

# Native Plants of Massachusetts

Pine Barren communities are globally rare and support a unique suite of species. Preserving Massachusetts's Coastal Pine Barrens is vital to the conservation management of many pollinators. Globally, pollinators are in decline. You can help them by supporting the conservation of Pine Barren communities and providing nectar and pollen sources they need to survive. Butterflies and moths also rely on host plants for food as caterpillars and for a home. Small outdoor spaces have the potential to provide quality habitat for all pollinators.

This guide will help you learn more about the native plants we included in the Tidmarsh Wildlife Sanctuary's pollinator restoration project. Below are rare and declining pollinator species that will directly benefit from these efforts. Plants selected for our restoration project are adapted to dry sandy soils which characterize their sandplain habitats in southeastern Massachusetts.



## Wild Indigo

*Baptisia tinctoria*

**Importance:** This is the larval host plant of the Frosted Elfin and Wild Indigo Duskywing. Like tumble weed, in the west, this nitrogen-fixing plant breaks off in fall and blows in the wind to spread its seeds.

**Bloom Time:** Mid-Summer

**What you can you do?** Wild Indigo is an important pollen and nectar source for many insects. Plant it in small clusters to provide habitat for pollinators.

## Frosted Elfin

This species has a positive relationship with ants.



## Wild Indigo Duskywing

Rapid, erratic flight pattern. Hard to follow but it stops frequently for nectar and to bask in the sun.





## Low Bush Blueberry

*Vaccinium angustifolium*

**Importance:** This is the host plant of the Brown Elfin and an important early season nectar source for native bees. Berries are also consumed by most birds and mammals.

**Bloom Time:** May-June

**What can you do?** As well as being an important pollen source blueberry is a great garden plant. It is resistant to pests and will provide delicious berries for the family.

## Brown Elfin

A key species to look for on an April butterfly walk, often the first to emerge.



## Bumblebee

These large bees are important pollinators for crops. An estimated \$3 billion worth of crop pollination annually to the U.S. economy.



## Milkweed

*Asclepias tuberosa*

**Importance:** Milkweeds are the only larval host plant of the Monarch butterfly.

**Bloom Time:** July-August

**What can you do?** There are several milkweeds native to our region. Consider planting Butterfly weed, Common Milkweed or Swamp Milkweed in your garden.

## Monarch

The chemical composition of its milkweed makes this species poisonous to predators.





### Bearberry

*Arctostaphylos uva-ursi*

**Importance:** This is the larval host plant of the Hoary Elfin. This plant is common across the Tundra. It grows low to the ground and its fruit is edible to wildlife.

**Bloom Time:** April-June

**What can you do?** This hardy plant grows in clusters and nutrient poor dry conditions. It's a good ground cover for full sun location in gardens.

### Hoary Elfin

In Massachusetts this species is only found in Plymouth County, the Cape and Martha's Vineyard. It can be observed in flight only in early spring.



## Other Beneficial Native Plants of Massachusetts

Below is a list of perennial plant species that will enhance and support pollinator habitat. These plants provide pollinators with a source of nectar and pollen and nesting areas required to complete their life cycles. Plant information includes annual bloom period and taxonomic classification with soil preferences and planting suggestions.

Common Name	Scientific Name	Distribution	Bloom Period	Soil Preference	Planting Suggestions
Service Berry	<i>Amelanchier canadensis</i>	Native	Early Spring	Well drained, acidic to neutral sandy loam soils	Full sun to part shade, transplant along woodland edge
White Clover	<i>Trifolium repens</i>	Introduced	Early Spring and Fall	Cool moist, neutral to alkaline, silt to clay loam soils	Full sun to part shade, plant seed only in cool moist areas at low density
Common Blue Violet	<i>Viola sororia</i>	Native	Early Spring	Moist, neutral to alkaline silt to clay loam soils	Full sun to part shade, transplant in dense clusters
Tussock Sedge	<i>Carix stricta</i>	Native	Spring	Wet to moist, acid to neutral, silt to clay loams	Full sun, transplant in and along edge of ephemeral wetland depression

