**Adding Native Plants to Your Landscape**

Looking to add native plants to our landscape this spring? While adapted to our area, native plants have preferences on where they’d like to be planted. Below are tips to consider when adding natives to your yard:

***When designing your landscape:***

* Pay attention to the different types of native plants in your area. What have you seen thriving outside your local library or in your neighbor’s yard? Each native plant is adapted to specific environmental conditions and identifying what grows well in your area is a great place to begin.
* Consider the following when getting to know your garden site: How much sunlight is there? What is the soil type? Does this area drain well or is it often wet?
* Determine your budget for the landscape and create a wish list of the native plants you would like to add to your garden. Find ideas on different types of native gardens (from butterfly gardens to shade loving gardens) [here.](https://www.naturalgardennatives.com/page/Gardening-with-Natives)
* Some plants rapidly spread, so if you have a smaller landscape it is best to ask an expert if any of your choices may crowd out other plantings.

***Suggested time to plant native plants:***

* Herbaceous plants: Spring up to early summer.
* Trees and Shrubs: Fall, but can also be planted in the spring.
* Bulbs: Late October to early November (before the ground freezes).

***Preparing a garden to plant your native plants:***

* Begin by clearing the area you wish to plant. Invasive plants and aggressive weeds will compete with the native plants. It’s best to start your natives off with ample space for them to become established. Black plastic or even wetted down newspaper can be used to kill off an area of turf grass or weeds before preparing it to plant.
* Compost is a natural fertilizer containing nutrients your new native plants will love. Consider amending your garden bed with compost from your own compost pile or bagged compost from your local garden center to help establish your new garden.

***Maintaining your new native garden:***

While native plants are adapted to this area and do not require as much maintenance as non-natives, they should still be checked on for things such as:

* *Water:* Depending on how frequently it rains after you plant your garden, the amount of watering you will need to do will fluctuate. While native plants grow very deep roots, when they are first planted the roots are only as deep as the pot you took them out of and their root ball can dry out very quickly. Be sure to water routinely and deeply so that water reaches below the plant root ball. This method of watering will encourage the roots to grow downward when looking for water instead of encouraging them to grow up toward the surface where they will dry out quickly.
* *Weeds*: The amount of weeding will decrease as your native plants grow and fill in, but until they are mature it’s best to keep them from having to compete with weeds. Over time as your native plants fill in, your weeding will decrease. Using a shredded wood mulch helps to keep weeds at bay, as well as lock moisture into the soil below.

Ready to add native plants in your yard? Your local municipality and/or county-based Soil and Water Conservation District may also host annual native plant sales – keep your eye out in the spring! You may also contact the following grower and suppliers for native plants:

**Natural Communities Native Plants**

812 N Washington AveBatavia, IL 60510

(331)-248-1016

<https://naturalcommunities.net/>

**Possibility Place Nursery**

7548 W. Monee-Manhattan Road  
Monee, Illinois 60449

(708)-534-3988

<https://www.possibilityplace.com/>

**The Growing Place**

2000 Montgomery Road

Aurora, IL 60504

(630)-820-8088

AND

25w471 Plank Road

Naperville, IL 60563

(630)-355-4000

[www.thegrowingplace.com](http://www.thegrowingplace.com)