



Plant Finder Worksheet

The Delaware Nature Society's annual Native Plant Sale offers a wide selection of plants to choose from. Here are some tips to help you find the plants that will perform best in your garden.

For every spot in your garden where you want to add plants, answer the following questions:

Name of Location: _____

With a tape measure, determine:

Size of available space in feet and/or inches: **Length** _____ **Width/depth** _____

Is there a window, overhead line or other height limitation or preference? Is there something you want to hide? Note in feet and/or inches: **Maximum desirable height** _____ **Minimum desirable height** _____

Available sunlight in the summer _____

- * Lots of direct sun, most of the day: write in **FS** on the line above and below
- * Almost no direct sun: write in **SH** on the line above
- * There is sun for several hours in the morning: write in **PS/SH**
- * There is sun for several hours in the afternoon: write in **PS/FS**
- * A little bit of sun comes in under tall trees: write in **PS**
- * It will be planted under a new tree or large shrub that is still small: write **FS/PS**

Soil Moisture _____

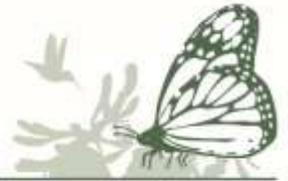
- * Water sits most of the time: write in **Aquatic plants** or **W** on the line above and below
- * It is soggy or mushy most of the time: write in **W**
- * It is on a slope, raised bed, container, top of a wall, a rock garden, or sandy soil: write in **D**
- * It is wet for a few hours after it rains, or it is a rain garden: write in **M**
- * Soils are loose, high in organic matter and shady: write in **M**
- * None of the above: write in **M/D**

Write in your answers from above

Length _____ **Width/depth** _____ **Maximum height** _____ **Minimum height** _____

Available Sunlight _____ **Soil Moisture** _____

Now go to the first page of the Native Plant Sale Catalog, and check out "How to use this Guide". Then browse the catalog and make a list of the plants that best meet the conditions you have written above. Or bring this worksheet to the plant sale and ask one of our experts to help you find plants that meet these conditions.



Plant selection tips

- *Are you looking for shade? Consider a large or small tree, or a vine on a structure
- *Do you need a groundcover? Look for grasses, ferns, perennials and low growing shrubs
- *Are you looking to feed the birds, bees & butterflies? Look for the symbols after the plant's description
- *Are you looking for edible plants? Look for the fork symbol after the description

How many plants do you need? Whether you are looking for visual impact or to attract wildlife, the smaller the plant, the more you will need to make an impact: Plant 5-10 of the same perennials, grasses or ferns, plant 3 to 5 of the same shrubs or tall perennials, you may only need a single tree, vine or large shrub.

Design tips

- *The best habitat gardens are planted in layers, with canopy trees, small understory trees, large and small shrubs and an herbaceous groundcover layer. Each layer serves a different habitat function for a variety of species. The more layers and plant species you have, the greater variety of birds and other wildlife you will attract to your garden. Mix shrubs with perennials and plant shrubs and groundcovers under your trees.
- *For screening, consider a border of mixed evergreen and deciduous trees and large shrubs. Plant your evergreens first, where they will be most visible in winter (when you are indoors), then fill in with the other deciduous plants for a more natural look, multi-seasonal color and diversity.
- *Large trees take up a lot of space and cast a very long shadow. Keep them away from gutters and locate them so they won't shade your (or your neighbor's) solar panels and veggie gardens. If you have a smaller property, consider planting a smaller tree instead.

Planting Tips

- *Planting: Dig a hole 3 times wider than the pot and to the same depth as the pot. Remove the plant from the pot and loosen the roots. Place the root ball so that the top of soil in the pot is level with the top of soil in your new bed. Backfill the hole and water well.
- *Staking: Only trees planted in windy or wet locations need to be staked. Remove stakes and wires between 6 to 12 months after planting. NEVER leave stakes beyond one year unless recommended by a Certified Arborist.
- *Fertilizer: Never fertilize newly planted plants, it can burn tender roots. If you have chosen the right native plants for your garden conditions, plants should never need additional fertilizer.
- *Soil amendments: Professionals recommend returning the same garden soil that was removed without additional soil amendments. Changing the backfill discourages new roots from expanding beyond the original hole, leading to weak plants and girdled (killing) roots. Soil amendments such as the addition of organic matter should be applied to the entire planting bed before planting.
- *Mulch: Use organic mulch after planting to protect the bare soil and hold in moisture. Never let mulch touch the stems of your plants. Never apply more than 3 to 4 inches of mulch. Do not apply any additional mulch to herbaceous plantings, as mulch will prevent them from filling in and could even kill them.



Delaware Nature Society

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Delaware Nature Society is an organization that helps connect people with nature, preserve natural areas, and advocates for stewardship and conservation of our natural resources. If you are interested in learning more about what we do or visiting one of our sites, please visit www.delnature.org.



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