

My Favorite Plants

Criteria

Native to Cape Cod

Survived in my yard for at least 3 years

Has lovely blooms or distinctive foliage

Has ecological value

Results

5 Shrubs

3 Grasses

3 Ground covers

5 Sun perennials

5 Shade perennials



Unless otherwise noted, all photos were taken by me in my yard in 2022-2023

Shrub: Beach plum (*Prunus maritimus*)



3 shrubs, planted on the hillside next to red cedar
After 10 years, 7 ft high x 10 ft wide
Glorious spring blooms
Full sun, dry soils, very little care
Lots of pollinators
Fruit if you're quick!



Shrub: Sweet fern (*Comptonia peregrina*)



Medium rounded shape, 3 ft x 5 ft
If it's happy, colonizes with rhizomes
Lovely foliage scent
Grows in sun or shade, dry-to-average soils



Shrub: Bayberry (*Morella caroliniensis*)



Tough, early-succession shrub
Distinctive leaves, berries in the fall
Grows in sun and part shade, dry-to-average soil
Will colonize and self-seed, but somewhat slowly
May be listed as *Myrica pensylvanica*



Photo: At CCF meadow on Rt 28

Shrub: Oak-leaf hydrangea (*Hydrangea quercifolia*)

Native to Southeast but grows well on Cape Cod

Will grow to 6-8 ft

Sun to part shade, dry-to-average soils

Wonderful leaf shapes, summer flowers, fall foliage



Shrub: Sweet pepperbush (*Clethra alnifolia*)

Shrub with spiky blooms in late summer
Grows in sun or part shade, average-to-wet soils
Straight species is 4-8 ft by 4-6 wide
Multiple cultivars available, all pollinator friendly – pink blossoms, smaller sizes
Colonizes readily
Seeds stay on branch tips all winter



Photo: At CCF meadow on Rt 28



Other Shrubs

Work Well

Shadbush (*Amelanchier canadense*)
Fothergilla (*Fothergilla gardenii*)
Black huckleberry (*Gaylussacia baccata*)
Witch hazel (*Hamamelis virginiana*)
Smooth hydrangea (*Hydrangea arborescens*)
Inkberry (*Ilex glabra*)
American holly (*Ilex opuntia*)
Winterberry (*Ilex verticillata*)

Virginia sweetspire (*Itea virginica*)
Sheep laurel (*Kalmia angustifolia*)
Ninebark (*Physocarpus opulifolius*)
Gro-low fragrant sumac (*Rhus aromatic 'Gro-Low'*)
Great rosebay (*Rhododendron maxima*)
Silky dogwood (*Swida amomum*)
Red twig dogwood (*Swida sericea*)
Arrowwood viburnum (*Viburnum dentatum*)
Yellowroot (*Xanthorhiza simplicissima*)

Failed

New Jersey tea (*Ceanothus americanus*)
Low-bush blueberry (*Vaccinium angustifolium*)
Chokeberry (*Aronia melanocarpa*)

Grass: Little bluestem (*Schizachryium scoparium*)



Clumping, warm-season grass
Bluish stems, reddish in fall
Requires full sun and dry soils
Flops when too moist
Survived the drought



Photo: Internet

Grass: Purple lovegrass (*Eragrostis spectabilis*)

Clumping warm-weather grass

Smaller with wide blades

Seedheads form purple haze in August



Grass: Prairie dropseed (*Sporobolus heterolepsis*)



Warm-season
clumping grass
Soft, feathery grass
blades
No issues in drought
Beautiful seedheads
in September



Ground cover: Wild strawberry (*Fragaria virginiana*)

Low-growing, fast-spreading perennial

Grows in sun and part shade, dry to average soils

White blossoms in June

Fruit in July

Can be used as lawn filler/replacement



Ground cover: Sensitive Fern (*Onoclea sensibilis*)



Large fronds, shallow divisions
Grows in part shade to shade,
average-to-wet soils
Often found along streams or in
rich or clay soils



Ground cover: Christmas fern (*Polystichum arcostichoides*)

Upright-growing fern, 1-2 ft
Clumps which will colonize slowly
Tolerant of some sun and medium moisture
Semi-evergreen



