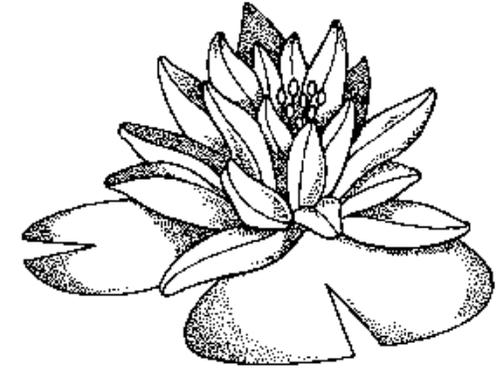
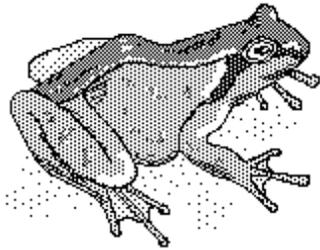


Native Plants for Coastal NC Wetlands and Retention Ponds



Hundreds of species of wetland plants occur throughout North Carolina. Many produce attractive flowers and foliage and are valuable sources of food and shelter for birds, butterflies and other wildlife. The following lists are suggested plants suitable for use in wetlands plantings, including retention ponds. All are native to Southeastern North Carolina and many occur throughout the state. All of these plants can be purchased at specialty native plant nurseries, though a few are commonly used as ornamentals and are widely available from local garden centers (widely available plants are marked with a star*).



Floating Rooted Aquatic Plants

Floating rooted aquatic plants grow with their roots in the mud while their leaves and flowers float at or stick up above the water's surface. These aggressive growers prefer to grow in 3'-6' of standing water and can quickly fill a small pond or wetland. In the wild, their spread is usually limited by varying water levels. These plants should only be planted in large wetlands with varying water depths that will limit their spread. If planted in small ponds, be aware they can quickly cover areas of water between 2' and 10' deep.

Common Name	Scientific Name	Comments
American Lotus	<i>Nelumbo lutea</i>	Bold plant with foliage and flower stems standing 4'-6' above water's surface. Large, showy yellow flowers produced throughout summer.
Spadderdock, Cow-lily	<i>Nuphar luteum</i>	Heart shaped leaves float on water's surface. 1"-2" wide, globe shaped, yellow flowers are born throughout summer.
Fragrant Water-lily	<i>Nymphaea odorata</i>	Rounded, heart shaped leaves float on water's surface. Large, white, sweetly fragrant flowers open throughout summer.
Floating Hearts	<i>Nymphoides aquatica</i>	Large heart shaped leaves float on water's surface. Dainty, 5-petaled, 1"-2" white flowers emerge among the foliage and stand up a few inches above water's surface.



Emergent Aquatic Perennials

This group of plants prefers to grow in 3” to 6” of standing water, with their crowns and roots in the mud but their leaves and flowers emerging up above the water. They can tolerate periods of dryer conditions but in general need saturated soils to grow best. They are perfect for growing at the edges of ponds or in shallow standing water.

Common Name	Scientific Name	Exposure	Comments
Duck Potato*	<i>Sagittaria latifolia</i>	sun to light shade	Tough emergent aquatic with arrowhead shaped leaves and spikes of white flowers produced throughout summer. Reproduces rapidly.
Arrow Arum	<i>Peltandra virginica</i>	sun to part shade	Elegant arrowhead shaped leaves and interesting green flowers on a clump forming plant.
Pickerelweed*	<i>Pontederia cordata</i>	sun to part shade	Upright plant producing numerous 3' tall spikes topped with blue flowers all summer. Tough and attractive.
Lizard's Tail*	<i>Saururus cernuus</i>	sun to part shade	Spreading perennial that will grow in shallow standing water and wet soils. Pendant spikes of white flowers in late spring and summer.
Blue Flag*	<i>Iris virginica</i>	sun to part shade	Blue flowering, 3' tall iris that prefers to grow in shallow standing water or water's edge.

Submerged and Free Floating Aquatics

Like floating rooted aquatics, these two types of aquatic plants require pools of permanently standing water to grow successfully. Though they are not necessary for the success a wetland planting, their inclusion will certainly add interest and increase habitat value. Submerged plants grow completely underwater, though some do produce small flowers that float at the water's surface. They help to keep the water oxygenated and provide habitat for fish. Examples of native submerged aquatics include Eelgrass (*Vallisneria americana*), Coontail (*Ceratophyllum demersum*), and Common Water Nymph (*Najas guadalupensis*). Free floating aquatics float on top of the water with their roots hanging down into the water below. These plants tend to increase rapidly and can quickly cover the surface of a pond or wetland. Native species include Carolina Water Fern (*Azolla caroliniana*) and Bladderwort (*Utricularia inflata*).

