



# Wild Natives for Civilized Gardens

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Master Gardener



# Why Grow Natives?

- ❖ More than 30% of U.S. birds are endangered, threatened, or in significant decline
  - ❖ "The State of the Birds: 2010 Report on Climate Change" USFWS
- ❖ In the last 20 years, the population of monarch butterflies in the eastern U.S. has declined by 90 percent
  - ❖ Newsweek, Douglas Main 8/27/14
- ❖ Federal survey that found beekeepers lost more than 40 percent of their colonies last year
  - ❖ Seth Borenstein, Associated Press May 19, 2015

# Why is this Happening?

❖ Invasive Species



❖ Habitat loss



❖ Climate change





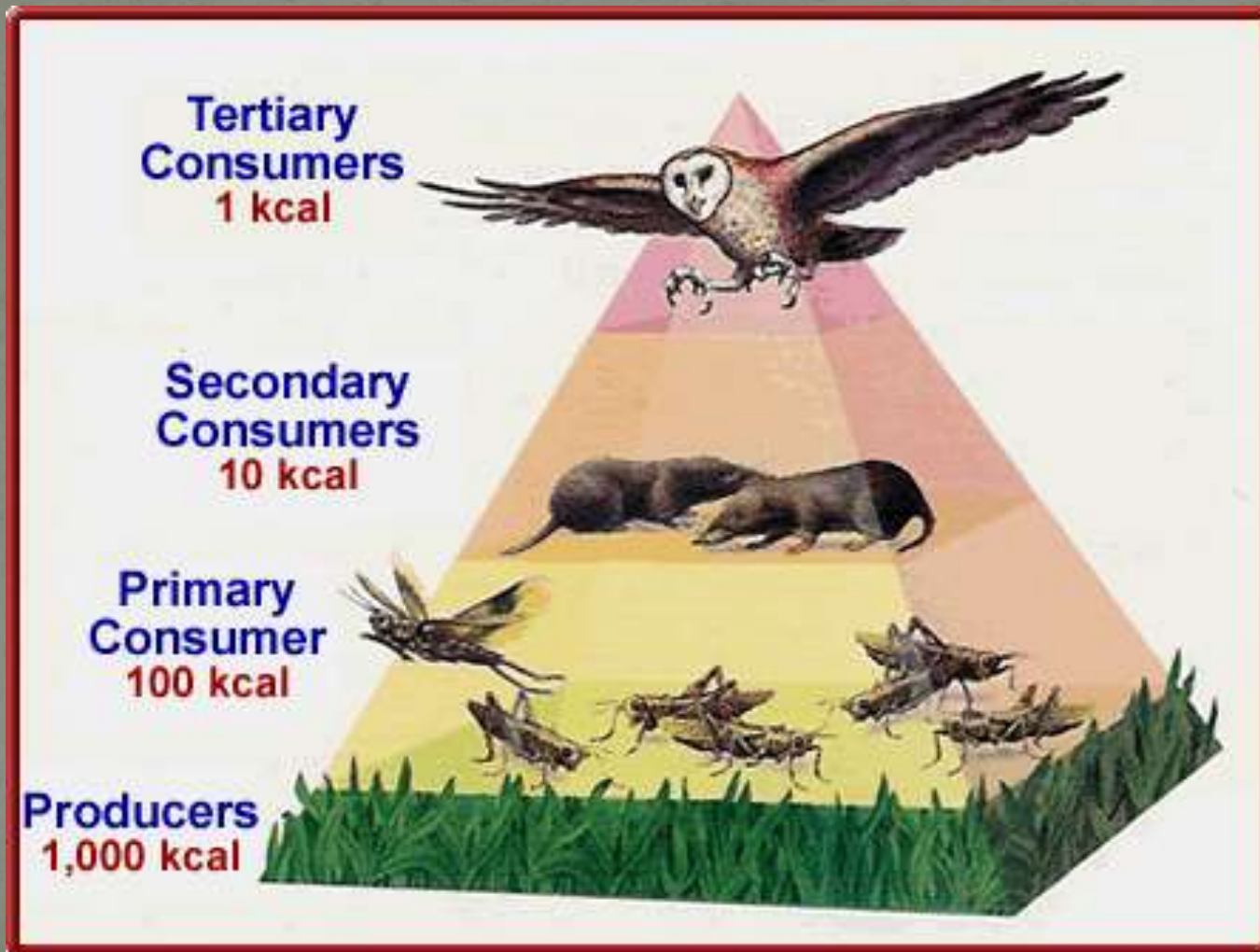
# Growing Native Plants



- ❖ Provides the right food sources for insect pollinators and birds
- ❖ Ensures appropriate habitat for wildlife
- ❖ Encourages biodiversity at all levels



# Critical for a Healthy Food Web





# Thermodynamic Research: UGa

Schramski JR, Gattie DK, Brown JH. Human domination of the biosphere: rapid discharge of the earth-space battery foretells the future of humankind. Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences

- ❖ Estimate: Earth had 1,000 billion tons C in living biomass 2,000 years ago
- ❖ Now estimated to be ½ of that due to human activity
- ❖ **"If we don't reverse this trend, we'll eventually reach a point where the biomass battery discharges to a level at which Earth can no longer sustain us," Schramski said.**

# Wait ! What's a Native Plant ?

Native species are those that occur in the region in which they evolved.





Today's talk will be about what I think are some great **Natives** for pollinators that will also fit in well with most gardens. Due to time, I have focused on herbaceous perennials.

