

for Native Plant Mini-Cost Share, Habitat Restoration, Shoreline Restoration, and Waterbody Buffer Restoration projects

## Native Plant Requirements

- **Native range:** Plants (wildflower, grass, sedge, shrub, tree, etc.) must be native to and grown within the designated area.
- **Form:** Any form of native plant is allowed including *wildflowers, grasses, sedges, trees, and shrubs!*
- **Type:** A native plant must be the straight or wild type of the species that has not been bred for preferred characteristics. Cultivated varieties (cultivars) of native plants (nativars) are not allowed.
- **Selection:** Plant selection must be appropriate for site conditions. In other words, evaluate your site's sun exposure and soil moisture and select plants accordingly.
- **Source:** Live native plants and native seeds must be grown within southern Minnesota, northern Iowa, or western Wisconsin. We strongly encourage that native plants be purchased from a local grower or nursery that specializes in native plants. The name of the grower or retailer you plan to use must be provided. If the grant review committee is unsure about their qualifications, they may ask for more info or ask you to use another source.
- **Maintenance:** To protect water quality and preserve habitat integrity, native plants must be maintained in an ecologically friendly way. This means limiting chemical use and leaving dead, non-diseased plant material in place.



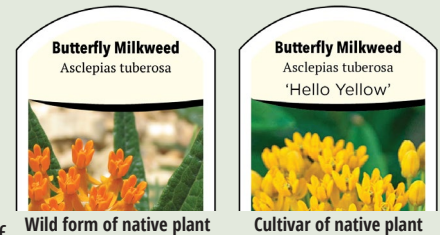
## Frequently Asked Questions

### Why don't you allow cultivars of native plants?

Cultivars are bred to enhance human-desired traits such as shape, size, and color. A native cultivar (sometimes called a "nativar") may be modified enough so that it no longer provides the same ecological benefits as the wild form of the native plant. Even minor changes in a native cultivar may cause pollinators such as butterflies and bees to no longer recognize it or to be unable to access its nectar or pollen. Cultivars also have less genetic diversity and if they escape into natural areas can negatively impact wild populations of that species.

### How do I tell if a native plant is a cultivar?

When shopping for native plants, avoid plants that have a variety name which is typically written inside single quotes. The examples on the right show the tops of



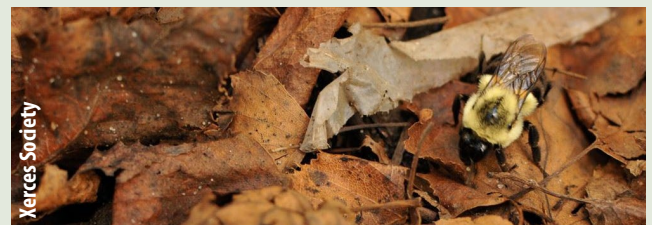
plant tags for Butterfly Milkweed. The straight or wild form of milkweed does not have a variety name on the tag, whereas the cultivar has the variety name 'Hello Yellow.' If you shop with a nursery that specializes in native plants, they will likely not have cultivars.

### Why is plant diversity important for my project?

Native plants help protect water quality and also provide habitat for wildlife. More plant diversity results in better habitat quality in the form of food, shelter, and places to raise young. Pollinators that rely on nectar and pollen are especially vulnerable to low plant diversity. This is why we ask that native plant projects have a minimum of 9 different species and that bloom times are distributed spring through fall.

### Why do you encourage "messy gardening?"

When plants shed their leaves in autumn, the leaves fall on the ground and form a layer of leaf litter. This serves as a natural mulch that conserves soil moisture, provides homes and nest materials for wildlife, and enriches the soil through decomposition. Caterpillars, bumblebee queens, and other insects also rely on leaf litter to overwinter until late spring.



## Diversity & Quantity Minimums

To support pollinators, restoration projects require at least three (3) different blooming native plant species per bloom season (spring, summer, and fall) with no overlap in species. *Mini-Cost Share native plant projects are encouraged to have native plant diversity but are exempt from the minimum diversity minimum requirement.*

### Summary of Minimum Requirements for Species Diversity and Quantity

Bloom season	Months	Number of species*	Minimum quantity needed**
SPRING	March, April, May, and/or June	At least 3 species	At least 3 individuals of each species
SUMMER	Late June, July, and/or August	At least 3 species	At least 3 individuals of each species
FALL	Late August, September, and/or October	At least 3 species	At least 3 individuals of each species

\* At least 9 different species in total. \*\* No quantity minimum for shrubs and trees.

