



Plants for Damp Areas

Here is a varied list of perennials, shrubs, and trees that either tolerate or prefer moist, damp garden soil and many of which can cope with the poorly draining clay soil that many of us have. **Please note** that, unless specified for bog gardens, most of the plants listed here do not do well in constantly wet soil.

Perennials

Boltonia (*B. asteroides*) - Profusions of starry, daisy-like flowers in white, pink, or purple appear late summer to early fall. Charming in wildflower or informal perennial gardens. Grows to 3-6 feet depending on variety. Plant in sun to part sun.

Canna Lily (*Canna spp.*) - Bright summer flowers in multiple or single colors of yellow, orange, and red borne over lush, tropical looking foliage of many color variations. Grows to 3' to 5'. Plant in sun.

Cinnamon fern and Royal Fern (*Osmunda spp.*) - Two lovely ferns that particularly like moist to wet soils. Light green, broad fronds and spikes of brown spore-bearing fronds add interest in spring. Grows to 2-3' tall. Plant in shade.

Creeping Jenny (*Lysimachia nummularia*) - Chartruese green coin-shaped leaves hug the ground to create a pretty ground-cover in damp or wet areas. Plant in sun to light shade.

Elephant Ears (*Colocasia spp.*) - Huge, showy leaves shaped like, you guessed it, in bright green or burgundy black (or a combination thereof). Very showy with a tropical effect. Plant in part shade in a protected location. Grows to 4'-6'.

Joe Pye Weed (*Eupatorium spp.*) - Large clusters of white or dusty rose late summer flowers attract butterflies. Grows to 3' to 9' depending on species. Plant in sun or light shade.

Obedient Plant (*Physostegia spp.*) - Spikes of white or pink flowers in late summer. The bend-and-stay flower spikes are useful for floral arrangements. Grows to 2' to 4'. Plant in sun.

Perennial Hibiscus (*Hibiscus moscheutos*) - Huge flowers 10" across bloom in summer in red, white, and pink often with a red eye and going from June and into fall. Watch out for Japanese beetles on this plant. Grows 6-8' tall. Full sun.

Pink Turtlehead (*Chelone lyonii*) - Spikes of pink flowers late summer into fall resembling turtleheads, or something between a snapdragon and a foxglove. Forms a spreading clump

and will reseed in moist areas. Easy to grow. Grows to 2-3' tall. Part sun to light/moderate shade.

Red Lobelia (*Lobelia cardinalis*) - Flame red flowers in summer. Excellent for hummingbirds and butterflies. Good for bogs and pond edges. Grows to 2' to 4'. Plant in part to full shade.

Sea Oats (*Chasmanthium latifolium*) - Clusters of showy "oats" on this ornamental grass start apple green and change to rosy pink and golden tan colors as they age. Allow for this aggressive perennial to spread. Plant in full sun.

Swamp Hibiscus Texas Star (*Hibiscus coccineus*) - A traffic-stopping shrubby perennial with showy bright red 3" flowers June and July and handsome maple-like foliage. Plant in full sun.

Swamp Milkweed (*Asclepias incarnata*) - Similar to butterfly weed but with ruby pink, vanilla-scented flower clusters in summer. Provides nectar to butterflies and is a host to caterpillars. Grows to 4' tall. Plant in sun.

Swamp Sunflower (*Helianthus angustifolius*) - Native sunflower, extremely showy in late summer, with masses of golden-rayed flowers that have dark centers. Grows 5-10 feet tall. Full sun.

Sweet Flag (*Acorus gramineus*) - Small fans of grass-like leaves have a sweet odor when crushed with golden or golden-green variegated leaves. Great for bog gardens. Sun to part shade.

Japanese or Siberian Iris (*Iris ensata* or *I. sibirica*) - Two species of iris known to thrive in moist to wet soils. Blooms range from deep purple to blue-lavender (Siberian iris) or violet, pink, purple, or white (Japanese iris). Excellent foliage plants with upright, strap-shaped leaves providing good textural contrast. Japanese iris also comes in wonderfully variegated form. Great for bog gardens and pond edges.

Shrubs

Anise (*Illicium spp.*) - Low maintenance, problem-free evergreen shrubs and small trees. Star-shaped flowers are light, creamy green, light coral, or red depending on species. Fragrant foliage. Grows to 6' to 20' depending on species. Plant in part to full shade.

Beautyberry (*Callicarpa spp.*) - Violet-purple berries run along arching branches in early fall. Easy to grow and grows to a convenient 4'x4'. Plant in sun to part sun.

Dappled Willow (*Salix integra* 'Hakuro Nishiki') - A pretty and low-maintenance shrub or small tree with dappled white variega-

tions on mint green slender leaves. Fast-growing to 6-8' tall and wide. Prune to train into a small tree. Full to part sun.

Dwarf Yaupon Holly (*Ilex vomitoria* 'Nana') - Well-behaved, rounded evergreen shrub that grows in moist soil. Easy care and low maintenance. Grows to 3'. Plant in sun.

European Cranberrybush Viburnum (*Viburnum opulus*) - Large shrubs with lovely white lacecap flowers in spring, handsome maple-leaf foliage, and showy scarlet berries in fall. Good for shrub borders and screens, and easy to grow. Grows to 8-12' tall, 10-15' wide; dwarf forms to 4'5' tall and wide.

