

WHY NATIVE PLANTS?

Native plants are plant species that have evolved and occur naturally in a given location. In North America, native plants are generally those that have grown here since before European settlement.



Having co-evolved with local plant and animal species, native plants are integral to local ecosystems. They provide multi-dimensional wildlife benefits that can't easily be replicated by non-native plants.



When sited properly, native plants require minimal care and attention. Gardening with native plants can greatly reduce the amount of water and chemical inputs that negatively impact the environment.



We think you should grow native plants for another reason – each species is fascinating in its own right, and very few are less than stunningly beautiful!



Join our network for news, updates, and exclusive seed offerings

ABOUT

Grow RI Native Seeds (GRINS) is made possible in part by a grant from the **RI Office of Library and Information Services** using funds from the **Institute of Museum and Library Services**. Our goal is to empower Rhode Islanders to grow and champion native plants via seeds and information resources organized by their local libraries. The libraries responsible the launch of the program in 2024 are:

- Brownell Library
- Clark Memorial Library
- Cross' Mills Public Library
- Cumberland Public Library
- Exeter Public Library
- Jamestown Philomenian Library
- Lincoln Public Library
- Maury Loontjens Memorial Library
- Newport Public Library
- North Scituate Public Library
- Rogers Free library
- Tiverton Public Library
- Willett Free Library
- William Hall Library

GROW RI NATIVE SEEDS



STRATIFICATION

Many native seeds germinate only after being in the ground for a certain period of time – usually over the winter. This weatherization process is known as stratification and can be artificially recreated. Seeds requiring winter stratification can be mixed with moist sand or vermiculite and chilled in the fridge, or simply sown and set outside during the winter. They will germinate in the spring when conditions are right. Winter stratification is also known as cold-moist stratification.



A relatively few seeds, such as some woodland species, require double or multiple periods of stratification. We recommend these only if you enjoy taking on a challenge!

TINY SEEDS

Many native seeds are truly tiny. *Eragrostis spectabilis* seeds are tiny and round and easily roll away. *Lobelia cardinalis* seeds are almost as fine as dust. Handle tiny seeds with care and sow them onto the surface of the soil or potting mix. Firm them into the surface, but don't bury them.

PATIENCE

Slow and steady wins the race is the motto for many native plants. Many do not put on size and bloom until the second year. You can use beneficial annuals to fill in the space while your plant settles in for the long haul. Your patience will be fully rewarded in the years to come.



SPECIES NAMES

The same plant can have many different common names, and the same common name may refer to many different plants. Species names, however, are unique. Using species names ensures that you have the right plant that's native to Rhode Island and not a similar plant that's native to somewhere else.



SAVE & SHARE

Sharing native seeds is a cinch! After bloom, look for seed heads that have matured – usually when the stem has dried. Snip off the mature seed heads, put them into a paper bag, and bring the whole thing to a participating library. We will clean and package the seeds for sharing with other Rhode Islanders on your behalf.