Other Grasses and Ground Covers

Work Well

Grasses and Sedges

Pennsylvania sedge (*Carex pensylvanica*)
Eastern woodland sedge (*Carex blanda*)
Tufted hairgrass (*Deschampsia fluxuosa*)
Switchgrass (*Panicum virgatum*)
Indiangrass (*Sorghastrum nutans*)

Groundcovers and Ferns

Wild ginger (*Asarum canadense*)
Lady fern (*Athyrium filix-femina*)
Wood fern (*Dryopteris marginalis*)
Maidenhair fern (*Adiantum pedatum*)
Barren strawberry (*Geum fragaroides*)
Allegheny spurge (*Pachysandra procumbens*)
Foamflower (*Tiarella cordata*)

Failed

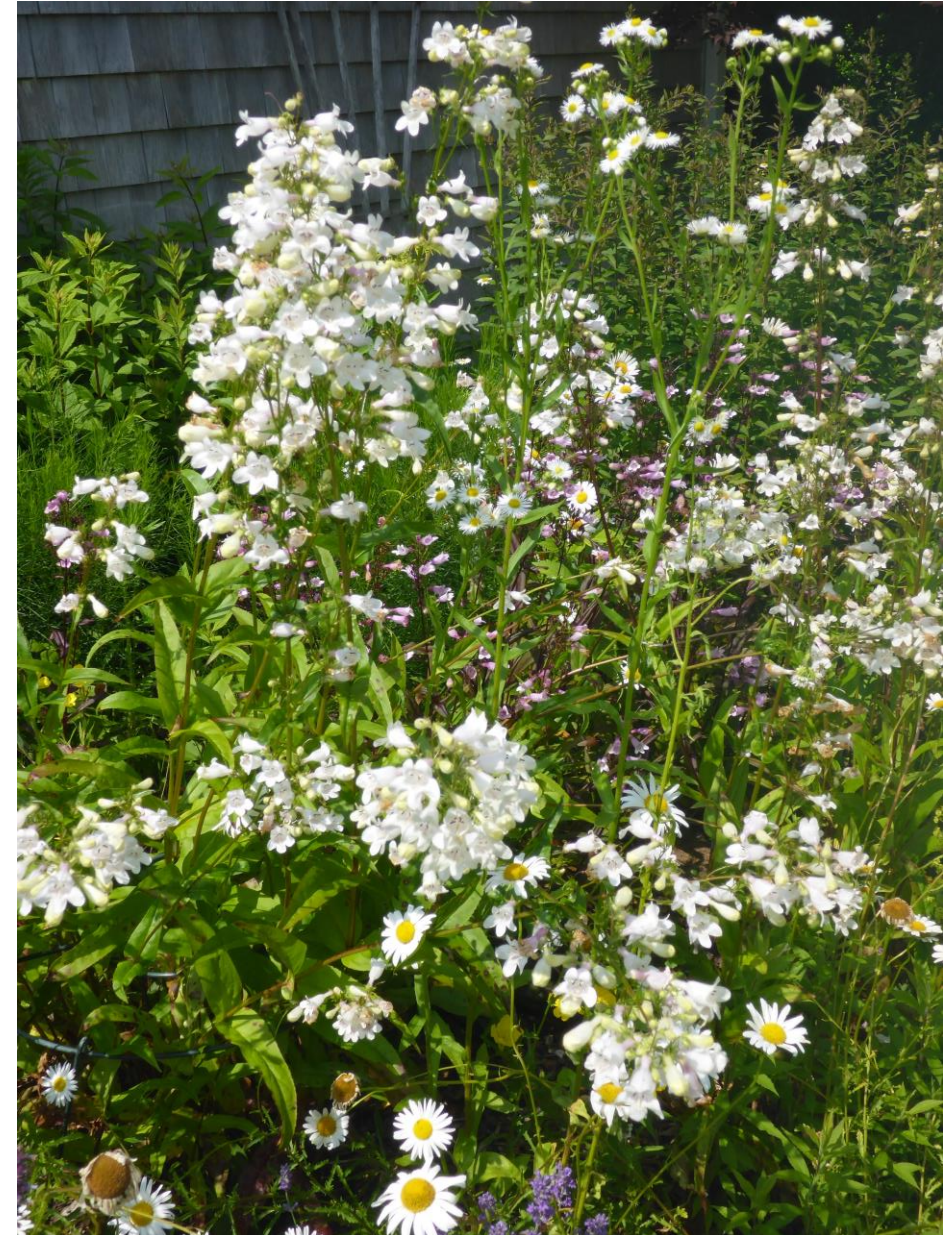
Virginia bluebells (*Mertensia virginica*)
Moss phlox (*Phlox subulate*)
Royal fern (*Osmunda spectabilis*)

