

Balsam Fir

Abies balsamea

This native fir is an easy-to-grow tree, known for its blue-green foliage and evergreen aroma. The narrow, pyramid shape makes it a natural choice for windbreaks. It requires almost no care when used as a hedge or screen, only occasional waterings. And single trees soften house corners.



MATURE SIZE

50 to 75 ft tall × 20-25 ft wide. Older trees develop an oval habit with lateral branches that start relatively low to the ground.

GROWTH SPEED

Moderate (~1 ft/year). Reaches mature size in 15 to 30 years.

SUN PREFERENCE

Full or partial sunlight. Newly started trees prefer a sheltered area for the first year of growth.

SOIL PREFERENCE

Prefers dry, loose, sandy soil with a low pH in full sun. Water consistently and slowly.

ATTRIBUTES

- Grows in a pyramidal shape
- Develops blisters of resin (balsam) along the trunk
- Long, dark, 1-inch needles in pairs, with blunt tips

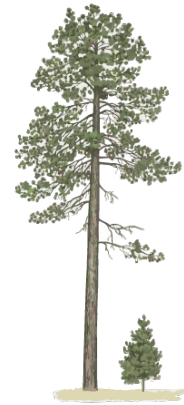
WILDLIFE VALUE

The seeds and buds are food for birds including grouse, squirrels, mice and voles. Moose and white-tailed deer use the balsam fir for food, cover and shelter. The bark is browsed by black bears. Beavers occasionally use the wood for dam building.

Red Pine

Pinus resinosa Also known as Norway Pine

Red Pine was an important lumber tree and is the common "plantation pine" in the upper Midwest, including in Door County. Its needles snap in half when bent — the only pine that does this — making identification easy. The 3 or 4-year-old needles turn yellow and drop in fall (seasonal needle drop). It produces short, stubby cones, and the bark on older trees becomes a patchwork of grays and rusty-oranges. Grows with Arborvitae (White Cedar) along the top of the Niagara Escarpment.



MATURE SIZE

Up to 80 ft tall × 40 ft wide

GROWTH SPEED

Moderate

SUN PREFERENCE

Full sun (does not tolerate shade)

SOIL PREFERENCE

Well-drained, even dry soils

ATTRIBUTES

- Long, stiff, dark green needles in bundles of 2
- Needles snap cleanly in half when bent (unique identifier)
- Seasonal needle drop: older needles turn yellow and fall in autumn
- Short, stubby cones
- Mature bark forms distinctive gray and rusty-orange patches
- Common "plantation pine" in the Upper Midwest
- Often found growing alongside Arborvitae along the Niagara Escarpment

WILDLIFE VALUE

Provides shelter and nesting habitat for birds. Seeds are eaten by small mammals and birds. Offers year-round cover for wildlife.

Eastern White Pine

Pinus strobus

Eastern white pine forests originally covered much of north-central and northeastern North America. Only one percent of the old-growth forests remain after the extensive logging operations of the 18th century to early 20th century. Mature trees are often 200–250 years old, and some live to over 400 years. The Native American Haudenosaunee denominated it the "Tree of Peace."



MATURE SIZE

50-80 ft tall × 20-40 ft wide

GROWTH SPEED

Fast — height increases of more than 24 in/year

SUN PREFERENCE

Full sun to partial shade. Prefers a minimum of four hours of direct, unfiltered sunlight each day.

SOIL PREFERENCE

Acidic, moist, well-drained and dry soils. Does best in moist soil, but can tolerate everything from dry, rocky ridges to bogs.

ATTRIBUTES

- Grows in an oval, pyramidal shape. Transplants easily.
- Is sensitive to air pollution, road salt and soil compaction.

WILDLIFE VALUE

Eastern white pine seeds are favored by black bears, rabbits, red squirrels and many birds, especially red crossbills. While potentially damaging to the trees, the bark is eaten by mammals such as beavers, snowshoe hares, porcupines, rabbits and mice. White pines provide nesting sites for many birds including woodpeckers.

White Spruce

Picea glauca

A straight, tall tree easily recognized by its needles. Cones always hang down. Beautiful year-round color.



MATURE SIZE

40-60 ft tall × 10-20 ft wide

GROWTH SPEED

Medium — 13-24 in/year

SUN PREFERENCE

Full sun is ideal — at least six hours of direct, unfiltered sunlight each day.

SOIL PREFERENCE

Acidic, loamy, moist, sandy, well-drained and clay soils. Has some drought tolerance.

ATTRIBUTES

- Transplants readily
- Can withstand wind, heat, cold, drought, crowding and some shade
- Works well in cities and rural windbreaks

WILDLIFE VALUE

Besides providing nesting sites and shelter, white spruces provide food for many kinds of wildlife. Crossbills, evening grosbeaks and red-breasted nuthatches prefer the seeds. The foliage is eaten by grouse, rabbits and deer. Red squirrels cut open cones to eat the seeds, and they feast upon young, tender spruce shoots. The bark is enjoyed by both porcupines and black bears, sometimes to the detriment of the trees.

