

Go Native!

Gardening with native plants on Lake George

BY EMILY DEBOLT

June's Plant of the Month Canada Anemone *Anemone canadensis*

Do you have a sunny hillside that you don't want to struggle with mowing anymore? Canada anemone might just be the plant you are looking for. Hardy to zone 2, this little flower isn't as dainty as it appears. Instead it is a very aggressive spreader, covering ground in no time with its rhizomes. Don't plant just one in your garden as this plant needs room to grow. Consider planting it under or around trees and shrubs instead of in a formal garden area.

Canada anemone grows in sun to partial shade and in average soils once it gets established. To get it going and if you have planted it in full sun, it needs a moist soil to be happy. So if you want to try to tame it a bit, give it a drier, shadier site. You can divide Canada anemone in the fall if you like if it is becoming crowded and flowering less, and give some to a friend who also has an area of the yard to cover.

Canada anemone reaches one to two feet high and has deeply dissected leaves and is covered with 1 inch white flowers. It is a very



attractive groundcover and a great alternative to invasive plants such as crown vetch and goutweed or bishops weed. (Native plants can't be invasive by definition—as to be an invasive the plant must be a non-native. Rather, native plants that can spread like rapid-fire are called aggressive or robust.) Canada anemone might also be a great plant to use to keep other woodland edge invaders in our area such as garlic mustard and wall lettuce at bay.

Also called windflower, our native anemones bloom in the spring with the wind, giving it its name. They look very delicate, but

manage to stay put as they are blown about in the wind. Canada anemone really brightens up woodland edges and shade areas in the yard where you can't get the grass to mow and you don't know what to do.

"Go Native" highlights a different native plant each month that can be used in the home garden and landscape. Written by Emily DeBolt, owner of Fiddlehead Creek Farm and Native Plant Nursery in Hartford, NY. For more info about gardening with native plants, Emily can be reached at Emily@fiddleheadcreek.com.