

Hummingbird Hill Native Plant Nursery

June/July 2024 Newsletter

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We are busy at the nursery growing more local genotype plants than ever before! Thank you to everyone who came out to visit the nursery this spring and for helping us get native plants out there. If you haven't added plants to your property this year, it's not too late to plant! Our nursery stays well supplied throughout the summer with species locally native to this area.

What's New At the Nursery



UPDATED HOURS:

We have updated our hours and are now available by appointment on Saturdays, Sundays, Mondays, and Tuesdays. To schedule an appointment, please visit our website!

SUMMER SALE

Now through
August 1st

10% OFF

1 quart & 4 inch pots





Planting Natives *in the* **SUMMER**

TIPS FOR ADDING NATIVES DURING THE WARM MONTHS

Summer is upon us! Hoary Mountain Mint (pictured above) is blooming at the nursery, buzzing with pollinator life. Wild Basil has begun to display its tubular pink blossoms, and birds are busy gleaning insects off leaves in native plantings to bring back to their ever hungry nestlings. As the weather warms, we are continuously growing plants at the nursery and planting natives in our own habitat corridors. Here, we take a look at some frequently asked questions regarding summer planting and offer tips about how to grow natives as the weather warms.

CAN NATIVES BE PLANTED IN THE SUMMER? WILL THE PLANTS BE SHOCKED BY THE HOT TEMPERATURES?

Potted natives can be planted anytime from the beginning of April to the end of October, including during the summer months. Since the plants are native, grown outdoors, and acclimated to this climate, hot summer temperatures won't affect them negatively or hinder their growth. Unlike with the transplanting of bare root specimens, the roots of potted pots aren't disturbed during the planting process. When planting, the species can simply be taken out of the pot with no disruption of the roots and put into the ground. This will not shock the plant or cause it to wilt.



Unlike with transplanting bare root specimens, potted natives' roots aren't disturbed during the planting process.

WHAT SHOULD I KEEP IN MIND WHEN PLANTING DURING THE SUMMER?

The main consideration for summer planting is to make sure that you will be able to check the plants for water over the next few weeks after planting. Ensure that the establishment time for the planting doesn't overlap with a vacation or other trip that you have planned. If the weather is hot, you may also want to focus on smaller plantings and keep in mind how much time it will take to get the new plants in the ground. When the temperatures are high, working during the cooler hours in the morning and evenings is a good option, especially if you are doing site preparation or removing sod.

HOW OFTEN SHOULD NEW NATIVES BE WATERED ONCE PLANTED? WHAT ABOUT ESTABLISHED NATIVE PLANTS?



Newly planted natives should be checked for water needs for the first 2-3 weeks.

Adding natives is very different from planting non-natives in the summer. Unlike non-natives, which can sometimes be watered for months or even a year after being planted, natives only need to be checked for water for the first 2-3 weeks after planting. If the weather is especially hot and dry, you may need to continue checking them for a couple of weeks longer. Rather than on a daily schedule, the natives should only be watered as necessary during this time. Sometimes this can mean watering just a couple of times during the adjustment period. It's important to note that native plants that thrive in dry conditions don't want wet soil, even directly after planting. These can easily be over-watered and will only do well in dry soil, even while getting established. Once established, plants should not receive any supplemental water. They are adapted to Virginia's climate and will only need the natural rainfall.

Because we grow our plants in a medium similar to Virginia's soil and use minimal fertilizer, our plants adjust quickly to the site. Their roots will begin to reach out to the surrounding soil at the site shortly after being planted in their new environment.

DO I NEED TO MULCH MY PLANTING TO HOLD IN THE MOISTURE?

It's better to skip traditional mulches and wood chips. When planting natives in the right habitat, they will be able to thrive in the soil at the site and prefer no added amendments or mulches. In the future, you can let fallen leaves remain in place in your planting. This will provide nutrients and maintain moisture levels for native plants, while also creating shelter for wildlife and insects.

WHAT BENEFITS ARE THERE TO PLANTING IN SUMMER?

Plants are actively growing during the summer months. Because of



Skip traditional mulches and instead let fallen leaves stay in your habitat corridors.

this, their roots establish very quickly into the surrounding soil, and they can put on a lot more foliage growth than at most other times of the year. In a short period, plantings can become full and vegetated. Since it is the peak growing season for many natives, you'll likely have blooms right away that turn to seeds in the autumn. Pollinators are especially active during the summer months and if there are empty spaces in a planting, adding more natives will help to give these critters and other wildlife what they need immediately.



DOES HUMMINGBIRD HILL NURSERY OFFER PLANTS DURING THE SUMMER OR IS THE NURSERY MOSTLY SOLD OUT?

Insects are especially active at native plants in the summer.

The summer months are a big time for us at the nursery! Many of the plants that we seeded in spring are growing and becoming available. We aim to keep a good supply of plants and a wide variety of species throughout the year. However, we often have the largest diversity of species available during the summer months. New species become ready at this time of year, and we are



Hummingbird Hill keeps a wide variety of plants in stock throughout the summer, including quarts and plugs.

constantly restocking our nursery sales area. Often we have small batches of difficult-to-propagate species become available also that we don't usually have in stock at other times of the year. We have a large variety of both 1 quart pots and plugs available.

WHAT OTHER TASKS CAN I DO ON MY PROPERTY DURING THE SUMMER MONTHS INVOLVING NATIVE PLANTS?