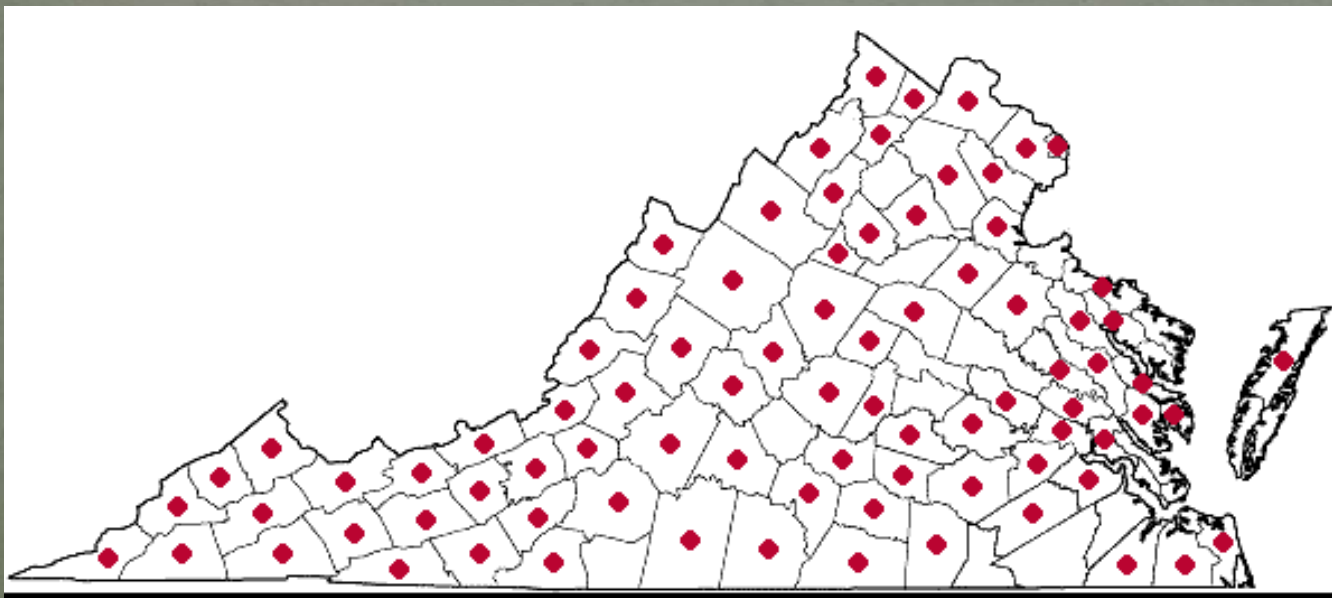




<http://www.vaplantatlas.org/>

