



SOUTH CAROLINA FAMILY AND COMMUNITY LEADERS

Affiliated with National Volunteer Outreach Network, Country Women's Council, U.S.A., Associated Country Women of the World and in partnership with Clemson University Cooperative Extension Service
SCFCL website: <http://www.scfcl.com>

Leader Training Guide

Native Plants Can Encourage Beneficials in the Home Landscape

Objective:

To increase knowledge of the advantages of using native plants in the home landscape.

Lesson Overview/Introduction:

Native plants can add many features to your home landscape. They can attract beneficial insects, add color and texture to the landscape, and provide a good habitat for wildlife.

Lesson:

Native plants in the home landscape invite beneficial insects and wildlife, leading to a more environmentally friendly home landscape. Native plants in the home landscape are adapted to your area and conditions and are able to better tolerate rain or drought, sun or shade. Of course, the right plant for the right place always applies when planting. Spraying is not typically needed for natives; therefore, pesticide use is reduced in our environment.

Plant natives for color, texture, and form as well as to attract bees, butterflies and birds. Ladybugs, praying mantis and lacewings are all examples of beneficial insects. Birds such as purple martins consume large amounts of mosquitoes, which may carry disease harmful to humans. Reptiles and frogs help to control rodents, slugs and some undesirable insects. Native plants may help to attract these animals and insects to your garden, as they have evolved together to help meet each other's needs, but the gardener can also help by providing habitats that make the landscape more appealing. Native plants provide cover, food and a place for birds to make nests for their young, but the gardener can help by supplying water sources. A birdbath with trickling water attracts birds to drink and to take baths. Gardeners delight in watching birds bathing in a birdbath and it is good entertainment for children as well.

Recommended Natives

SHRUBS:

Latin Name:	<i>Callicarpa americana</i>
Common Name:	American beautyberry
Height:	from 3-8 feet tall, typically around 7 feet, about 3-4 feet across
Bloom	small lavender-pink flowers, then large bunches of violet purple berries (there are lighter varieties)
Range	US Zones 7-11; full sun to partial shade
Soil	moist and well drained, do well in most soils and mountainous areas
Root System	tap root

Wildlife berries are food source for Northern Bobwhite and other birds; foliage is consumed by whitetail deer

Beautyberry has light green foliage and beautiful purple berries on new growth. Best when more than one is planted, and make good understory plants. White varieties may be found.

Latin Name *Hydrangea quercifolia*
Common Name Oakleaf hydrangea
Height 6-8 feet sun or shade
Bloom White, 4-12 inch pyramidal cluster, late spring, turning rose pink
Range US Zones 6b-8
Soil acid, rich, deep
Root System may colonize
Wildlife seeds eaten by a few songbirds, game birds and mammals

Most gardeners can accommodate only one Oakleaf hydrangea—it is so HUGE and GRAND, it becomes the centerpiece of a late spring landscape. After the leaves drop, the bark peels off in pale, often “peaches and cream”, papery curls.

PERENNIAL:

Latin Name *Monarda didyma*
Common Name Beebalm, Oswego tea
Height typically 3-4 feet, sun to partial shade
Bloom dense, clustered blooms with a rounded head, typically red with slight variations
Range US Zone 5
Soil moist and acidic soils
Roots thick, fleshy, clump forming, prone to spreading
Wildlife a nectar source that attracts hummingbirds, butterflies, bees, and other native pollinators

The foliage of beebalm has a minty smell, and was traditionally used by the Oswego Indians of New York as a medicinal tea. The plants tend to colonize any open areas over time.

SMALL TREES:

Latin Name *Cercis canadensis*
Common Name Redbud, eastern redbud, Judas tree
Height 20-30 feet sun or shade
Bloom rosy purple before leaves appear
Fruit 2-3 inch beans, ripe in summer, brown in fall and winter
Leaves heart shaped, sometimes yellow in fall
Range US Zones 5-8
Soil acid
Wildlife flowers used by bees for honey and seeds eaten by birds

In a dense forest, redbud is a wispy sapling. In a landscape, place redbud on the sunny side of a tall deciduous tree where it will have plenty of sun to bloom and grow but will not get heat stressed in August. Redbud blooms very early, before the canopy tree puts on new leaves.

Latin Name	<i>Cornus florida</i>
Common Name	Flowering dogwood
Height	20-40 feet, shade to partial shade
Bloom	white and pink spring blooms
Fruit	red fruit
Leaves	oval, dark green in summer turning to a reddish purple in fall
Range	US Zones 5 (possibly through 9)
Soil	moist but very well drained, rich soil, slightly acidic
Wildlife	flowers used by native pollinators; foliage larval host for Spring Azure butterfly

Flowering dogwoods typically grow tall in landscapes and have a large, full crown. To reach maximum budding and flowering it is important to purchase seedling that have been grown in your zones and are adjusted to the native climate.

Lesson Summary:

Planting natives promotes an environmentally friendly home landscape, with color and texture and invites birds, bees, butterflies, and other wildlife to the landscape for the gardener's enjoyment.

Suggested Activities:

Visit local nurseries and check out the native plants they have available.
Plant more natives in the home landscape.

Suggested Materials:

Books: Sally Wasowski. 2009. Gardening with Native Plants of the South. Taylor Trade Publishing-Rowman and Littlefield, Lanham MD.
Allan Armitage. 2006. Armitage's Native Plants for North American Gardens. Timber Press Publishing Company, Portland OR.
Dirr, Michael. 1998. Manual of Woody Landscape Plants. Stipes Publishing, Champaign IL.

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Other Sources/References:

www.clemson.edu/hgic