

Dry Understory for Pollinators

Planting under mature trees can be challenging but a mix of native forbs, ferns and sedges adapted to the dry, shady conditions under mature trees can turn a difficult turf-growing area into a textural native planting.

Wild Ginger

A showy, herbaceous woodland perennial. Graces forest edges and openings with its rose-pink to purple blooms from mid-April to mid-June.



height 8"

Columbine

is tolerant of a wide range of soils and light levels, and is an early blooming food source for pollinators.



height 24"

Wild Geranium

is a beautiful scented, spreading powerhouse. It is easy to transplant and share its shallow rhizomes with your neighbors or your other gardens when it outgrows its space



height 20"

Poke Milkweed

The most shade tolerant milkweed species in Minnesota, it often grows along forest edges or woodland openings.



height 6"

Tall Thimbleweed

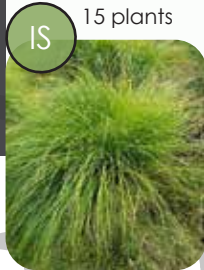
This perennial plant is about 1-2½' tall. The stems have scattered white hairs and there is little branching, except for the production of long stalks for the flowers.



height 15"

Rosy Sedge

Carex is a large genus, with over 600 species in North America and 150+ in Minnesota alone. They are grouped into sections, the species in each group having common traits.



height 15"

Zig-Zag Goldenrod

is a common wildflower in Eastern deciduous forests. The species makes it a good addition to rain gardens and native plantings in partial shade.



height 36"

Big-Leaved Aster

is a common woodland species with large, heart-shaped leaves that can form a pleasant ground cover. It has blue flowers that bloom in August and September.



height 12"

Lady Fern

makes a very useful groundcover for shady restorations, gardens, rain gardens and replacement for hostas to deter deer. Ferns are susceptible to excess wind and sun exposure.

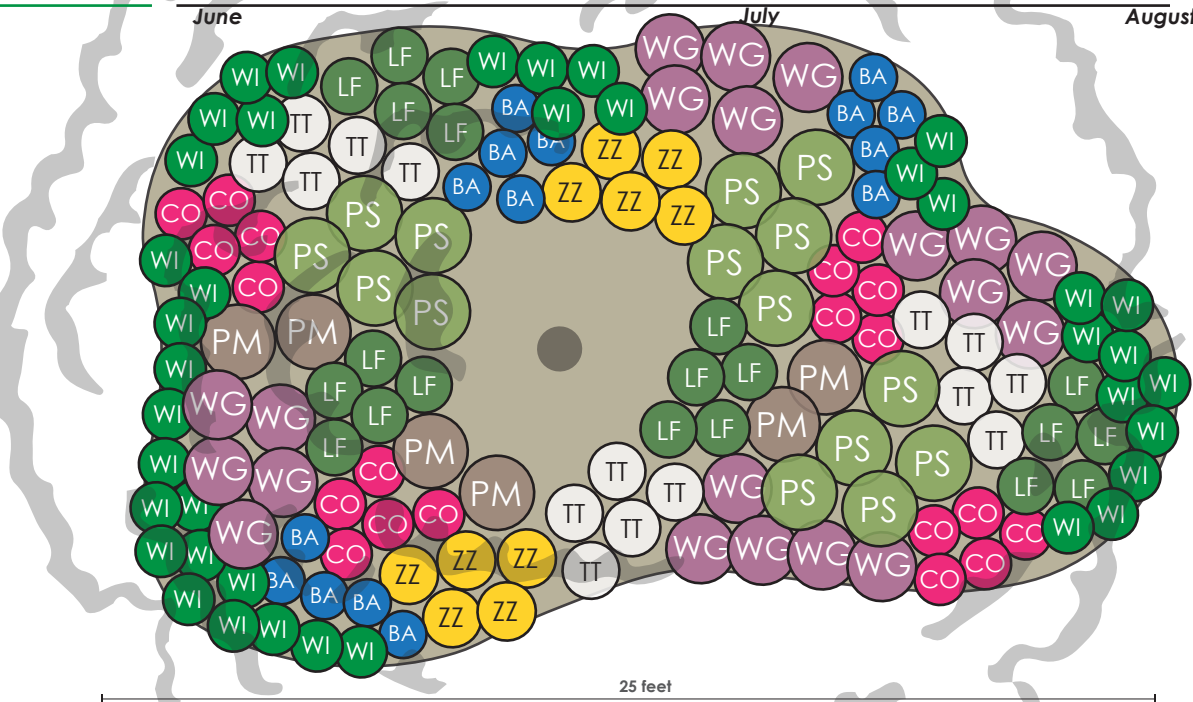


height 12"

May June July August September-Oct.