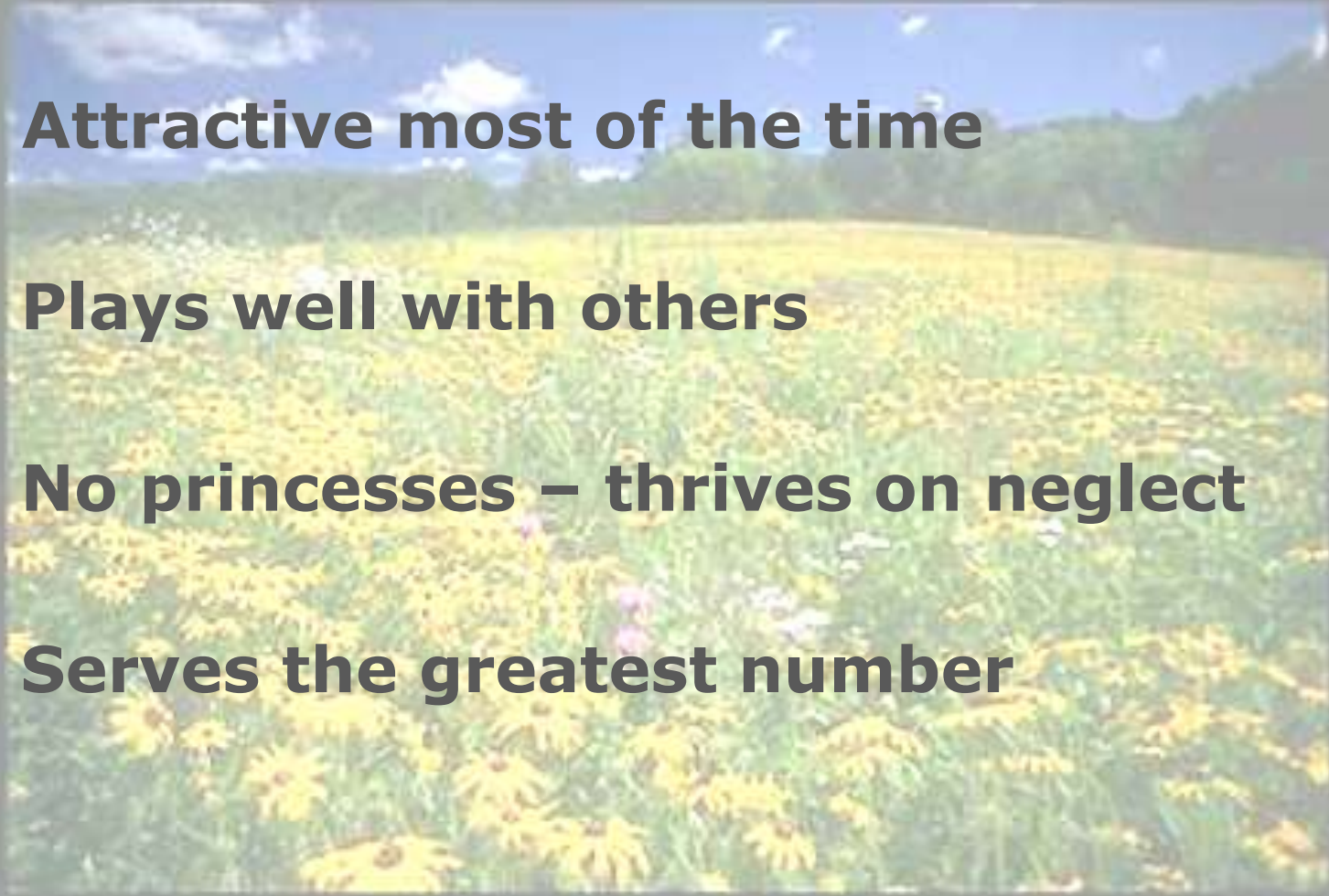
# Sneezeweed

*Helenium autumnale* L.



