

Emergent Species

Acorus calamus (sweet flag)

- **Family:** *Acoraceae* (Calamus family)
- **Wildlife value:** Provides waterfowl habitat. Muskrats will eat rhizomes; wood ducks eat seeds.
- **Attributes:** 2-6 feet tall; green/brown flower in May-June
- **Notes:** Iris-like foliage in slow spreading clumps. Sweet flag loves a rich moist spot such as a pond or bog, but will tolerate average garden soil. Very hardy. *Acorus calamus* can be easily identified by crushing the foliage, the odor is strong and spicy like citrus. The leaves were formerly used instead of rushes to strew on floors.

Alisma subcordatum (common water plantain)

- **Family:** *Alismataceae*
- **Wildlife value:** Achenes (seeds) are eaten by waterfowl, songbirds, pheasants, and rodents. Plants provide shade for fish. Leaves are sometimes eaten by rabbits and deer.
- **Attributes:** 4in.-3ft. White blooms May to September.
- **Notes:** A tall, spindly, many-branched aquatic with small white (rarely pink) flowers in whorls. Members of the Water-Plantain Family grow in water, swamps, on muddy banks, or occasionally in wet sand.

Caltha palustris (marsh marigold)

- **Family:** *Ranunculaceae* (buttercup)
- **Attributes:** 12-18in. Yellow flowers March to June.
- **Notes:** A hardy, succulent perennial of marsh and waterside with loose clumps of heart or kidney shaped leaves. Growth rate moderate. Entire plant dies to the ground by midsummer. Good for stream banks, shallow pond margins, and wet bog gardens. Often the first flower to bloom in the early spring bog garden.

Cephalanthus occidentalis (button bush)

- **Family:** *Rubiaceae* (Madder or Bedstraw family)

- **Wildlife value:** Food for waterfowl, insects, beaver, deer and muskrats (seeds, shoots, and leaves). Nectar for insects. Habitat for reptiles and birds.
- **Attributes:** Deciduous shrub - 3-10ft. Blooms white June-August.
- **Notes:** Easily grown in moist, humusy soils in full sun to part shade. Pruning is usually not necessary, but may be done in early spring to shape. If plants become unmanageable, however, they may be cut back near to the ground in early spring to revitalize. Flowers are fragrant and attractive to bees and butterflies. Fruiting heads persist through the winter. *Cephalanthus* is most frequently found in wet open areas, low woods, thickets, swamps, upland sink-hole ponds, river bottomland and stream/pond margins.

***Sagittaria latifolia* (broadleaf arrowhead)**

- **Family:** *Alismataceae*
- **Wildlife value:** Excellent source of food for waterfowl like rails, ducks, swans, canvasback duck, Canada geese, gadwall duck, whistling swans...also for muskrats, porcupines, beaver. Habitat for macro invertebrates, fish, frogs, snakes, and turtles.
- **Attributes:** Leaves 2-8 inches tall; Inflorescence 4-30 inches. White flowers July and September.

***Scirpus acutus* (hardstem bulrush)**

- **Family:** *Cyperaceae* (sedges)
- **Wildlife value:** Food for waterfowl and shorebirds (achenes), muskrats and geese (stems and rhizomes). Preferred nesting habitat for redhead and canvasback ducks. Spawning and nursery habitat for pike and other fish.
- **Attributes:** 3-9 feet tall; reddish-brown inflorescence May-September.
- **Notes:** This very tall bulrush has tough, round stems and works well along lakes and marshes. Needs saturated soil conditions and sun. Spreads by rhizomes.

Species for Saturated Soils

***Anemone canadensis* (windflower)**

- **Family:** *Ranunculaceae*
- **Attributes:** 1-2 feet tall; white flowers in April-June.

- **Notes:** This spring-blooming meadow anemone typically occurs (often in large colonies) along rivers next to levees and on river flood plains, in low, moist meadows and in moist thickets. Flowers (2" diameter) are born on erect stems above the foliage.