CAUTION: Extreme care should be taken when introducing free-floating aquatics so that only native species are used. Many invasive non-native species are available that are or could become noxious weeds.

Sedges and Rushes

This large family of grass like plants includes many different moisture loving species. Most will grow happily in shallow standing water or permanently moist soils, though many can tolerate periods of dryer conditions. Sedges and rushes should be used as fillers in the backyard wetland. They are excellent for stabilizing soil and can be used in large sweeps for visual interest. Some of the more attractive species are listed below.



Common Name	Scientific Name	Comments
Hop Sedge	<i>Carex lupulina</i>	2'-3' tall sedge producing dramatic clusters of pineapple shaped light green flowers in early summer.
Soft Rush	<i>Juncus effusus</i>	Common rush found throughout NC. 2'-3' tall with dark green spiky foliage. Green flowers age to brown seed pods throughout summer.
White-top Sedge	<i>Rhynchospora latifolia</i>	Showy 2' tall, spreading sedge bearing attractive white bracted flowers throughout summer.
Woolgrass	<i>Scirpus cyperinus</i>	Large, 3'-4' tall and wide clump forming bulrush producing wooly green flower heads in summer that age to an attractive rusty brown as seeds mature.

Moisture Loving Perennials

Many of our most attractive native perennials grow in moist soils or wetlands. These plants return year after year to bring color and seasonal variety to wetlands areas. The flowers of many are excellent nectar sources for butterflies and hummingbirds. Some of these plants increase rather quickly by spreading roots known as rhizomes and stolons while others tend to stay in one place forming large clumps. The growth habit of each is noted below, as well as the average mature size (height x width).

Common Name	Scientific Name	Size	Exposure	Growth	Comments
Swamp Milkweed*	<i>Asclepias incarnata</i>	3'-4' x 2'-3'	sun - part shade	clumping	Pink flowers in early summer. Larval host food of monarch butterflies.
Turtlehead	<i>Chelone glabra</i>	3' x 3'	sun - part shade	spreading	Fall bloomer with spikes of white snapdragon shaped flowers.
Swamp Tickseed	<i>Coreopsis helianthoides</i>	2'-3' x 2'-3'	sun - part shade	spreading	Fall bloomer producing masses of golden sunflower shaped blossoms.

Perennials continued . . .

Common Name	Scientific Name	Size	Exposure	Growth	Comments
Plume Grass	<i>Erianthus giganteus</i>	7'-10' x 3'-5'	sun - light shade	clumping	Dramatic tall grass with showy flower plumes in fall.
Hatpins, Pipewort	<i>Eriocaulon decangulare</i>	1'-2' x 1'-2'	sun - light shade	clumping	Small white ball shaped flowers on the end of straight stems actually do resemble hatpins. Flowers all summer.
Joe Pye Weed*	<i>Eupatorium fistulosum</i>	5'-7' x 3'-4'	sun - part shade	spreading	Masses of rosy-mauve flowers in late summer through fall, attracts hundreds of butterflies.
Swamp Sunflower*	<i>Helianthus angustifolius</i>	5'-7' x 3'-4'	sun - part shade	spreading	6' + towers topped with 3" wide golden sunflowers in fall - attracts butterflies.
Red Star Hibiscus*	<i>Hibiscus coccineus</i>	4'-6' x 3'-4'	sun - part shade	clumping	Tough, clump forming, sturdy plant with star shaped red flowers in summer.
Rose Mallow*	<i>Hibiscus moscheutos</i>	4'-6' x 3'-4'	sun - part shade	clumping	Tough, durable plants with huge white, pink or rose flowers in summer.
Seashore Mallow	<i>Kosteletskya virginica</i>	4'-6' x 3'-4'	sun - part shade	clumping	Tall airy plants are covered with 2"-3" pink flowers all summer.
Cardinal Flower*	<i>Lobelia cardinalis</i>	2'-4' x 1'-2'	sun - part shade	clumping	Tall spikes of crimson red flowers in late summer and fall - attracts hummingbirds and butterflies .
Cinnamon Fern	<i>Osmunda cinnamomea</i>	3'-5' x 2'-3'	sun - part shade	clumping	Dramatic clump forming fern with rusty fiddleheads in spring.
Royal Fern	<i>Osmunda regalis</i>	3'-5' x 2'-3'	sun - part shade	clumping	Dramatic clump forming fern with bold textured foliage.
Switch Grass	<i>Panicum virgatum</i>	3'-4' x 2'-3'	sun - part shade	spreading	Upright fall blooming grass whose airy seedheads persist through winter.
Green Headed Coneflower	<i>Rudbeckia laciniata</i>	4'-6' x 3'-4'	sun - part shade	clumping	Yellow flowers in summer on tall plants. Good for butterflies.
Goldenrod	<i>Solidago rugosa</i>	3'-5' x 2'-3'	sun - part shade	spreading	Multiple spikes of golden yellow flowers in late summer and fall.
Ironweed	<i>Vernonia noveboracensis</i>	5'-7' x 3'-4'	sun - part shade	spreading	Royal purple flowers atop tall stems in late summer through fall - attracts butterflies.
Atamasco Lily	<i>Zephyranthes atamasco</i>	1' x 1'	sun - part shade	clumping	Spring bloomer with large white trumpet shaped flowers. Grows from bulbs.

