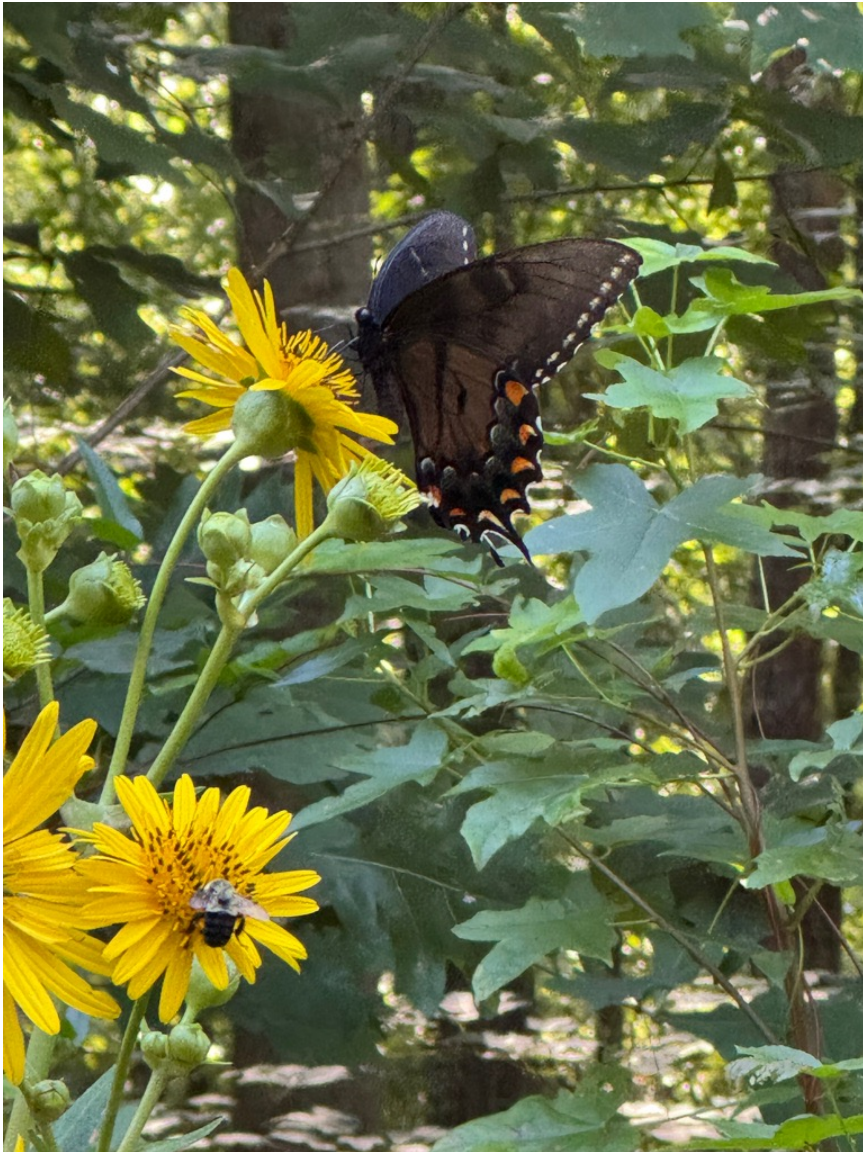




Native Plants Made Easy

Wild Ones
Charlotte Piedmont Chapter
July 11, 2026

Kristyna Culp, Director Habitat Builders,
NCWF Chapter in West Union County

Extension Master Gardener Volunteer,
Union County, NC

Photos are my own unless otherwise noted

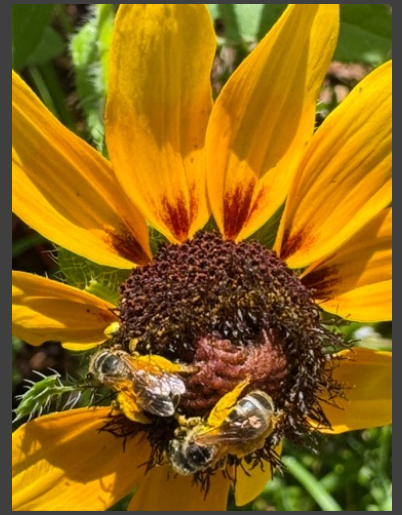
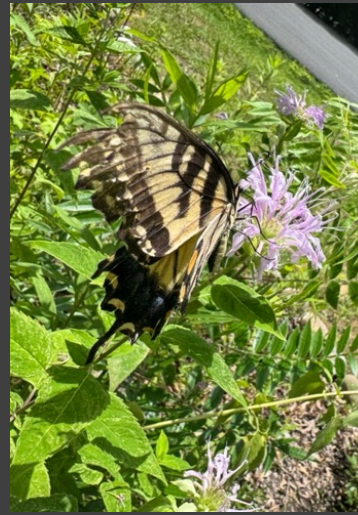


Native Plants ARE Easy

- Relative to other flowering plants
- But only if the plants are native in your area