Sun Perennial: Beardtongue (*Penstemon digitalis*)

Full sun, dry-to-average
soils

Clouds of white blooms in
late June

Many cultivars, pollinator
value unclear



Sun Perennial: Blue Star (*Amsonia hubrectii*)

Full sun, dry-to-average soils

Small blue flowers in June

Lovely yellow foliage in fall

A. tabernaemontana similar with wider leaves



Sun Perennial: Mad dog skullcap (*Scutellaria laterifolia*)



Full sun, average-to-moist soils
2-3 ft high
Blooms in late summer
Colonizes over time



Sun Perennial: Slender Mountain Mint (*Pycnanthemum tenuifolium*)



Mounded shape 2-3 ft
Feathery leaves
Grows in sun, dry-to-average soils
White blooms in late summer
Spreads, but slowly
Faster-spreading blunt mountain mint (*P. muticum*) has silver bracts with tiny white flowers)



Sun Perennial: Wild Columbine (*Aquilegia canadensis*)

Unusual red and yellow blooms in June

Self-seeds in open spaces

Grows in sun to part shade, average-to-moist, well-drained soil



Other Sun Perennials

Work Well

Anise hyssop (*Agastache Foeniculum*)

Canada anemone (*Anemone canadensis*)

Swamp milkweed (*Asclepias incarnata*)

Butterfly weed (*Asclepias tuberosa*)

False indigo (*Baptisia australis*)

Boneset (*Eupatorium perfoliatum*)

Joe Pye weed (*Eutrochium dubium* 'Little Joe')

Ox-eye sunflower (*Helopsis helianthoides*)

Great blue lobelia (*Lobelia siphilitica*)

Bee balm (*Monarda didyma* 'Cambridge scarlet')

Bee balm (*Monarda fistulosa*)

Spotted bee balm (*Monarda punctata*)

Common sundrops (*Oenothera fruticosa* cultivar)

Eastern prickly pear (*Opuntia humifusa*)

Golden groundsel (*Packera aurea*)

Black eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia hirta*)

Goldenrods (*Solidago* 'Fireworks', *caesia*)

Golden alexander (*Zizia aurea*)

Failed

Virginia anemone (*Anemone virginiana*)

Sneezeweed (*Helenium autumnale*)

Blazing star (*Liatris spicata*)

Obedient plant (*Physostegia virginiana*)

Spiderwort (*Tradescantia virginiana*)

Culver's root (*Veronicastrum virginicum*)

Shade Perennial: White wood aster (*Euribia divarica*)

Soft mound 1-2 ft

Grows in part shade to shade

Self-seeds readily



Shade Perennial: Black cohosh (*Actaea racimosa*)

1-2 ft mound of divided foliage
4-ft spikes of white flowers in July-
August
Grows in part shade and shade,
average-to-moist soils
Native bee magnet



Shade Perennial: Goatsbeard (*Aruncus dioicus*)



White astilbe-like flowers in June
Fades to yellow
Grows in part shade to shade, prefers moist soils



Other Shade Perennials

Work Well

Baneberry (*Actaea rubra*)

Turtlehead (*Chelone glabra*)

Wild geranium (*Geranium maculatum*)

Mayflower (*Maianthemum canadense*)

False Solomon's seal (*Maianthemum racemosum*)

Mayapple (*Podophyllum peltatum*)

Failing

Trailing arbutus (*Epigaea repens*)

Partridgeberry (*Mitchella repens*)

Bloodroot (*Sanguinaria canadensis*)

New This Year



Northern bush honeysuckle
(*Lonicera diervillea*)



Tupelo (*Nyssa sylvatica*)



Side-oats grama
(*Bouteloua curtipendula*)



White goldenrod (*Solidago bicolor*)



Fragrant goldenrod (*Solidago odora*)



Heal-all (*Prunella vulgaris*)