A species that blooms in two seasons may count for either season but not for both.

## Required Information for Plant List — Standard Cost Share Project

### Include the following in your plant list:

- 1. Common name of the plant.**  
Common names vary, which is why we also require a scientific name.
- 2. Scientific name of each plant.**  
This should be readily available from a reputable native plant grower.
- 3. Bloom time for each plant (season or month).** This may be waived for a native seed mix designed for pollinators by a trusted native plant supplier.
- 4. Size description** such as pot size, multi-pack number, or seed weight.
- 5. Price per container** (individual pot, multi-pack, seed packet, etc.)
- 6. Quantity** you plan to purchase of each live plant species. Provide a weight or coverage for seeds.
- 7. Total price** for each plant species

EXAMPLE PLANT LIST						
Common Name	Scientific Name	Bloom	Size Desc.	Price ea.	Qty.	Total
Blue False Indigo	<i>Baptisia australis</i>	SPRING	6-pack plugs	\$18.00	6	\$108.00
Ohio Spiderwort	<i>Tradescantia ohioensis</i>	SPRING	3-in. pot	\$3.99	6	\$23.94
Bur Oak	<i>Quercus macrocarpa</i>	SPRING	#5 cont.	\$40.00	1	\$40.00
Black-eyed Susan	<i>Rudbeckia hirta</i>	SUMMER	¼ oz. seed packet	\$5.00	1	\$5.00
Leadplant	<i>Amorpha canescens</i>	SUMMER	3-in. pot	\$3.99	6	\$23.94
Showy Milkweed	<i>Asclepias speciosa</i>	SUMMER	9-pack plugs	\$22.50	4	\$90.00
Bush Honeysuckle	<i>Diervilla lonicera</i>	SUMMER	#3 cont.	\$12.99	3	\$38.97
Meadow Blazingstar	<i>Liatris ligulistylis</i>	FALL	9-pack plugs	\$22.50	4	\$90.00
Stiff Goldenrod	<i>Solidago rigida</i>	FALL	6-pack plugs	\$18.00	6	\$108.00
Smooth Blue Aster	<i>Symphotrichum laevis</i>	FALL	6-pack plugs	\$18.00	6	\$108.00

If you order from a native plant specialist, you should have access to all the information you need for your plant list.

## 2026 Maximum Allowable Costs for Native Plants — Standard Cost Share Project

### How does this work?

#### Maximum allowable costs are set for cost-effective use of grant funds.\*

For plants, buying smaller and less expensive containers also means you are more likely to buy young, healthy plants with less risk of disease, nutrient deficiencies, or root issues.

Let's say that a grant applicant is planning a project and is choosing between two different sizes of Yellow Coneflower, *Ratibida pinnata*. The 1-gallon pot size costs \$13, and the 3-inch pot size costs \$7.

Because the maximum allowable cost for a non-woody native plant is \$8.00, the applicant will have a greater out of pocket cost if they select the 1-gallon over the 3-inch pot. This is because a grant offer won't credit the 1-gallon pot for more than \$8 though it costs \$13.

\* Does not apply to Mini-Cost Share projects.

Habitat restoration cost share projects are reimbursed at a maximum dollar per square foot instead of considering maximum allowable cost per individual plant.

Item	Maximum allowable cost	Note
<b>Non-woody native plant</b> (wildflower, grass, sedge, rush, etc.)	<b>Up to \$8</b> per individual live plant or small seed packet. There is no set maximum for bulk native seed.	Small pots and plugs provide the best value. Small plants are young and tend to have fewer root concerns and nutrient deficiencies than large container plants.
<b>Shrub</b>	<b>Up to \$20</b> per individual live shrub	Plants that are younger and have spent less time growing in containers tend to be healthier. Bare root shrubs are a great value.
<b>Tree</b>	<b>Up to \$500</b> per live tree	Only non-cultivated varieties of native trees are eligible*. Visit the MN DNR website for a <a href="#">list of Minnesota's native trees</a> . Due to Emerald Ash Borer, ash trees are not eligible for grant funds. *Due to Dutch Elm Disease (DED), cultivars of native elms resistant to DED are allowed.