***Asclepias incarnata* (swamp milkweed)**

- **Family:** *Asclepiadaceae*
- **Wildlife value:** Flowers are very attractive to butterflies as a nectar source. In addition, swamp milkweed is an important food source (albeit somewhat less important than upland species of *Asclepias*) for the larval stage of Monarch butterflies.
- **Attributes:** 4-5 feet tall; white-pink flowers in July-August
- **Notes:** Plants have deep taproots and are best left undisturbed once established. Foliage is slow to emerge in spring. Swamp milkweed is an erect, clump-forming plant, with small, fragrant, pink to mauve flowers. Flowers are followed by attractive seed pods (to 4" long) which split open when ripe releasing silky-haired seeds easily carried by the wind.

***Carex comosa, granularis, stipata, vulpinoidea and others* (sedge)**

- **Family:** *Cyperaceae* (Carex)
- **Wildlife value:** Food for waterfowl and song birds like sora and yellow rails, swamp and tree sparrows, snipe.
- **Attributes:** 1/2-4 feet tall; blooms green April to July
- **Notes:** *Carex* is the most species-rich genus in the *Cyperaceae* (sedge) family, often referred to as the "true sedges." Most (but not all) sedges are found in marshes, where they can be the dominant vegetation. Most carex species are very sensitive to artificial fertilizers, so will decline rapidly in population without an upland buffer.

***Eupatorium maculatum* (Joe-Pye weed)**

- **Family:** *Asteraceae*
- **Attributes:** 4-6 feet tall; pink flowers in July through September.
- **Notes:** Very showy. The flowers are lightly scented and they are very showy when planted in mass plantings.

***Filipendula rubra* (queen-of-the-prairie)**

- **Family:** Rosaceae
- **Attributes:** 6-8 feet tall; pink flowers in June- August.
- **Notes:** Intolerant of drought and appreciates part shade in hot climates. Foliage may scorch in full sun if soils are allowed to dry out. Freely self-seeds and can form large colonies in optimum growing conditions. It is a very tall, upright, clump-forming perennial that typically grows 6-8' tall and features branched, astilbe-like, fragrant, flowers in early to mid summer.

***Helenium autumnale* (sneezeweed)**

- **Family:** *Asteraceae* (sunflower or composite)
- **Wildlife value:** Attracts butterflies and provides cover
- **Attributes:** 3-5 feet tall; blooms yellow August-November

***Iris versicolor* (blue flag iris)**

- **Family:** *Iridaceae*
- **Attributes:** 3 feet tall; deep blue to purple flowers in late spring.
- **Notes:** *Iris versicolor* is commonly found growing on lake shores, swamps, and wet meadows occasionally in shallow water.

***Juncus torreyi* (Torrey's rush)**

- **Family:** *Juncaceae* (rush)
- **Wildlife value:** Provides food for muskrat, marsh birds, and waterfowl. Also provides spawning ground for bluegill and other fish species.
- **Attributes:** 3 feet tall; blooms green to brown July to October
- **Notes:** During the summer, these flower heads are usually yellowish to reddish green and shiny; during the fall, they become brown and dull. The preference is full sun, consistently moist to periodically wet conditions, and soil that is slightly acid to alkaline. The soil can consist of mud, sand, or poorly drained clay. This rush can spread aggressively in disturbed wetlands where there is little competition.

***Liatris Pycnostachya* (prairie blazing star)**

- **Family:** *Asteraceae*
- **Attributes:** 30-42 in. tall; magenta flowers in July-August

***Lobelia cardinalis* (cardinal flower)**

- **Family:** *Campanulaceae* (bellflower)
- **Wildlife value:** Attracts hummingbirds
- **Attributes:** 1-2 feet tall; blooms red late July to early October

Notes: Will tolerate full sun in cool, northern climates, but otherwise appreciates part shade. Divide clumps in spring as needed. May self-seed in optimum growing conditions.

***Lobelia siphilitica* (great blue lobelia)**

- **Family:** *Campanulaceae* (bellflower)
- **Wildlife value:** This plant can persist through degradation, and is a cheerful indicator of other fine plants that could be retrieved with successive burnings.
- **Attributes:** 1-4 feet tall; blooms blue July through early October

***Mertensia virginica* (Virginia bluebells)**

- **Family:** *Boraginaceae*
- **Wildlife value**
- **Attributes:** 1.5-2 ft tall; blue flowers in March-April
- **Notes:** Best massed and left undisturbed in moist, shady woodland, wildflower or native plant gardens. Clumps may be sprinkled in borders or rock gardens, but, since plants go dormant in summer, they must be overplanted.