Highbush Blueberry (*Vaccinium corymbosum* 'Sunshine Blue') - Delicious, nutritious berries are produced following sweet, bell-like white flowers on these deciduous shrubs. Plant 2 or 3 varieties for best pollination. Grows to 3-4' tall. Plant in sun.

Inkberry (*Ilex glabra* 'Compacta') - Evergreen shrub with black berries September through May. Excellent for foundations, hedges, and accents. Low maintenance. Withstands heavy pruning. Grows to 5' to 6' or more. Plant in sun or shade though best in sun.

Kerria (*Kerria japonica*) - Graceful, free-flowering shrub with golden-yellow flowers in spring that resemble small roses. Grows to 5' to 6'. Plant in sun to light shade.

Redtwig Dogwood (*Cornus sericea*, *C. alba*) - White summer flowers, brilliant fall foliage, and bright red winter twigs are nice seasonal features of this shrub, making it a good candidate for the shrub border. Grows to 7' to 9'. Plant in sun to light shade.

Summersweet (*Clethra alnifolia*) - A deciduous shrub that produces fragrant spikes of spice-scented pink or white flowers. Tolerates poor soil. Grows to 4' to 10' depending on cultivar. Plant in part sun to light shade.

Sweetspire (*Itea spp.*) - Spikes of fragrant, white late spring flowers borne on erect, clustered branches. Yellow, orange, and red fall color. Grows to 3' to 5'. Plant in sun to part shade.

Wax Myrtle (*Myrica cerifera*) - A tough and adaptable evergreen shrub with aromatic foliage. Works well as a screening plant. Grows to 3' to 15' depending on cultivar. Plant in sun or part shade.

Winterberry Holly (*Ilex verticillata* cultivars) - Gorgeous and brightly-colored red berries clustered on leafless stems in winter provide exceptional seasonal interest. Golden-berried forms available. Requires a male pollinator, such as 'Apollo', 'Jim Dandy', or 'Southern Gent' for fruit set. Grows to 6' - 15' depending on cultivar. Plant in sun to part sun.

Trees

American Hornbeam (*Carpinus caroliniana*) - A handsome native tree that with smooth, fluted bark that resembles flexed muscles. Nice fall color usually yellow to orange and red. Grows to 20-30'. Plant in part sun to light shade.

Bald Cypress (*Taxodium distichum*) - A stately deciduous conifer with light green needles. Adaptable to a range of soil conditions and stands up well to windy conditions. Grows to 50-70'. Plant in sun.

Black Gum (*Nyssa sylvatica*) - A beautiful native tree good as a specimen or in naturalized areas. One of the best and most consistent natives for fall color which ranges from yellow to orange to scarlet, even purple. Grows to 30-50' tall, 20-30' wide. Plant in sun to part shade, sheltered from wind. Does not tolerate pollution well, so not a great street tree.

Dawn Redwood (*Metasequoia glyptostroboides*) - A deciduous pyramidal "redwood". Gets rather large, 70-100'. Beautiful in groves. Plant in sun.

Japanese Pussy Willow (*Salix chaenomeloides*) - Small, upright tree bears showy red flower buds followed by silky pink catkins from March to early April. Extremely easy to grow and an eye-catching specimen in spring. Grows to 15' to 20'. Plant in full sun.

Nuttall Oak (*Quercus nuttallii*) - An oak of superior adaptability. Recommends itself by way of its rapid growth, clean leaf drop in fall, toleration of a range of soil pH, and reddish fall color. Grows to 40' to 60'. Plant in sun.

Red Maple (*Acer rubrum*) Attractive tree with brilliant red twigs and branchlets as well as red fall foliage. Wonderful specimen tree. Grows 40' to 60'. Plant in sun.

River Birch (*Betula nigra*) - Heat tolerant, handsome specimen tree with interesting exfoliating bark character. Disease and pest resistant. Grows to 40' to 70'. Plant in sun.

Southern Magnolia (*Magnolia grandiflora*) - Evergreen tree with large, creamy, white, fragrant flowers in late spring. Generally, problem-free. Tolerates heavy pruning. Grows to 60' to 80', but 'Little Gem' cultivar only gets to about 30'-40'. Plant in sun to part shade. Also, **Sweetbay Magnolia** (*Magnolia virginiana*) - Graceful small tree with mostly evergreen, fragrant leaves and creamy-white, lemon-scented flowers in late spring/early summer. Generally, grows to 20-30' tall. Plant in sun to light shade.

Weeping Willow (*Salix babylonica*) - Graceful, weeping tree. Avoid placing near drain fields or water mains/lines where roots can invade. Grows to 30' to 40'. Plant in sun.

Western Arborvitae (*Thuja plicata* 'Green Giant') - Attractive, evergreen conifer with columnar habit. Generally, trouble-free. Good screening plant. Grows to 30' to 40'. Plant in sun to light shade.

White Fringetree (*Chionanthus virginicus*) - Beautiful small specimen tree but also excellent in groups. Bears lovely, white, fringe-like blooms from May to June. Grows to 12' to 20'. Plant in sun to part shade.