# Criteria for my Favorites

- ❖ **Attractive most of the time**
- ❖ **Plays well with others**
- ❖ **No princesses – thrives on neglect**
- ❖ **Serves the greatest number**





# Eastern Columbine

*Aquilegia canadensis*





# Eastern Columbine

- ❖ Family: Ranunculaceae or Buttercup
- ❖ Life-cycle: short-lived perennial
- ❖ Produces abundant seed, so only needs to be planted once





# Eastern Columbine



- ❖ Widely adaptable
- ❖ Hummingbird magnet
- ❖ Not attractive to deer or rabbits
- ❖ Nectar for pollinators
- ❖ Easy to grow from seed

# Growing It



- ❖ Ideal site is humus rich, well drained soil under high light shade or morning sun
- ❖ Tolerates full sun, drought, clay soil
- ❖ Critical factor : good drainage



# In the Garden

- ❖ Blooms anytime between late March and mid-April depending on site and weather; lasts for 2- 3 weeks
- ❖ Naturalizes beautifully in woodland settings
- ❖ Looks good with daffodils, spicebush, white azaleas, and serviceberry













# Phlox



❖ **Moss rose, creeping phlox:**

❖ *Phlox subulata*

❖ **Woodland creeping phlox:**

❖ *Phlox stolonifera*

❖ **Woodland phlox:**

❖ *Phlox divaricata*

❖ **Garden phlox:**

❖ *Phlox paniculata*

1 5 2005



# Family: Polemoniaceae

- ❖ May develop powdery mildew in poorly chosen sites
- ❖ Bloom time covers late February (*subulata*) through September (*paniculata*)
- ❖ Great nectaries and also fragrant



# Creeping Phlox (*subulata*)





Full Sun, Excellent Drainage





# Got Shade?

- ❖ Humus rich soil
- ❖ Constant moisture- but not soggy!
- ❖ **Early** morning sun or filtered shade



*Phlox divaricata*



# Creeping Woodland Phlox

*Phlox stolonifera*





# Creeping Woodland Phlox

*Phlox stolonifera*





# Woodland Phlox *Phlox divaricata*





# Back to Full Sun

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# Garden Phlox

*Phlox paniculata*





# Blooms July - September

- ❖ Deadhead for best bloom
- ❖ Plant mildew-resistant cultivars
- ❖ Benefits from good soil fertility
- ❖ Fragrant



# Also in dark colors



'Red Magic'

Dark colors attract  
butterflies,  
clearwing moths,  
and hummingbirds



# For the moonlight Garden

Use white or pale varieties to attract hawk moths and sphinx moths at night



'David'



# Golden Alexanders

*Zizia aurea*





Blooms late April - May





Loves WET CLAY SOIL !!!



Family : Apiaceae = Parsley



# Black Swallowtail





# Yucca 'Color Guard'

*Yucca filamentosa*



- ❖ Family: Agavaceae
- ❖ Full sun, sharp drainage
- ❖ Likes potash



# Intricate relationship with Yucca Moth





Birds will use threads  
for nesting material





Looks good coming out of winter





# Beardtongue 'Husker Red'

*Penstemon digitalis*\*



\*experts are not certain if native to Virginia



Leaf color holds well all season





And mixes well in the garden





5 Weeks Later





# Growing it

- ❖ Full sun, good drainage
- ❖ Raise pH to at least 6.0
- ❖ Drought tolerant
- ❖ Will produce new plants from seed

Early September





# Eastern Beardtongue 'Maple Hill'

*Penstemon laevigatus*

- ❖ Full sun to partial shade
- ❖ Moist to wet soil
- ❖ Larval host for Common Buckeye Butterfly





# Butterflyweed *Asclepias tuberosa*



29 May 2011



# Great Nectararies !





# Growing it

- ❖ Full sun, sharp drainage
- ❖ Tolerant of drought and low fertility
- ❖ Asclepias aphids and sooty mold indicate poor drainage





