dry soils in full sunlight; very attractive to butterflies.

## **Gay Feathers, Blazing Star**

### ***Liatris spicata***

Tall, erect perennial 20-40 inches tall; numerous long, narrow leaves along the stem; long (6-18 inch spike of fuzzy pinkish flowers that are very showy; moist to dry soils in full sunlight; blooms in August-September.

## **Joe Pye Weed, Queen-of-the-Meadow**

### ***Eupatorium fistulosum***

Very tall perennial, 6-12 feet tall; leaves in attractive circles of 4-10 around the hollow stem; flowers in large showy rounded clumps at the top, pink, fuzzy, blooms August to September; wet to moist soil in full sunlight.

## **Showy Goldenrod**

### ***Solidago speciosa***

Perennial 2-4 feet tall; large spike of bright yellow flowers at top of plant, blooms September and October; moist open sunlight.

### **Early Goldenrod**

#### ***Solidago juncea***

Perennial 2-3 feet tall that arches or reclines; large 6-10 inch long head of bright yellow flowers that blooms July to October; moist to dry soil in full sunlight.

### **Bigleaf Aster**

#### ***Aster macrophyllis***

Perennial with underground roots that form colonies, 10-20 inches tall; numerous large heart-shaped leaves; violet or blue flowers in showy heads; blooms August and September; moist to dry soil in partial to full sunlight.

### **Three-lobed Coneflower**

#### ***Rudbeckia triloba***

Perennial 2-4 feet tall; numerous attractive, 1-inch wide, bright yellow flowers with purple center; rich, moist soils along margins or in open sunlight; seeds eaten by birds and small mammals.

### **Jerusalem-artichoke**

#### ***Helianthus tuberosus***

Perennial 6-9 feet tall, usually in large clumps that originate from underground roots; rough hairy stems and leaves that are gray-green; golden-yellow flowers are 2-3 inches wide, numerous and blooms from September through October; tubers are edible; seeds eaten by mammals and birds; excellent nest sites and shelter.

### **Pearly Everlasting**

#### ***Anaphalis margaritacea***

Perennial herb covered with whitish, wooly hairs, 15-20 inches tall; pearly white flowers with brownish-yellow center, blooms August-September; moist to dry soil in full sunlight.

### **Wahoo, Burning Bush**

#### ***Euonymus atropurpureus***

Woody shrub 10-15 feet tall; rich soils; open or partial shade; flowers in early summer are a deep purple; smooth orange capsule splits to reveal bright red seeds; dark green leaves turn scarlet in fall.

**Smooth Arrowwood*****Viburnum recognitum***

Woody shrub, 6-12 feet tall; white clusters of flowers from May to June; fruits a small cherry-like, bluish-black in late autumn and eaten by many mammals and birds; wet to moist soils in partial shade to full sunlight.

**Rose Azalea, Mountain Rosebay*****Rhododendron roseum***

Woody shrub 6-15 feet tall, deciduous leaves are whitish underneath; colorful tubular bright pink flower clusters; wet to moist acid soils in full sunlight; blooms May and June.

**Mountain Fetterbush*****Pieris floribunda***

Woody shrub 5-10 feet tall, evergreen leathery green, 2-4 inch leaves, showy white flowers in 3-5 inch spikes at end of branches, blooms in May; moist and dry soil in partial shade to full sun.

**Mountain Laurel*****Kalmia latifolia***

Woody shrub 6-12 feet tall; evergreen with bright green, 2-4 inch leaves; showy flower clusters of pink and white; blooms May to July; moist to dry acid soil in light partial shade or full sunlight.

**Wild Oats*****Uniola latifolia***

Perennial grass, 2-3 feet tall; leaves 1 inch wide and 6-8 inches long; seeds in flat heads resembling fish; excellent ornamental in moist, light shady areas.

**Fraser's Sedge*****Carex fraseri***

Perennial grass-like plant; large attractive dark-green leaves that are evergreen (1-2 inches wide and 10-15 inches long); leaves with slight arch and tips flat on ground; showy white tufted flowers bloom in April and May; rich, moist and shady habitats.

**Yellow Fawn Lily, Trout Lily**

*Erythronium americanum*

Perennial lily with bright yellow bell-shaped flowers; blooms March-May; 2 leaves mottled with purplish-brown streaks; moist shady areas; excellent ornamental.

**Turk's Cap Lily**

*Lilium superbum*

Perennial; 5-8 feet tall with numerous large yellow or orange flowers with long recurved petals; very showy; excellent ornamental for wet openings; blooms in July and August.

**Shooting Star**

*Dodecatheon meadia*

Perennial wildflower; 8-12 inches tall, showy lilac, pink or white flowers on a single stalk in May and June, flowers with backwardly swept petals (similar to a shooting star); partial shade to open sunlight.

**Black Haw**

*Viburnum prunifolium*

Woody shrub or small tree, 10-20 feet tall; white clusters of flowers from April to June; fruits are small plum-like, attractive and readily eaten by wildlife, green at first, then whitish, and finally bluish-black; moist to dry soils in full sunlight.