- Caveat: They are not easier to manage than “never changing” foundation plants like boxwood, privet, autumn olive, Chinese holly etc.



Native Plants Are Easy AND they are Purposeful



Every Native Plant Matters
YOU can make a difference by planting even one



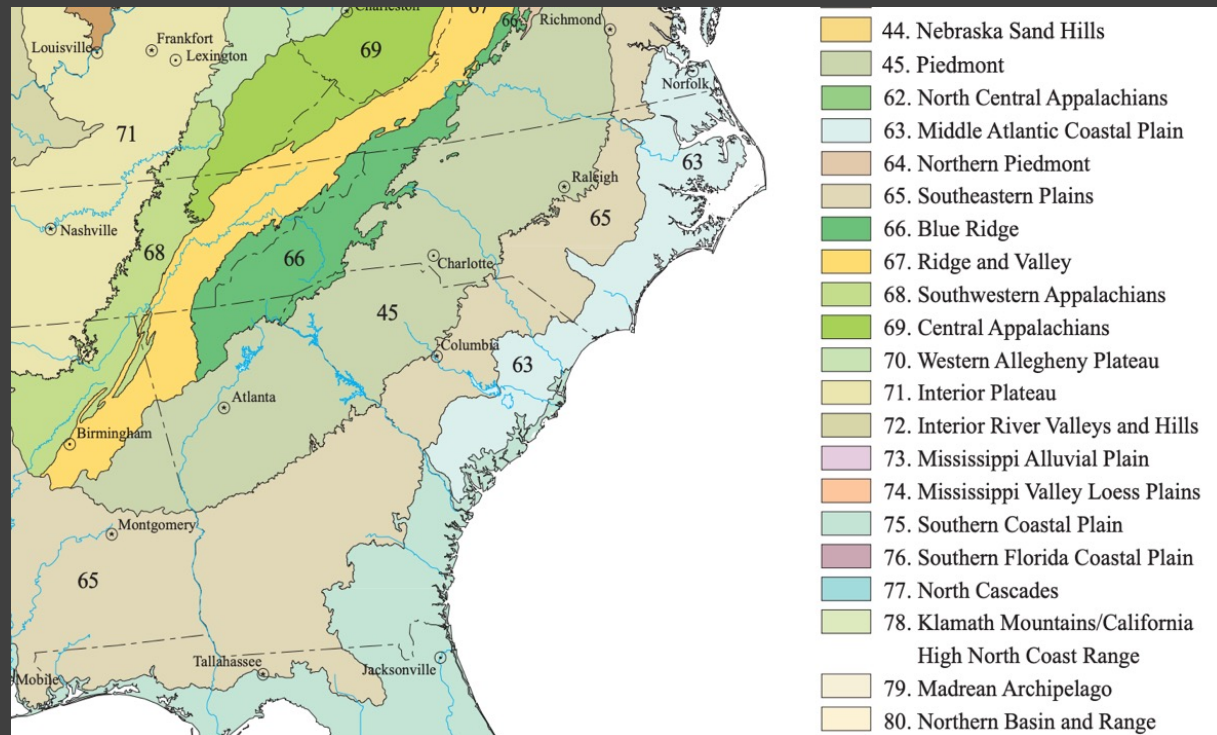
One Plant



LOTS of Plants

Definition of Native

- Here before European settlers
- Co-evolved for thousands of years
- Symbiotic and dependent relationships
- “Native” in NC/SC: Piedmont vs Mountains/Coast