Common Ironweed

Vernonia fasciculata

Vernonia fasciculata is a Wisconsin native plant named for its tough stem. Ironweed has excellent upright form in the garden. The intense purple bloom color stands out in the late summer landscape, attracting many butterflies and other pollinators. While this tall stately plant occurs naturally in moist soils and tolerates brief flooding, it grows equally well in average garden soils. The plant height may be reduced by cutting back the stems in late spring. Ironweed can be an aggressive spreader by seed and may not be suitable for smaller settings, but is very effective in background borders, cottage gardens, rain gardens and wildflower meadows.



Garden locations: Grows best in full sun; in pine woods, in mixed hardwood forests, in sandhills, and roadside banks.

AT A GLANCE

Common Name: Ironweed

Native Range: Southeast US

Height: 4 to 6 feet

Bloom Time: July to September

Sun: Full sun

Maintenance: Low

Attracts: Butterflies

Family: Asteraceae

Zone: 3 to 7

Spread: Far

Bloom Description: Purple

Water: Medium

Flower: Showy

Tolerates: Drought, Clay Soil

Golden Alexander

Zizia aurea

Zizia aurea, commonly called golden Alexander, is a native perennial which occurs most often in small colonies in moist woods and meadows, thickets, glades and prairies. Features flat-topped clusters (compound umbels) of tiny yellow flowers in late spring atop stems growing to 3' tall. Distinguished from other carrot family members by the absence of a flower stalk on the central flower of each umbel. Both basal and stem leaves are compound biternate with toothed leaflets. The similar *Zizia aptera* has simple, heart-shaped basal leaves.



Garden locations: Grows best in the full sun; in pine woods, in mixed hardwood forests, in sandhills, and roadside banks.

Uses: Best massed in open woodland or prairie areas, wild or native plant gardens.

Of Note: No serious insect or disease problems. Foliage tends to depreciate as the summer progresses. In ideal conditions can reseed heavily.

AT A GLANCE

Common Name: Golden Alexander

Family: Apiaceae

Native Range: Eastern Canada to southern United States

Zone: 3 to 8

Height: 1.5 to 3 feet

Spread: 1.5 to 2 feet

Bloom Time: May to June

Bloom Description: Yellow

Sun: Full sun to part shade

Water: Medium

Maintenance: Medium

Flower: Showy, Good Cut

Suggested Use: Naturalize, Rain Garden

Attracts: Butterflies

Marsh Blazing Star

Liatris spicata

Liatris spicata, commonly known as blazing star, dense blazing star, or marsh blazing star, is a tall, upright, clump-forming perennial native to moist low grounds, meadows, and marsh margins in the Eastern United States. It typically grows 2-4 feet tall in cultivation, but can reach up to 6 feet in native habitats. It produces tall spikes (6-12") of fluffy, red-purple flower heads that attract hummingbirds, butterflies, and other pollinators. The small seeds also appeal to songbirds.



Garden locations: Commonly featured in native plant gardens, prairie restorations, and public rain garden displays throughout its native range.

Uses: Adds vertical interest to rain gardens and native plantings. Excellent for pollinator support and late-summer color.

Of Note: Belongs to the aster family, but produces only disk flowers (no ray flowers). Popular cultivar *L. spicata* 'Kobold' is a compact form.

AT A GLANCE

Common Name: Blazing Star

Native Range: Eastern United States

Height: 2 to 4 feet

Bloom Time: July to August

Sun: Full sun

Maintenance: Low

Suggested Use: Pollinator Garden, Rain Garden

Family: Asteraceae

Zone: 3 to 8

Spread: 0.75 to 1.5 feet

Bloom Description: Red-purple, fluffy flower heads on tall stalks

Water: Medium

Flower: Showy, Good Cut, Good Dried

Attracts: Birds, Hummingbirds, Butterflies

New England Aster

Symphotrichum novae-angliae

Symphotrichum novae-angliae, commonly called New England aster, is a native perennial which occurs in moist prairies, meadows, thickets, low valleys and stream banks. It is a stout, leafy plant typically growing 3-6' tall with a robust, upright habit. Features a profuse bloom of daisy-like asters (to 1.5" diameter) with purple rays and yellow centers from late summer to early fall. Rough, hairy, lance-shaped leaves (to 4" long) clasp stiff, hairy stems. Flowers are attractive to butterflies.



Culture: Easily grown in medium, well-drained soil. Prefers moist, rich soils. Good air circulation helps reduce incidence of foliar diseases. Pinching back stems several times before mid-July will help control plant height, promote bushiness and perhaps obviate the need for staking. Pinching back will also delay flowering.

Uses: Effective naturalized in drifts in meadows or in native or wildflower gardens.

Of Note: Susceptible to powdery mildew. Aster wilt can also be an occasional problem, particularly if plants are grown in poorly-drained clay soil.

AT A GLANCE

Common Name: New England aster

Zone: 4 to 8

Bloom Time: August to September

Sun: Full sun

Maintenance: Medium

Suggested Use: Naturalize, Rain Garden

Family: Asteraceae

Height: 3-6 feet

Bloom Description: Deep pink-purple

Water: Medium

Flower: Showy, Good Cut

Attracts: Butterflies, Bees