* = Denotes plants that are commonly available at local garden centers.

Moisture Loving Woody Plants

Woody plants are a valuable component of any wetland, providing shelter for nesting birds, berries for wildlife, and large root systems that hold soil in place. The various wetlands that are found across our state are inhabited by many different species of trees and shrubs. Most of these plants are tough and adaptable, tolerating periods of flooding as well as drier conditions. Many will grow just as happily in average, well-drained soil as they will in wet boggy areas. The majority are deciduous plants (D) that lose their leaves each fall but a few are evergreen (E). The mature size is listed as height (H) x width (W).

Trees

Common Name	Scientific Name	E/D	Exposure	H x W	Comments
Red Maple*	<i>Acer rubrum</i>	D	sun to light shade	40'-60' x 20'-30'	Medium to large tree with excellent fall color. Produces showy red flowers and seedpods in early spring.
Pawpaw	<i>Asimina triloba</i>	D	sun to part shade	15'-25' x 10'-20'	Suckering multi-stemmed shrub or small tree producing sweet banana like fruit in autumn.
River Birch*	<i>Betula nigra</i>	D	sun to light shade	30'-40' x 15'-20'	Adaptable tree that produces attractive light colored flaky bark. Often grows with multiple trunks.
Redbud*	<i>Cercis canadensis</i>	D	sun to part shade	15'-25' x 10'-20'	Graceful small tree producing bright rosy purple flowers in early spring.
Atlantic White Cedar	<i>Chamaecyparis thyoides</i>	E	sun to light shade	30'-50' x 10'-20'	Tall, slender evergreen formerly used to make log cabins. Smaller growing selections are available.
Fringe Tree	<i>Chionanthus virginicus</i>	D	sun to part shade	10'-20' x 10'-15'	Large shrub or small multi-stemmed tree bearing fragrant, white flowers in early summer, followed by blue berries on female plants.
Swamp Dogwood	<i>Cornus foemina</i>	D	sun to part shade	15'-25' x 10'-20'	Large shrub or small multi-stemmed tree producing flat clusters of white flowers followed by blue berries. Excellent food source for birds.
TiTi	<i>Cyrilla racemiflora</i>	Semi E	sun to part shade	10'-20' x 10'	Large shrub or small multi-stemmed tree producing masses of tiny white flowers in drooping spikes in mid summer.
Possumhaw	<i>Ilex decidua</i>	D	sun to light shade	15'-25' x 10'-20'	Small tree whose stems are lined with bright red berries in fall and winter.

Common Name	Scientific Name	E/D	Exposure	H x W	Comments
Sweetbay*	<i>Magnolia virginiana</i>	Semi E	sun to light shade	20'-30' x 10'-15'	Small tree with large, fragrant white flowers in early summer. Often grows with multiple trunks.
Swamp Redbay	<i>Persea palustris</i>	E	sun to part shade	20'-30' x 10'-15'	Evergreen upright tree. Salt tolerant and deer resistant.
Pond Cypress	<i>Taxodium ascendens</i>	D	sun to light shade	60'-70' x 10'-20'	Columnar habit with fine textured, feathery foliage. Rusty brown fall color.
Bald Cypress*	<i>Taxodium distichum</i>	D	sun to light shade	50'-70' x 20'-30'	Majestic large tree, synonymous with Southern swamps. Amazingly adaptable and will grow in almost any soil and up to 3' of standing water.

* = Denotes plants that are commonly available at local garden centers.