Getting Started: The Quickest Way

- Find a planting spot
- Figure out the constraints
- Plant something native
 - Container
 - Existing bed
 - Empty/New area
- Easiest to grow (and find)
 - Rudbeckia, Black-eyed Susan
 - *Pycnanthemum*, Mountain mint
 - *Symphotrichum*, Asters
 - *Solidago*, Goldenrod
 - *Monarda*, Bee Balm
 - *Liatris*, Blazing Star
 - *Callicarpa americana*, Beauty Berry
 - *Carex*, *Panicum*, Grasses/sedges
 - *Gelsemium sempervirens* Carolina Jessamine
 - *Lonicera sempervirens* Coral Honeysuckle





The Process in More Detail

- Timing
- Preparation
- Design
- Procure Plants
- Plant It
- Weekly Care
- Long Term Maintenance



Timing

- Best time to plant is Spring or Fall
- For perennials: Fall is best
 - Root development
 - Less water needed
- For seeds:
 - Early Spring is best
 - Cold Stratification if needed



Preparation

- Preparation
 - Find a location
 - Understand the location's cultural conditions
 - [Find your Growing Zone](#)
 - Know your area: Mountain, Piedmont, Coastal
 - Determine the daily hours of sun, soil moisture, soil type, microclimates
 - **This fundamental principle holds true for every kind of garden**
 - **Right Place, Right Plant**
 - Clear ground
 - Scalp and spray
 - Smother and cover
 - Pull and pray