# Blooms from Seed the First Year



Will bloom through September if deadheaded



# Milkweeds are ONLY host for Monarch Butterfly Larvae

















# Wet or Swampy Soil ?



Swamp Milkweed



'Ice Ballet'

*Asclepias incarnata*



# Infertile Soils, Waste Places



Common Milkweed

*Asclepias syriaca*





# Milkweed Seedpods





# *Asclepias currasavica*

*Tropical Milkweed*





# This Milkweed DOESN'T Help

- Where this plant overwinters in the South it harbors a parasite that is putting a huge additional stress on a species of butterfly that is being considered for the T & E list.
- There is a possibility that *Asclepias currassavica* could overwinter in warmer parts of Virginia during mild years

article by scientists from the University of Georgia published in the *Proceedings of the Royal Society B*. The research, available online at <http://rspb.royalsocietypublishing.org/content/282/1801/20141734.full>, was supported by the National Science Foundation and the U.S. Forest Service.



# Scarlet Hibiscus

*Hibiscus coccineus*





# Growing it

- ❖ Grows 7' – 9' tall
- ❖ Grows in good garden soil; extra water is a bonus
- ❖ Heavy Feeder
- ❖ Blooms July – frost
- ❖ Japanese beetles can be a problem





# Hummingbird Magnet



[www.gifts-of-god.com](http://www.gifts-of-god.com)

Butterflies & bees love it, too !



Loves Wet  
Clay Soil !





Too tall ? Rosemallow to the  
rescue ! *Hibiscus moscheutos*





# Same Requirements, Same Issues





# Luna Series is even smaller





# Mistflower

*Conoclinium coelestinum*





# Daisy family: Asteraceae





# How to Grow it

- ❖ Prefers high shade, moist soil, and average fertility
- ❖ Tolerates full sun (lots of mulch), clay and sandy soils
- ❖ Freely self-sows
- ❖ Great filler



# Tiger Moth larva





# Black-eyed Susan

*Rudbeckia fulgida* 'Goldsturm'





# *Rudbeckias* aka yellow coneflowers

- ❖ Poor dry soil is fine, drought tolerant
- ❖ Clay soils are ok, but some mildew is possible: improve drainage
- ❖ Full sun unless otherwise noted
- ❖ Bee and butterfly attraction
- ❖ Finches and sparrows love the seeds





# Three Lobed Coneflower

*Rudbeckia triloba*





Tolerates dry partial shade





# *Rudbeckia triloba*

- ❖ Weak perennial, but reseeds well
- ❖ Works as herb layer among fairly wide-spaced trees





*Rudbeckia fulgida* 'Goldsturm'



05 November 2009



Earlier in the season !





# Giant Coneflower

*Rudbeckia maxima*





Prefers Moist Soils, Full Sun



Giant  
Coneflower

© Rob Broekhuis 2004



# Switchgrass 'Shenandoah'

*Panicum virgatum*









# Growing it

- ❖ 6 Hours Sun minimum
- ❖ Wet to Dry Soils
- ❖ Cut to Ground Level or Burn in mid-February

'North Wind'





# Virtues of Switchgrass



'Prairie Sky'

- ❖ Great Winter Food for Birds
- ❖ Deep Root System adds Biomass and Mines Nutrients
- ❖ Good Cover for quail & other birds



# New England Aster

*Symphotrichum novae-angliae*







- ❖ **Full sun, rich soil, high moisture**
- ❖ **Forms large clumps and seeds freely**
- ❖ **Blooms August – September**
- ❖ **Tolerates clay soil**





# *Solidago rugosa* 'Fireworks'

Goldenrod







- ❖ Full sun, well drained moist soil, low fertility OK
- ❖ DOES NOT cause hayfever!
- ❖ Spreads by underground rhizomes to form large colonies





# Wreath Goldenrod

*Solidago caesia*





- ❖ Medium shade to partial sun
- ❖ Tolerates dry soils, prefers moderate
- ❖ Thrives in oak woods





