

Natural Woodlands **Recommended Planting List**

**Prepared as a service to
Natural Woodlands homeowners by
Johnson County Heritage Trust**



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This listing is meant to guide the selection of landscaping trees, shrubs, grasses and forbs in Natural Woodlands. We hope that it provides you with a useful tool for enhancing your property while simultaneously safeguarding the high-quality native plants and communities that surround your homesite.

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Why a Natural Woodlands Recommended Planting List?

Natural Woodlands building lots are embedded within some of Johnson County’s highest quality remaining native oak-hickory forest. This forest is unusually free of invasive species. Landscaping with inappropriate invasive species could rapidly degrade the fine quality and character of this forest. Such non-native plants, once they spread, would outcompete and eliminate native plants, along with the birds and other animals dependent on them.

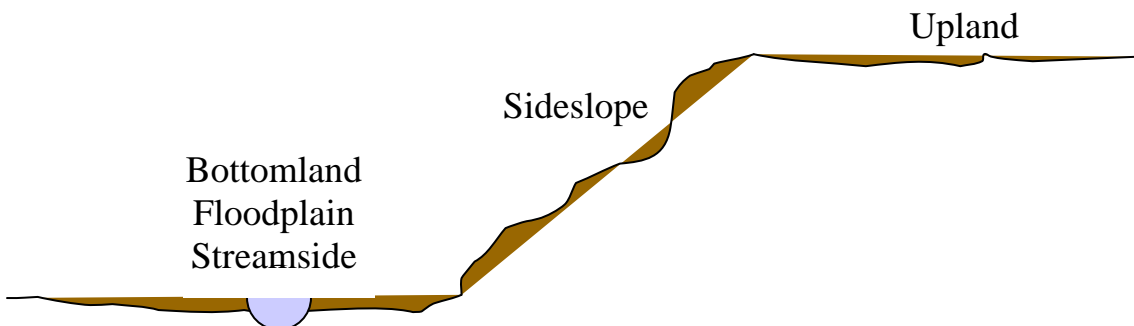
This listing of landscaping plants was prepared to help prevent such highly destructive situations. The listing encourages the planting of native species (that is, plants that have grown in this region of the country for hundreds or thousands of years). The listing suggests natives that are appropriate both for upland and sideslope sites (see the diagram below); homesites are not found on bottomland locations. Listed natives will not become invasive or noxious threats to the surrounding forest. Natives also are best adapted to the local climate and soils and are well received by wildlife and birds, which use them for food and nesting sites. They are best suited to provide important ecological services, such as enhancing soils and fostering diverse and healthy natural communities.

When purchasing native plants or seeds, we encourage avoiding cultivars whenever possible and purchasing local genetic (“local ecotype”) stock when available. Local ecotype prairie seed is now sold by many reputable nurseries. Local ecotype seed of other types of plants will become more available in coming years.

Because of the quality of the Natural Woodlands native plant communities, the following listing is highly selective. It does not include species that might be recommended for more degraded areas. However, to give landowners more landscaping leeway, a listing of acceptable non-native trees has been included. These alternatives have given no indication of becoming invasive.

And last, listings of plants that are especially invasive or otherwise problematic have been included. These should **never** be planted.

This listing is for building lots only. Plantings within the Conservation Easement areas are prohibited.



TREES

Please keep conifers a minimum of 30 feet away from the woodland edge due to potential fire management of woodlands.

“Small trees” are typically less than 30 feet in height; “large trees” are typically taller.

RECOMMENDED NATIVE UPLAND TREES

bigtooth aspen (<i>Populus grandidentata</i>)	large tree
black oak (<i>Quercus velutina</i>)	large tree
bur oak (<i>Quercus macrocarpa</i>)	large tree
chinkapin oak (<i>Quercus muehlenbergii</i>)	large tree
eastern redcedar (<i>Juniperus virginiana</i>)	small or large tree
native crabapple (<i>Malus ioensis</i>)	small tree
pagoda dogwood (<i>Cornus alternifolia</i>)	small tree
quaking aspen (<i>Populus tremuloides</i>)	large tree
serviceberry (<i>Amelanchier arborea</i>)	small tree
shagbark hickory (<i>Carya ovata</i>)	large tree
white oak (<i>Quercus alba</i>)	large tree

RECOMMENDED NATIVE SIDESLOPE TREES

black walnut (<i>Juglans nigra</i>)	large tree
honeylocust (<i>Gleditsia triacanthos</i>), thornless and seedless varieties only	large tree
Kentucky coffeetree (<i>Gymnocladus dioicus</i>)	large tree
redbud (<i>Cercis canadensis</i>)	small tree
red oak (<i>Quercus rubra</i>)	large tree

