

# Nursery owner grows & urges use of New York native plants

By Emily DeBolt

Fiddlehead Creek Native Plant Nursery

**Editor's note:** Emily DeBolt and her husband Chris own Fiddlehead Creek Farm and Native Plant Nursery on Route 40 in Hartford, which grows and sells groundcovers, perennials and shrubs native to New York. Emily submitted the following article. Info: [www.fiddleheadcreek.com](http://www.fiddleheadcreek.com) or call 518-632-5505.

Native plants are the trees, shrubs, flowers, grasses, ferns, and other plants that have evolved in a particular area over thousands of years. Gardening with natives has many benefits for you and your family, the environment and the economy. So it is no surprise that interest in gardening with natives is increasing.

However, many people still have the misconception that a garden of native plants will look like the weeds along the side of the road when many of those roadside weeds aren't native at all, but are in fact European imports.

Another misconception is that native



plants mean "no maintenance" landscaping. Just like any gardening, there is some maintenance. You have to water and weed until the new plants get established and fill in, but it is fair to say that they are lower maintenance than many other plants used in gardening.

So, while they may not be miracle workers, native gardens are from being weedy and unkempt in ap-

Blue Vervain is another native species.

Photo © Emily DeBolt



pearance. They're rather beautiful and functional landscapes.

What are some of these amazing benefits of gardening with natives? Since native plants have evolved in our environment

over many years and are already adapted to survive here, they require less fertilizer, pesticides and watering to thrive.

This saves you time and money, con-

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serves water and reduces the chemicals around your home.

Natives also provide you with entertainment and delight as you watch hummingbirds visit flowers to sip nectar or monarch caterpillars transform into butterflies before your eyes.

Natives help protect New York's biodiversity by providing food and habitat for birds, butterflies and other wildlife.

The deep roots of natives absorb and filter runoff more effectively than the short roots of many turf grasses and other ornamental plants. So they can be used in rain gardens, which are pretty yet functional ways to manage stormwater on your property.

There is a native plant for pretty much any scenario. Dry and sunny, clay soil, wet shade — there are native plants that thrive

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in all these tough gardening situations.

Native plants come in an amazing array of shapes, sizes and colors — creating attractive gardens with four seasons of interest.

With all the benefits that native plants provide, it's hard to think of a reason not to try them out if you haven't already!

## Garden workshop, more

Gardenworks in Salem hosts its annual Mothers Day Celebration on Saturday, May 7, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Activities include a greenhouse tour, local food sampling and container herb garden workshop, which costs \$25 and requires registration. Moms who stop in early will be offered coffee or tea, fresh baked cider doughnuts and a free gift, organizers say. Info: 854-3250.