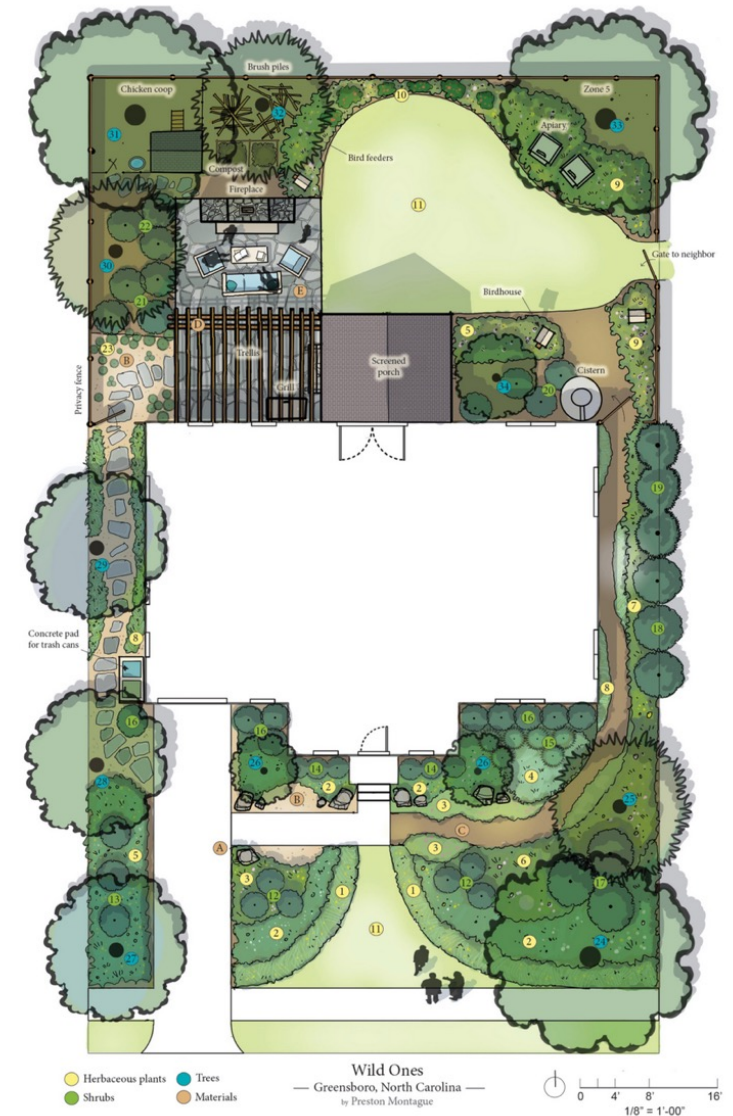
EXAMPLE

- Zone 8a
- Piedmont
- 8+ hours sun
- Soil tends to be dry
- Clay soil
- Soil has low organic matter
- Area covered in turf grass and various “weeds”



Design

- Consider layers, plant heights and widths
- Consider spread: self-seed, rhizome/stolon
- Consider bloom time and bloom color
- 3 seasons of bloom with 3+ genus
- Cues to Care
- [Wild Ones design plan for our region](#)



Pick and Procure Plants

- Research plants that fit location constraints
 - [NC Plant Tool Box](#)
 - [Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center](#)
 - [NCNPS native plant recommendations](#)
 - [SCNPS native plant recommendations](#)
 - [NCWF Plant List](#)
 - [NWF Native Plant by zip code](#)
- Plant/Seed Sources
 - Local nurseries
 - Internet order
 - Plant Sales
 - Plant Exchange groups
 - Plant Rescue events
 - Next Door/FB Marketplace BEWARE



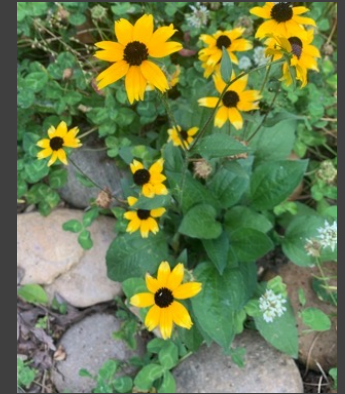
Special Considerations for Plant Purchases

- Make sure your purchases are [pollinator safe](#)
 - No neonicotinoids, very long lasting
 - Really no pesticides at all is best
- Pollinators like composite flowers, easy work
- Pollinators do not like double flowers, can't find the pollen!



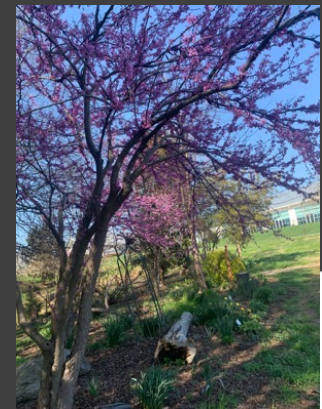
Easy Native Perennials for our Area

- *Rudbeckia hirta*, *triloba*, or *fulgida*, Black-eyed Susan
- *Solidago* spp. (anything but *altissima* or *canadensis*) Goldenrod
- *Eupatorium perfoliatum* Boneset
- *Symphyotrichum oblongifolium* or *novae-angliae*, (and others that pop up in your landscape) Native Asters
- *Echinacea purpurea*, Purple Coneflower
- *Eutrochium* spp. Joe-Pye Weed
- *Asclepias tuberosa*, Milkweed
- Best plant time: October-December, but Spring ok



Easy Native Trees for our Area

- *Liriodendron tulipifera*, Tulip Poplar
- *Prunus serotina*, Wild Black Cherry
- *Quercus* spp., Oak
- *Salix* spp., Willow
- *Cercis canadensis*, Redbud
- *Acer* spp., Maple
- Best plant time: October-February



Easy Native Vines for our Area

- *Passiflora incarnata*, Passionflower
- *Gelsemium sempervirens*, Carolina Jessamine
- *Lonicera sempervirens*, Coral Honeysuckle
- *Bignonia capreolata*, Crossvine
- *Parthenocissus quinquefolia*, Virginia Creeper
- Best plant time: October-December, Spring ok