***Matteuccia struthiopteris* (ostrich fern)**

- **Family:** *Dryopteridaceae*
- **Attributes:** 3-5 feet
- **Notes:** can be aggressive

***Panicum virgatum* (switch grass)**

- **Family:** *Poaceae*
- **Wildlife value:** cover and food for wildlife
- **Attributes:** 3-6 feet tall with pink-tinged inflorescence July-February.
- **Notes:** Prefers moist, sandy or clay soils. Tends to flop in rich soils. Generally best in full sun. Will grow in part shade, but begins to lose its columnar form in too much shade, growing more openly and possibly falling over. Grows primarily in clumps, but may naturalize by rhizomes as well as self-seeding to form sizable colonies. Cut back clumps to the ground in late winter to early spring.

***Pycnanthemum virginianum* (mountain mint)**

- **Family:** *Lamiaceae* (mint)
- **Wildlife value:** Attracts butterflies
- **Attributes:** 2-3 feet tall; blooms white with purple spots July to August
- **Notes:** The common name of mountain mint for this native plant is somewhat misleading since the plant typically occurs in moist soils in wet meadows, swamps and along streams and ponds. All parts of the plant emit a strong, mint-like aroma when crushed.

***Solidago riddellii* (Riddell's goldenrod)**

- **Family:** *Asteraceae*
- **Wildlife value:** Attractive to bees and butterflies.
- **Attributes:** 2-3 feet tall; Yellow flowers September to October
- **Notes:** This goldenrod species is a somewhat rare species. Provides good color and contrast in late summer to early fall for wet areas of wild gardens, prairies, meadows, native plant gardens or naturalized areas.

***Thalictrum dasycarpum* (meadow rue)**

- **Family:** *Ranunculaceae*
- **Attributes:** 3-5 feet tall; purple white flowers in May-June.

- **Notes:** Prefers moist, rich, humusy soil and dappled sun. Intolerant of hot and humid conditions. Clump forming and features lacy foliage. Good background plant.

***Verbena hastata* (blue vervain)**

- **Family:** *Verbenaceae* (vervain)
- **Wildlife value:** Seeds are eaten by wildlife. Attracts butterflies. Small mammals eat shoots.
- **Attributes:** up to 5 feet tall; blooms purple/blue July to September.

Notes: Has stiff erect stems, lance shapes foliage and a spiky candelabrum of flowers. The flowers may not be as large as the garden varieties of verbena but they are abundant and bloom for a very long time during the summer months. This plant loves wet soils and can reach a height of 5 ft or taller if grown in a damp area. It will tolerate many other conditions but may remain smaller.

***Veronicastrum virginicum* (Culver's root)**

- **Family:** Scrophulariaceae
- **Attributes:** 4-6 feet tall; white flowers in May-August.
- **Notes:** Usually takes several years to establish itself in the garden. Tall spikes provide a strong accent and good vertical height for the garden.

Upland Slope Buffers

***Amorpha canescens* (lead plant)**

- **Family:** *Fabaceae* or *Leguminosae* (pea, bean, or legume)
- **Wildlife value:** attracts long-tongued bees, short-tongued bees, and wasps primarily. The caterpillars of certain moths feed on the foliage of Leadplant, while the caterpillars of the uncommon Leadplant Flower Moth feed on the flowers and seed capsules. Deer, rabbits, and livestock, are very fond of this plant. It is high in protein and quite palatable. This can make Leadplant difficult to establish in areas where these animals are abundant.
- **Attributes:** 4 feet tall; blooms lavender June to August
- **Notes:** considered to be a shrub

***Asclepias tuberosa* (butterfly weed):**

- **Family:** *Asclepiadaceae* (milkweed)
- **Wildlife value:** larval food for Monarch butterflies
- **Attributes:** 1-2 feet tall; blooms orange June to September
- **Notes:** Pollination in this genus is accomplished in an unusual manner, as the pollen is grouped into complex structures called pollinia (or "pollen sacs"), rather than being individual grains, as is typical for plant pollen. The flower petals are smooth and rigid, and the feet of visiting insects (predominantly large wasps) slip into notches in the flowers, where the sticky bases of the pollinia attach to the feet, pulling the pollen sacs free when the pollinator flies off.