Common Name	Scientific Name	Distribution	Bloom Period	Soil Preference	Planting Suggestions
High Bush Blueberry	<i>Vaccinium corymbosum</i>	Native	Spring	Well drained, acid, sandy loam soils	Full sun, transplant in clusters along woodland edge
Low Bush Blueberry	<i>Vaccinium angustifolium</i>	Native	Spring	Well drained, acid, sandy loam soils	Full sun, transplant in clusters
Self-heal	<i>Prunella vulgaris lanceolata</i>	Native	Spring	Moist, neutral silt to clay loam soils	Full sun to part shade, plant seed at low density
Yellow Wild Indigo	<i>Baptisia tinctoria</i>	Native	Early Summer	Well drain, slightly acidic to neutral sandy loam soils	Full sun, transplant in clusters
Perennial Lupine	<i>Lupinus Perennis</i>	Native	Early Summer	Well drain, slightly acidic to neutral sandy loam soils	Full sun, transplant in clusters
Common Milkweed	<i>Asclepias syriaca</i>	Native	Midsummer	Moist to well drained neutral to alkaline, sandy to clay loam soils	Full Sun, plant seed at low density
Butterfly Weed	<i>Asclepias tuberosa</i>	Native	Midsummer	Well drained, acid to neutral, sandy loam soils	Full sun, plant seed or transplant in clusters
Joe-pye Weed	<i>Eupatorium purpureum</i>	Native	Midsummer	Moist to wet neutral, silt to clay loam soils	Part shade to shade transplant
Early Goldenrod	<i>Solidago juncea</i>	Native	Midsummer	Well drained to moist, neutral to alkaline, sandy loam soils	Full sun to part shade plant seed at low density
Cardinal Flower	<i>Lobelia cardinalis</i>	Native	Midsummer	Wet to moist, slightly acid to neutral, sandy to clay loam soils	Full sun to shade, plant
Virginia mountainmint	<i>Pycnanthemum virginianum</i>	Native	Midsummer	Moist to wet, alkaline, sandy to clay loam soils	Part shade
Common Evening Primrose	<i>Oenothera biennis</i>	Native	Midsummer	Well drained, acid to neutral, sandy loam soils	Full sun, plant seed at low density
Daisy Fleabane	<i>Erigeron annuus</i>	Native	Mid to Late Summer	Well drained, neutral to alkaline, sandy to clay loam soils	Full sun to part shade, plant seed at low density
Meadow Sweet	<i>Spiraea alba latifolia</i>	Native	Mid to Late Summer	Moist, neutral to slightly alkaline, clay loam soils	Transplant plant in clusters

Common Name	Scientific Name	Distribution	Bloom Period	Soil Preference	Planting Suggestions
Panic Grass	<i>Panicum virgatum</i>	Native	Late Summer	Well drained to moist, acid to neutral, sandy to clay loam soils	Full sun, plant seed at low density
Little Bluestem	<i>Schizachyrium scoparium</i>	Native	Late Summer	Well drained, acid to neutral, sandy loam soils	Full sun, plant seed at high density
Purpletop	<i>Tridens flavus</i>	Introduced	Late Summer	Well drained, acid to neutral, sandy to clay loam soils	Full sun to part shade, plant from seed
Boneset	<i>Eupatorium perfoliatum</i>	Native	Late Summer	Moist to wet, acid to neutral, silt to clay loam soils	Sun to part shade, transplant
Harsh Sunflower	<i>Helianthus strumosus</i>	Native	Late Summer	Well drained, acid to neutral, sandy to clay loam soils	Part to full shade, transplant
Gray Goldenrod	<i>Solidago nemoralis</i>	Native	Late Summer	Well drained to moist, neutral to alkaline, sandy to clay loam soils	Part to full shade
Licorice-scented Goldenrod	<i>Solidago odora</i>	Native	Late Summer	Well drained to moist, acid to neutral, sandy loam soils	Full sun, plant seed at low density
Hoary Mountainmint	<i>Pycnanthemum incanum</i>	Native	Late Summer	Well drained to moist, neutral to acid, silt to clay loam soils	Full sun to part shade
Steeple Bush	<i>Spiraea tomentosa</i>	Native	Late Summer	Moist to wet, neutral to acid sandy loams soils	Full sun, transplant in clusters
New York Aster	<i>Symphotrichum novibelgii</i>	Native	Late Summer to Fall	Moist, acid to neutral, silt to clay loam soils	Full sun, plant seed at low density
Canada Goldenrod	<i>Solidago Canadensis</i>	Native	Late Summer to Fall	Well drained to moist, neutral to acid, sandy to clay loam soils	Full sun to part shade, plant seed at low density