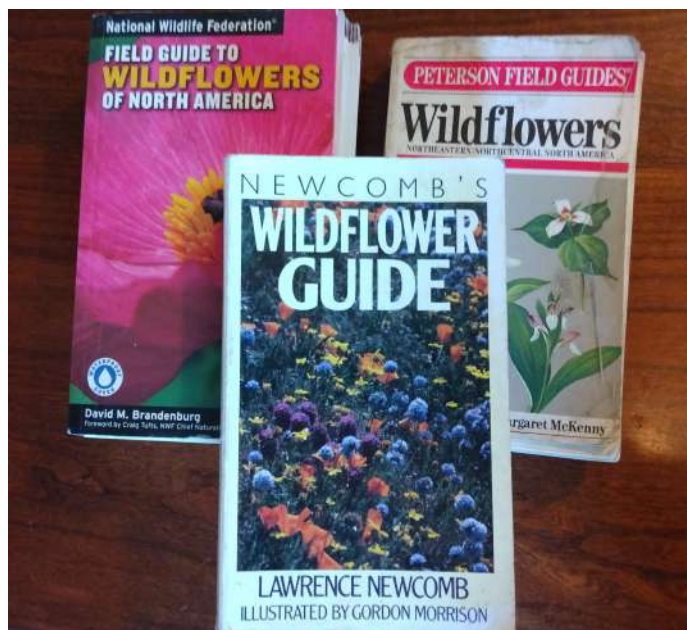
It's a great time of year to walk around your property and work on plant identification! There's a good chance that you have some naturally occurring native plants on your property that

would be great to protect and encourage. Even small urban properties often have a handful of native plant species existing at the site, and these species can be encouraged to help boost the ecosystem on your property. Many plants are flowering at this time of year or have distinguishable leaves that will help make identification easier. There are an assortment of wildflower field guides that can be great tools, and many people also find plant ID apps helpful. It can also be important to get to know which species on your property are invasive non-natives that would be good to remove. Having trouble identifying a certain species? Don't hesitate to reach out to us by email with a photo of the mystery plant.

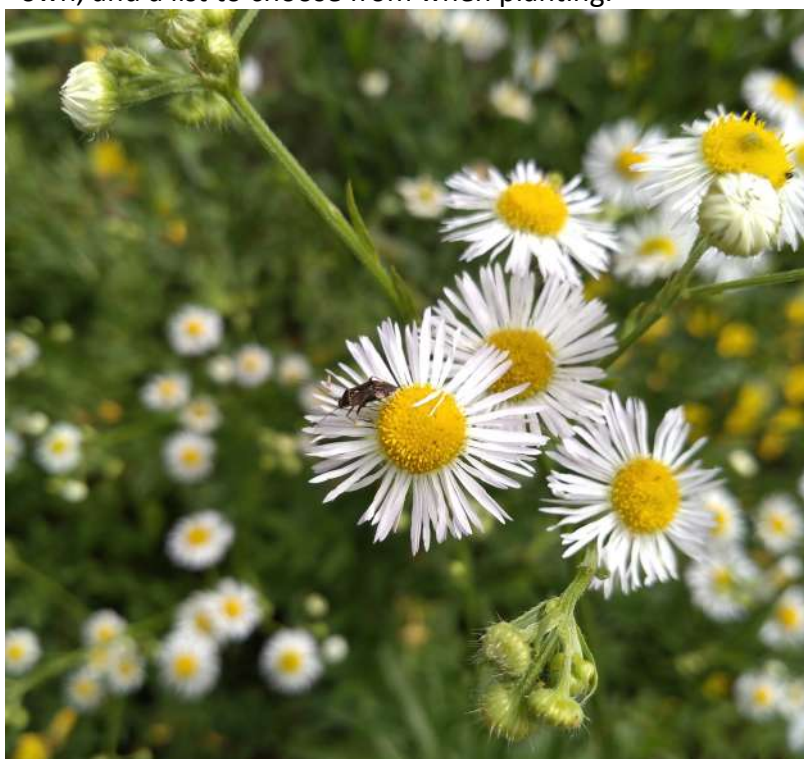
If you would like more in depth assistance with plant identification and habitat corridor planning on

your property, our nursery also offers site consultations. Summer is a great time of year to sign up for a site consultation as plants can be easily identified, and this can help give a more exact idea of what your property is like, including the different zones that exist at your site. We are happy to offer site consultations to the local area that include a combination of plant identification, species recommendations, and invasive removal strategies personalized for your specific property.

How does this work? During a visit, we walk around your property with you and identify naturally-occurring natives present, while discussing strategies to protect them and help create a better ecosystem on your property. We present strategies for removing any invasives present in a way that prioritizes existing natives and emphasizes a holistic approach. We also split the property into zones based on the site conditions in different areas of the property. After the consultation, we provide a list via email of the native plants that were identified, along with species that were not present but would naturally grow in the same habitat. This list serves as a tool for determining what plants are truly native to your site—ones that were present, ones that you may expect to see coming in on their own, and a list to choose from when planting.



Wildflower field guides are a great tool for plant identification. Here are a few great options!



Left: Annual Fleabane is a common native volunteer. In this photo, it is being used by a native Tarnished Plant Bug.

PLANTING TIP!

DO YOU HAVE A WET AREA ON YOUR PROPERTY?

Sites that hold moisture – low areas, pond edges, and creeks – are easy places to plant in the summer. Because the soil is



naturally wet, you can usually skip on the watering completely!