Plant It: Seeds

- Direct Sow Seeds
 - Mix with sand
 - Water well
 - Note depth requirements
- Seed Starting in Summer for Fall planting
 - Small containers with drainage
 - Light soil mix, cover as needed with sand
 - Into the sun
 - Move to plug pots
- Show and Tell



Plant It: Plants

- Plugs and Larger
 - Add compost as needed
 - Dig holes, add plants
 - Add mulch to keep unwanted seed germination down
 - Water well
- NOTE: no fertilizer needed



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Care and Maintenance

- Weekly Care:
 - Water weekly Year 1
 - Pull/cut back “weeds” as needed (ID plants first)
 - Deadhead to increase bloom time
 - Cues to care, HOAs, ordinances
 - NOTE: no pesticides, herbicides

- Maintenance:

Y1 sleep, Y2 creep, Y3 leap

- [How to Save the Stems, Xerces Society](#)
- Mulch with leaves
- Pull/cut back “weeds” as needed (ID plants first)
- Garden will be dynamic, not static
- Water in drought



Why are we doing this?

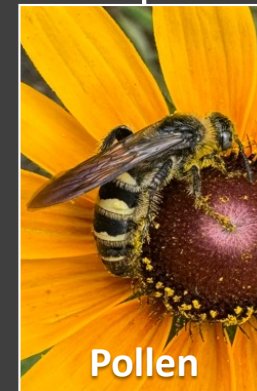
- Easier
- Cheaper (maintenance, water, amendments, chemicals)
- Eco-friendly
- Wildlife support: this means bugs, lizards and frogs etc



Find a Butterfly, Moth or Bee to Support



Host Plants for
Moths and Butterflies



Food for baby bees



Actions

- Buy local
- Eliminate pesticides and herbicides
- Decrease turf grass
- Leave the leaves
- Save the Stems
- Find a Butterfly, Moth or Bee to Support



Organizational Resources

- [Wild Ones](#)
- [Xerces Society](#)
- [National Wildlife Federation](#)
- [NC Wildlife Federation](#)
- [Homegrown National Park](#)
- [Habitat Builders](#)
- [NC Plant Tool Box](#)
- [Union County Master Gardeners](#)
- [NC Native Plant Society](#)
- [SC Native Plant Society](#)
- [iNaturalist](#)



Plant Sources

- Local
 - [Carolina Heritage Nursery](#)
 - [Windcrest Farm](#)
 - [Queen City Native Nursery](#)
 - [Dearness Gardens Nursery & Garden Center](#)
 - [Kings Garden Center](#)
 - [Renfrow Hardware](#)
 - [Constructive Plant Rescue](#)
 - [Mellow Marsh](#) (sort of local)
- Via Mail Order
 - [My Home Park](#)
 - [Garden for Wildlife, NWF](#)
 - [Izel Native Plants](#)
 - [Joyful Butterfly](#)
 - [Bring Back the Butterflies](#)
- Seeds
 - [Ernst Seeds](#)
 - [Roundstone Native Seed](#)
 - [Everwilde Farms](#)
 - [Sow True Seed](#)
 - [Eden Brothers](#)



Plant Sources

- Plant Sales

- [UNCC Botanical Gardens Plant Sales](#)
- [Wing Haven Plant Sales](#)
- [Union County Extension Master Gardeners Plant Sales](#)
look for other Master Gardener Sales in every county
- [CPCC Horticulture Department Plant Sales](#)
- [SCNPS Plant Sales](#)

- Nursery Lists

- [Wild Ones Nursery List](#)
- [NCNPS Nursery List](#)
- [NC Pollinator Alliance Resource List](#)
- [Xerces Native Plant and Seed Finder](#)



Find Plants in your Yard







Nature PSAs



Cats stay indoors



Outside Lights off at 10p



Feel Bad? Go Outside

Every Native Plant Matters
YOU can make a difference by planting even one



One Plant



LOTS of Plants

A photograph of a garden with a stone path leading through various plants and trees. A black bench is visible on the right side. The text "QUESTIONS??" is overlaid in large white letters.

QUESTIONS??

Contact me at
info@habitatbuilders.org
More info at www.HabitatBuilders.org