It is important to not plant too close to the tree's base. Leave 3-5' between the trunk and the start of the plantings. Lightly mulch the area but don't let any mulch pile up against the trunk or over any surface roots.

This planting can be adapted to a wide range of sizes. When adapting the design for different sized planting areas, remember to plant in groupings of around 5 plants of the same species to create more visual impact. Plant shortest plants along the outer edges to create a layered effect, with the taller plants toward the middle of the planted area.



Featured Pollinator:
Cecropia Moth
Hyalophora cecropia

Cecropia moths eat leaves, which is why it is important to have native understory plantings under large trees and to let fallen leaves remain on the ground so that the larvae have the opportunity to eat them. Mowing turf under large trees removes the larvae's food source.

Substitutions for selected species

Use plants found within their natural range. This helps protect nearby native plant communities and provides plant species that are sure to be compatible with local insect populations.

Wild Ginger

Wild Strawberry, Woodland Strawberry, American Alumroot, Virginia Waterleaf, Common Violet

Columbine

Bishop's Cap, Wild Blue Phlox, Jacob's Ladder, Wood Anemone, Bellwort

Wild Geranium

Harebells, Rue, Anemone, Jacob's Ladder, Foxglove, Beards-tongue

Poke Milkweed

Somomon's Plume, False Solomon's Seal, Maidenhair Fern, Early Meadow Rue

Tall Thimbleweed

Virginia Waterleaf, Somomon's Plume, Early Meadow Rue

Palm Sedge

Common Wood Sedge, Curly Styled Wood Sedge, Plains Oval Sedge, Pennsylvania Sedge

Zig-Zag Goldenrod

Upland White Goldenrod, Elm Leaved Goldenrod

Big-Leaved Aster

Heart Leaved Aster, Short's Aster

Lady Fern

Maidenhair Fern, Bracken Fern, Interrupted Fern, Oak Fern

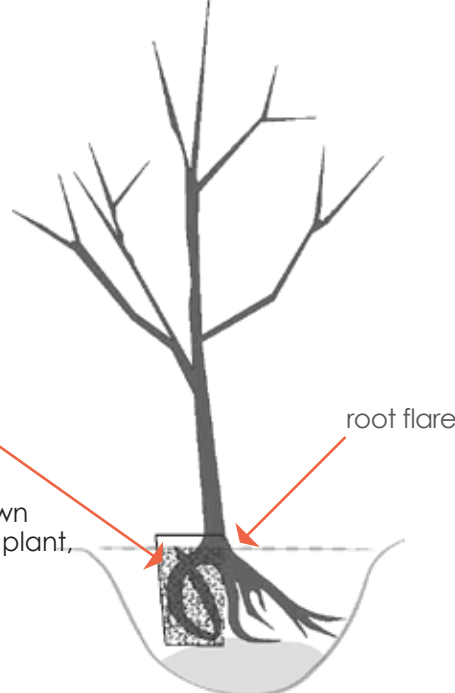
All common names are consistent with Minnesota Wildflowers

Planting Tips for new gardeners

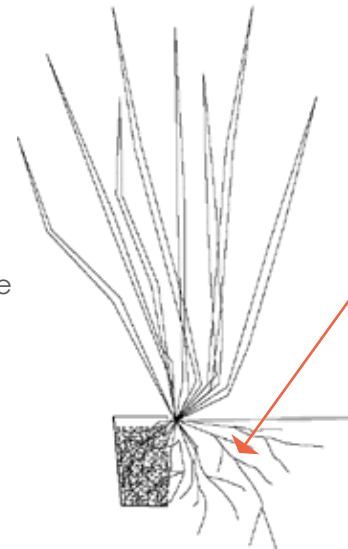
- Prepare your new garden bed. Use methods found on BWSR's [Creating Residential Pollinator Habitat](#) page
- Dig a hole as deep and 2-3 sizes wider than the pot. Remove the pot.
- Loosen roots and remove any roots that have growing a circle around the base of the plant.
- The soil level should be just below the flare of the tree or shrub and the base of your plant.
- Spread roots, then re-fill hole. Tamp soil down gently around the roots. Mulch around the plant, but don't place mulch against the trunk.

Water immediately after planting, then once a week for the first summer

TREES & SHRUBS



PERENNIAL PLANTS



- Prepare your new garden bed. Use methods found on BWSR's [Creating Residential Pollinator Habitat](#) page
- Dig a hole as deep and 2-3 sizes wider than the pot.
- Remove the pot.
- Loosen roots and remove any roots growing in a circle around the base of the plant.
- Mulch around the plant, but don't place mulch against the stem.
- Water immediately after planting, then once a week for the first summer.