ACCEPTABLE NON-NATIVE TREES

arborvitae (<i>Thuja occidentalis</i>)	small tree
Black Hills spruce (<i>Picea glauca</i> ‘densata’)	large tree
concolor fir (<i>Abies concolor</i>)	large tree
larch (<i>Larix</i> spp.)	large tree
Norway spruce (<i>Picea abies</i>)	large tree
white pine (<i>Pinus strobus</i>)	large tree
white spruce (<i>Picea glauca</i>)	large tree

TREES THAT SHOULD NEVER BE PLANTED

amur maple (<i>Acer tataricum</i> subsp. <i>ginnala</i>)	invasive
ash species (<i>Fraxinus</i> spp.)	abundant disease and insect problems
black locust (<i>Robinia pseudoacacia</i> L.)	invasive
catalpa (<i>Catalpa speciosa</i>)	invasive
Chinese elm (<i>Ulmus parvifolia</i>)	invasive
cottonwood (<i>Populus deltoides</i>)	habitat not suitable
elm hybrids (<i>Ulmus</i> hybrids)	potentially invasive

freeman maple selections (<i>Acer x freemanii</i>)	potentially invasive
hybrid poplar (<i>Populus</i> hybrids)	short-lived
Norway maple selections (<i>Acer platanoides</i>)	invasive
Russian olive (<i>Elaeagnus angustifolia</i>)	invasive
Siberian elm (<i>Ulmus pumila</i>)	invasive
tree of heaven (<i>Ailanthus altissima</i>)	invasive

SHRUBS

To ensure the best landscaping results, be sure to match shrub selections to your soil drainage, sunlight, and other site conditions that affect growth.

RECOMMENDED NATIVE SHRUB SPECIES

- American bladdernut (*Staphylea trifolia*)
- American hazelnut (*Corylus americana*)
- Atlantic leatherwood (*Dirca palustris*)
- American plum (*Prunus americana*)
- Canada yew (*Taxus canadensis*)
- Carolina rose (*Rosa carolina*)
- common juniper (*Juniperus communis*)
- common ninebark (*Physocarpus opulifolius*)
- early wild rose (*Rosa blanda*)
- fragrant sumac (*Rhus aromatica*)
- gray dogwood (*Cornus racemosa*)
- Missouri gooseberry (*Ribes missouriense*)
- nannyberry (*Viburnum lentago*)
- prairie willow (*Salix humilus*)
- rough-leaved dogwood (*Cornus drummondii*)
- smooth sumac (*Rhus glabra*)
- staghorn sumac (*Rhus typhina*)
- wafer ash (*Ptelea trifoliata*)
- wahoo (*Euonymus atropurpurea*)

INVASIVE SHRUBS AND VINES THAT SHOULD NEVER BE PLANTED

- autumn olive (*Elaeagnus umbellata*)
- barberry (*Berberis thunbergii*)
- buckthorn, exotic (*Rhamnus* spp.)
- burning bush (*Euonymus alatus*)
- European highbush cranberry/guelder rose (*Viburnum opulus*)
- honeysuckle (non-native; *Lonicera* species including *japonica*, *tatarica*, *mackii*, etc.)
- Japanese knotweed (*Polygonum cuspidatum*)
- multiflora rose (*Rosa multiflora*)
- oriental bittersweet (*Celastrus orbiculata*)
- periwinkle (*Vinca minor*)
- privet species (*Ligustrum* spp.)

FORBS AND DECORATIVE GRASSES

Wherever possible, we encourage gardening with native Iowa grasses and forbs. Prairie and savanna species grow well in Iowa, produce beautiful gardens, and are widely available. Many Iowa nurseries now specialize in native seeds and plants. A listing of such nurseries is available through Johnson County Soil and Water Conservation District (www.jcswcd.org). “Prairie mixes” available through large commercial chains often contain non-native and invasive species; always avoid these mixes.

The following species have proven to be highly invasive and pose serious threats to native communities. **These should never be planted:**

- birdsfoot trefoil (*Lotus corniculatus*)
- crown vetch (*Coronilla varia*)
- dame’s rocket (*Hesperis matronalis*)
- eulalia, Chinese or Japanese silvergrass, maiden grass (*Miscanthus sinensis*)
- eulalia grass, also known as pampas and plume grass (*Miscanthus sacchariflorus*)
- leafy spurge (*Euphorbia esula*)
- purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*)
- reed canary grass (*Phalaris arundinacea*)
- spotted knapweed (*Centaurea maculosa*)
- teasel (*Dipsacus fullonum*, *D. sylvestris*)
- yellow and white sweet clover (*Melilotus officinalis*, *M. alba*)

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