AgNews DELAWARE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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Attention gardeners and lawn enthusiasts: Native Plant Nurseries List available online at http://dda.delaware.gov/plantind/index.shtml

The Delaware Department of Agriculture (DDA), the Delaware Nursery and Landscape Association (DNLA) and the University of Delaware (UD) have teamed up to develop a Native Plant Nurseries List. This list was developed to satisfy the increasing demand of consumers for native plants. Over the past several years, Delaware gardeners, homeowners and landscapers have shown an increasing interest in using more native plants in gardens and landscaping. This same trend has also been observed in other parts of the United States and reflects a growing awareness of issues associated with invasive plants, and an emphasis on sustainable landscaping that recommends low maintenance, adaptable and hardy plants that are beneficial to the local environments. In addition, emerging research has shown that native plants are preferred for conserving populations of butterflies, pollinators and beneficial insects.



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Hibiscus and Lobelia in bloom - Native marsh mallow and cardinal flower in a wet site.

The nursery and landscape industry has responded to this trend by expanding native plant offerings and developing an ever-increasing variety of native plant cultivars. The Mid Atlantic has a rich variety of native trees, shrubs, perennials and native grasses, providing many choices for gardeners and landscapers. The Native Plants list was developed because the public has been asking where to purchase these plants. A survey was conducted of retail and wholesale establishments in the region to determine which ones were selling a significant number of native plants, and how these plants were being displayed. The Plant Industries Section in the Delaware Department of Agriculture organized the responses into two separate lists for publication. One listing is for wholesale dealers, who specialize in volume sales for, garden centers, as well as projects for highway improvement, soil stabilization, meadow and wetland restoration and other types of bioremediation. The second listing is for retail establishments. Both files can be found at the Plant Industries Section's webpage

http://dda.delaware.gov/plantind/index.shtml, as well as at the Delaware Nursery and Landscape Association and University of Delaware, Cooperative Extension's websites.

Photo by: Sue Barton



Butterfly weed, common milkweed and prairie dropseed drift through slope in Wilmington, Delaware

Photo by: Gary Schwetz

For the past several years, the DDA, along with UD, DNLA and the Delaware Center for Horticulture have been promoting the program, "Plants for a Livable Delaware" (PLD). The objectives of this program were to reduce the purchase and use of invasive plants and increase the availability, purchase, and use of regionally appropriate native landscape plants. In addition, PLD promoted the removal of invasive plants from privately-owned natural lands. The 3 booklets produced by this program have been used by a wide audience, including retail establishments, community landscape groups, design architects, and university professors.

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