The Plants of WVDEP’s Rain Garden

Perennials

A perennial plant is a plant that lives for more than two years. The term is often used to differentiate a plant from shorter-lived annuals and biennials. The term is also widely used to distinguish plants with little or no woody growth from trees and shrubs, which are also technically perennials.

Herbaceous perennials grow and bloom over the spring and summer, die back every autumn and winter, and then return in the spring from their root-stock. Depending on the rigors of local climate, a plant that is a perennial in its native habitat may be treated by a gardener as an annual and planted out every year, from seed, cuttings or from divisions. Tomato vines, for example, live several years in their natural tropical habitat but are grown as annuals in temperate regions because they don’t survive the winter.

Silphium perfoliatum

Type: Herbaceous perennial
Family: Asteraceae
Range: Central-eastern Canada to southeastern US
Height: 4–8 ft; spread: 1–3 ft
Blooms: July to September
Sun: Full sun
Water: Medium to wet
Wetland indicator status: FACW

Senna marilandica

Wild senna

Type: Herbaceous perennial
Family: Fabaceae
Range: Midwest and south-eastern US
Height: 3–6 ft; spread: 2–3 ft
Blooms: July to August
Sun: Full sun
Water: Medium
Wetland indicator status: FACW

Solidago canadensis

Canada goldenrod

Type: Herbaceous perennial
Family: Asteraceae
Range: Northeastern and north central North America
Height: 2–6 ft; spread: 2–3 ft
Blooms: September to October
Sun: Full sun
Water: Medium to wet
Wetland indicator status: FACW

Eutrochium fistulosum

Joe Pye weed

Type: Herbaceous perennial
Family: Asteraceae
Range: Eastern US
Height: 4–7 ft; spread: 2–4 ft
Blooms: July to September
Sun: Full sun to part shade
Water: Medium to wet
Wetland indicator status: FACW

Shrubs

A shrub is distinguished from a tree by its multiple stems and shorter height, usually less than 6 m (20 ft) tall. Plants of many species may grow either into shrubs or trees, depending on their growing conditions.

Vernonia gigantea

Giant ironweed

Type: Herbaceous perennial
Family: Asteraceae
Range: Eastern US
Height: 5 – 8 ft; spread: 3 – 6 ft
Blooms: August to September
Sun: Full sun to part shade
Water: Medium to wet
Wetland indicator status: FAC

Rudbeckia hirta

Black-eyed Susan

Type: Herbaceous perennial
Family: Asteraceae
Range: Central US
Height: 2 - 3 ft; spread: 1 - 2 ft
Blooms: June to September
Sun: Full sun
Water: Medium
Wetland indicator status: FACU

Baptisia australis

Blue false indigo

Type: Herbaceous perennial
Family: Fabaceae
Range: Eastern US
Height: 3–4 ft; spread: 3–4 ft
Blooms: May to June
Sun: Full sun to part shade
Water: Dry to medium
Wetland indicator status: FACU

Symphyotrichum laeve

Smooth aster

Type: Herbaceous perennial
Family: Asteraceae
Range: Northwestern US
Height: 2–4 ft; spread: 1–2 ft
Blooms: September to October
Sun: Full sun
Water: Dry to medium
Maintenance: Low
Wetland indicator status: FACU

Asclepias tuberosa

Butterfly weed

Type: Herbaceous perennial
Family: Apocynaceae
Range: Eastern and southern US
Height: 1–2.5 ft; spread: 1–1.5 ft
Blooms: June to August
Sun: Full sun
Water: Dry to medium
Wetland indicator status: FAC
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**Hamamelis virginiana**
Common witch hazel
Type: Deciduous shrub
Family: Hamamelidaceae
Range: Eastern North America
Height: 15-20 ft; spread: 15-20 ft
Blooms: October to December
Water: Medium
Wetland indicator status: FAC

**Lindera benzoin**
Spice bush
Type: Deciduous shrub
Family: Lauraceae
Range: Eastern US
Height: 6-12 ft; spread: 6–12 ft
Blooms: March
Sun: Full sun to part shade
Water: Medium
Wetland indicator status: FACW

**Euonymus atropurpureus**
Eastern wahoo
Type: Deciduous shrub
Family: Celastraceae
Range: Eastern North America
Height: 12-20 ft; spread: 15–25 ft
Blooms: June
Sun: Full sun to part shade
Water: Medium
Wetland indicator status: FAC

**Euonymus americanus**
Strawberry bush
Type: Deciduous shrub
Family: Celastraceae
Range: Eastern US
Height: 4-6 ft; spread: 4–6 ft
Blooms: May to June
Sun: Part shade
Water: Medium
Wetland indicator status: FACW

**Cornus racemosa**
Gray dogwood
Type: Deciduous shrub
Family: Cornaceae
Range: Eastern North America
Height: 10–15 ft; spread: 9-12 ft
Blooms: May to June
Sun: Full sun to part shade
Water: Medium
Wetland indicator status: FAC

**Ilex verticillata**
Winterberry
Type: Deciduous shrub
Family: Aquifoliaceae
Range: Eastern North America
Height: 3–12 ft; spread: 3–12 ft
Blooms: June to July
Sun: Full sun to part shade
Water: Medium to wet
Wetland indicator status: FACW

**Viburnum prunifolium**
Blackhaw viburnum
Type: Deciduous shrub
Family: Adoxaceae
Range: Eastern and central North America
Height: 12–15 ft; spread: 6-12 ft
Blooms: May to June
Sun: Full sun to part shade
Water: Dry to medium
Wetland indicator status: FACU

**Grasses**
The Gramineae or true grasses are a large and nearly ubiquitous family of monocotyledonous flowering plants. With more than 10,000 domesticated and wild species, it represents the fifth-largest plant family. Grasslands are estimated to compose 20% of the vegetation cover of the Earth. Grasses live in many other habitats, including wetlands, forests and tundra.

**Panicum virgatum**
Switch grass
Type: Ornamental grass
Family: Poaceae
Range: Central America to southern Canada
Height: 3–6 ft; spread: 2–3 ft
Blooms: July to February
Sun: Full sun to part shade
Water: Medium to wet
Wetland indicator status: FACW

**Chasmanthium latifolium**
River oats
Type: Ornamental grass
Family: Poaceae
Range: Eastern US, northern Mexico
Height: 2–5 ft; spread: 1-2.5 ft
Blooms: August to September
Sun: Full sun to part shade
Water: Medium to wet
Wetland indicator status: FAC

### Wetland indicator

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Designation</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OBL</td>
<td>Obligate Wetland Hydrophyte</td>
<td>Almost always occurs in wetlands</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>FACW</td>
<td>Facultative Wetland Hydrophyte</td>
<td>Usually occurs in wetlands, but may occur in non-wetlands</td>
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<tr>
<td>FAC</td>
<td>Facultative Hydrophyte</td>
<td>Occurs in wetlands and non-wetlands</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FACU</td>
<td>Facultative Upland Non-hydrophyte</td>
<td>Usually occurs in non-wetlands, but may occur in wetlands</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UPL</td>
<td>Obligate Upland Non-hydrophyte</td>
<td>Almost never occurs in wetlands</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>