***Aster ericoides* (New England aster):**

- **Family:** *Asteraceae* or *Compositae* (sunflower or composite)
- **Wildlife value:** *Aster* species are used as food plants by the larvae of a number of *Lepidoptera* (butterflies and moths) species.
- **Attributes:** 2-2 ½ feet tall; blooms white mid-August to October
- **Notes:** Compact habit; many tiny narrow leaves –looks like heather.

***Baptisia leucantha* (wild white indigo):**

- **Family:** *Fabaceae* or *Leguminosae* (pea, bean, or legume)
- **Wildlife value:** *Baptisia* species are used as food plants by the larvae of some *Lepidoptera* species including *Schinia jaguarina*.
- **Attributes:** 2-5 feet tall; blooms white June-July

***Chelone glabra* (white turtlehead):**

- **Family:** *Scrophulariaceae* (figwort)
- **Wildlife value:** It is the only plant on which the Baltimore Checkerspot Butterfly will lay its eggs.
- **Attributes:** 1-3 feet tall; blooms white August to September

***Echinacia pallida* (pale coneflower):**

- **Family:** *Asteraceae* or *Compositae* (sunflower or composite)

- **Wildlife value:** nectar source, food for the birds
- **Attributes:** 3 to 4 feet tall; blooms lavender in July-September

***Eryngium yuccifolium* (rattlesnake master):**

- **Family:** *Umbelliferae* or *Apiaceae* (umbel)
- **Attributes:** 3-5 feet tall; blooms green-white July-September

***Liatris aspera* (blazingstar):**

- **Family:** *Asteraceae* or *Compositae* (sunflower or composite)
- **Wildlife value:** attracts birds, butterflies, and hummingbirds
- **Attributes:** 2-3 feet tall; blooms purple August to October

***Monarda fistulosa* (wild bergamot):**

- **Family:** *Lamiaceae* (mint)
- **Wildlife value:** Palatable in early growth by grazing species. Attracts butterflies and honeybees.
- **Attributes:** 3 feet tall; blooms pink, lavender, purple, and sometimes white August to October

***Parthenium integrifolium* (wild quinine)**

- **Family:** *Asteraceae* or *Compositae* (sunflower or composite)
- **Wildlife value:** food and shelter
- **Attributes:** 3 feet tall; blooms white June to August

***Petalostemum purpureum* (purple prairie clover):**

- **Family:** *Fabaceae* or *Leguminosae* (pea, bean, or legume)
- **Wildlife value:** Highly palatable and nutritious for grazing
- **Attributes:** 1-3 feet tall; blooms purple in July-September

***Rudbeckia hirta* (black-eyed Susan)**

- **Family:** *Asteraceae* or *Compositae* (sunflower or composite)
- **Wildlife value:** attracts butterflies and is used for cover
- **Attributes:** 1-2 feet tall; blooms yellow with black/brown center June-July

***Schizachyrium scoparium* (little bluestem)**

- **Family:** *Poaceae* (grass)
- **Wildlife value:** Palatable and nutritious for grazing species. Provides cover for grassland birds.
- **Attributes:** 2-3 feet tall; reddish brown inflorescence August to September

***Silphium terebinthinacium* (prairie dock) and *perfoliatum* (cup plant):**

- **Family:** *Asteraceae* or *Compositae* (sunflower or composite)
- **Wildlife value:** Palatable to grazing species. Attracts butterflies and other insects
- **Attributes:** up to 10 feet tall; blooms yellow July to September
- **Notes:** *S. perfoliatum* can be aggressive.

***Solidago rigida* (stiff goldenrod)**

- **Family:** *Asteraceae* or *Compositae* (sunflower or composite)
- **Wildlife value:** Provides cover and food for songbirds. Attracts insects.
- **Attributes:** 3-6 feet tall; blooms yellow mid-July to October
- **Notes:** Goldenrods have been wrongfully accused of causing hay fever which is actually an allergic reaction to wind-borne pollen from other plants such as ragweed (*Ambrosia artemisiifolia* (common) and *Ambrosia trifida* (giant))

***Tradescantia ohioensis* (spiderwort)**

- **Family:** [*Commelinaceae*](#) (spiderwort)
- **Attributes:** 1-3 feet tall; blooms purple May to October
- **Notes:** each flower lasts for one day only.