Shrubs

Common Name	Scientific Name	E/D	Exposure	H x S	Comments
Chokeberry	<i>Aronia arbutifolia</i>	D	sun to light shade	6'-10' x 3'-5'	Upright, suckering shrub producing flat cluster of white flowers in early spring - followed by generous clusters of bright red berries in fall and winter.
Beautyberry	<i>Callicarpa americana</i>	D	sun to part shade	4'-6' x 3'-5'	Striking clusters of magenta berries line stems in late summer and fall. Best cut back to 1' in early spring.
Sweet Shrub	<i>Calycanthus floridus</i>	D	sun to part shade	5'-8' x 5'-8'	Suckering shrub bearing fragrant maroon flowers in early summer.
Buttonbush	<i>Cephalanthus occidentalis</i>	D	sun to light shade	6'-12' x 6'- 12'	Interesting round clusters of small white flowers in summer attract many butterflies. Adaptable - will grow in standing water or well drained soil.
Pepperbush, Summersweet*	<i>Clethra alnifolia</i>	D	sun to light shade	4'-6' x 3'-5'	Suckering shrub with extremely fragrant spikes of white or pink flowers in summer and yellow autumn color.
Silky Dogwood	<i>Cornus amomum</i>	D	sun to part shade	6'-10' x 6'- 10'	Flat clusters of white flowers are followed in autumn by blue berries which are valuable food source for birds.

Common Name	Scientific Name	E/D	Exposure	H x S	Comments
Strawberry Bush, Hearts-a-Bustin	<i>Euonymus americanus</i>	D	sun to part shade	4'-6' x 3'-5'	Common names refer the attractive red and orange seed pods that decorate this suckering shrub in autumn.
Dwarf Fothergilla	<i>Fothergilla gardenii</i>	D	sun to part shade	3'-5' x 3'-4'	Small, white, fringy, honey scented flowers in spring. Excellent yellow, orange and red fall color.
Inkberry*	<i>Ilex glabra</i>	E	Sun	5' x 5'	Evergreen shrub with small black berries in fall.
Winterberry*	<i>Ilex verticillata</i>	D	sun to light shade	6'-10' x 6'-10'	Large shrub covered with red berries all winter. Plant several to insure good pollination.
Yaupon*	<i>Ilex vomitoria</i>	E	sun to light shade	10'-20' x 5'-10'	Extremely tough and adaptable upright shrub. Stems of female plants are lined with translucent red berries in fall. Dwarf forms are available.
Virginia Sweetspire*	<i>Itea virginica</i>	D	sun to part shade	4'-6' x 3'-5'	Suckering shrub producing pendant spikes of white fragrant flowers in late spring. Exceptional autumn color.
Spicebush	<i>Lindera benzion</i>	D	sun to part shade	6'-10' x 6'-10'	Small but attractive bright yellow flowers in early spring. Followed by red berries on female plants. Larval host plant for Spicebush Swallowtail butterflies.
Wax Myrtle*	<i>Myrica cerifera</i>	E	sun to light shade	6'-15' x 6'-12'	Tough, adaptable plant that can be grown as a shrub or small multi-stemmed tree.
Coastal Azalea	<i>Rhododendron atlanticum</i>	D	sun to part shade	3'-5' x 3'-4'	Produces clusters of white, extremely sweetly scented flowers in early spring before the leaves come out.
Swamp Honeysuckle	<i>Rhododendron viscosum</i>	D	sun to part shade	9'-15' x 6'-10'	Large native azalea producing white, fragrant flowers in early summer.
Swamp Rose	<i>Rosa palustris</i>	D	sun to light shade	5'-10' x 5'-7'	Suckering shrub bearing fragrant pink flowers in summer. Red fruits (hips) in fall.
Dwarf Palmetto	<i>Sabal minor</i>	E	sun to shade	5' x 5'	Dramatic clumping palm for outer Coastal Plains.
American Snowbell	<i>Styrax americanus</i>	D	sun to light shade	6'-10' x 5'-8'	Fine textured shrub covered in white bell shaped flowers in spring.
Possumhaw Viburnum*	<i>Viburnum nudum</i>	D	sun to part shade	6'-10' x 6'-10'	Flat clusters of creamy white flowers are followed by cream to pink berries that mature to blue in fall. Wine and burgundy autumn color.

Common Name	Scientific Name	E/D	Exposure	H x S	Comments
Honeycups	<i>Zenobia pulverulenta</i>	D	sun to light shade	3'-5' x 3'-4'	Gracefully arching shrub whose stems are laden with white bell shaped flowers in spring. Nice autumn color.

* = Denotes plants that are commonly available at local garden centers.

Links of Interest:

NCSU - Wetland Plant Identification: http://harvest.cals.ncsu.edu/applications/plant_biology/wetland/library/PrefaceNEW.cfm

NCDENR - Common Wetland Plants of North Carolina: http://www.esb.enr.state.nc.us/Wetplant/Wetland_Plants.htm

NCSU - Aquatic Plant Resources Website: <http://www.weedscience.ncsu.edu/aquaticweeds/factsheets.asp>

NCSU - Water Gardens and Weeds: <http://www.weedscience.ncsu.edu/aquaticweeds/watergarden/WATERGRD2.HTM>

NCSU – Going Native: Landscaping for wildlife with native plants: <http://www.ncsu.edu/goingnative/>

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