



## Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council

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### **Watershed Council Hosts Native Plant Sale – Orders Due April 15**

It's still cold and snowy outside, but the promise of spring is in the air. What better way to anticipate its arrival than to order some native plants for your garden and landscape projects. The Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council's Native Plant Sale is an easy way to purchase Michigan native plants while supporting the organization.

What are native plants? Native plants are considered plant species that grew in an area before European settlement. Over time native plants have been displaced by more ornamental, non-native species. For years ornamentals have been the norm in traditional landscapes, but native species are beginning to be recognized for their benefits including less maintenance, such as fertilizing, irrigation, and winter protection, and the ability to withstand environmental stresses such as drought because they are better adapted to the local climate, soils and weather conditions. Another important benefit is their local relationship with wildlife. Native species have co-evolved with the insects and animals that depend on them. They are dynamically linked; when one species is affected, many others are impacted. As native plants have been replaced with non-natives, many of the birds, insects, and other pollinators have struggled because of loss or degradation of their native habitat.

Native plants are also versatile in landscape design. For those interested in maintaining a traditional landscape appearance, native plants lend themselves readily to a traditional design format; geometric patterns, foundation plantings, hedges, etc. Instead of using ornamentals, simply substitute natives. If you like the appearance of a more natural landscape, native plants are the best choice for a naturalized look.

Due to their widespread popularity and distribution of ornamental, non-natives, you can find many of the same plants in yards all across America. These generic landscapes and gardens do not reflect an area's natural identity. Native plants, on the other hand, help reinforce the local natural heritage. Here in Northern Michigan, the paper birch, white pine, and cedars are just a few of the trees that convey the area's natural identity. Can you imagine Northern Michigan without the paper birch?

Native plants also play an important role in preserving water quality and water conservation. Native plants require little or no irrigation. They also are not dependent on fertilizing, herbicide and pesticide applications, which means fewer nutrients from fertilizers, and chemicals from weed and pest control products, entering our surface waters and groundwater. Native species planted along the shoreline, collectively referred to as a greenbelt, helps control and filter runoff entering the lake, stabilizes the shoreline from wave erosion, and again, provides critical habitat to the many species of wildlife that inhabit the shoreline ecosystem.

So whether you live on the waterfront or simply want to experiment with the use of native plants in your landscape, the Watershed Council's Native Plant Sale will have something for everyone. Plants are offered for sale in groups or kits. There are six kits to choose from; each kit is a collection of five different species with the same site requirements. Kits include 12 to 32 plants each and are priced at \$60 or \$80 per kit. Please call 347-1181 to request a Native Plant Sale brochure or visit [www.watershedcouncil.org](http://www.watershedcouncil.org) for color photos and descriptions of the available plants and order forms. **ORDERS MUST BE RECEIVED BY APRIL 15<sup>TH</sup>**. Plants will be available for pickup at the Emmet County Fairgrounds on June 6, 7, 13 and 14. Additional plants will be available for purchase during pickup weekends on a first come, first serve basis.

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