



Sunny Expansion Kit

2022 Owner's Manual

Five native species that stand alone or can be added to a Sunny Basic Kit, totaling ten species that bloom from Spring to Fall to provide beauty in your yard and critical habitat for pollinators.

Sunny Expansion Kit Species



Columbine



Foxglove Beardtongue



Anise Hyssop



Cardinal Flower



Showy Goldenrod

Sunny Basic Kit Species

Pairs well with the Sunny Expansion Kit Sunny Basic Kit which includes:



Golden Alexander



Swamp Milkweed



Virginia Mountain Mint



New York Aster



Purple Coneflower

Sunny Expansion Kit Contents

Your 25 plant plug kit includes five species that thrive in sunny gardens (4-6 hours of sun per day minimum) and moist conditions.

The kit includes:

- Columbine, *Aquilegia canadensis*, 5 plugs
- Foxglove beardtongue, *Perstemon digitalis*, 5 plugs
- Anise hyssop, *Agastache foeniculum*, 5 plugs
- Cardinal flower, *Lobelia cardinalis*, 5 plugs
- Showy goldenrod, *Solidago speciosa*, 5 plugs

Important: Once you get home, check to see if your plugs need water. Keep their soil moist to the touch (but not soaked) until you are able to plant them in the ground.

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|------------|---------|---|--|---|------------|---------|
| Foxglove beardtongue | | | | | Red columbine | | | | |
|  |  |  | May - Jun | 3' - 4' |  |  |  | Apr - May | 2' - 3' |
| Color | Light | Moisture | Season | Height | Color | Light | Moisture | Season | Height |
| Anise hyssop | | | | | Cardinal flower | | | | |
|  |  |  | Jul - Sept | 2' - 4' |  |  |  | Jul - Sept | 2' - 5' |
| Color | Light | Moisture | Season | Height | Color | Light | Moisture | Season | Height |
| Showy goldenrod | | | | | | | | | |
|  |  |  | Aug - Oct | 3' - 4' | | | | | |
| Color | Light | Moisture | Season | Height | | | | | |

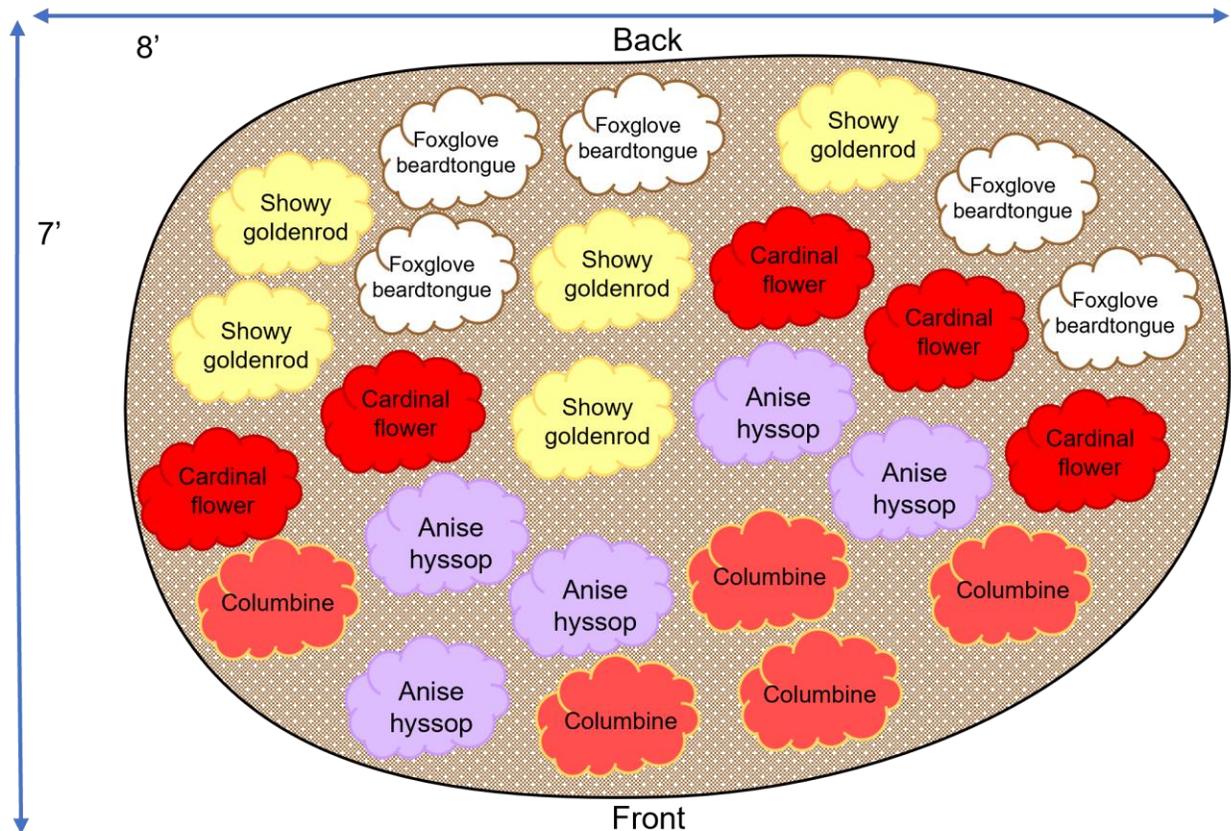
Description and Requirements: Sunny Basic and Expansion

Consider your garden bed conditions when designing your garden. For your garden to be most successful, your garden bed should meet your plants sunlight and moisture needs. Each plant's flower color and flowering time should be dispersed throughout the garden so that your garden is spectacular all year round. Lastly, taller plants should be placed towards the back of the garden so that they do not block the shorter plants from view.

| | | | | | |
|---|--|---|------------|-----------|--|
| Red columbine | | | | | |
|  |  |  | Apr - May | 2' - 3' | |
| Color | Light | Moisture | Season | Height | |
| Golden Alexander | | | | | |
|  |  |  | May - Jun | 1' - 2.5' | |
| Color | Light | Moisture | Season | Height | |
| Foxglove beardtongue | | | | | |
|  |  |  | May - Jun | 3' - 4' | |
| Color | Light | Moisture | Season | Height | |
| Swamp milkweed | | | | | |
|  |  |  | July - Aug | 3' - 4' | |
| Color | Light | Moisture | Season | Height | |
| Virginia mountain mint | | | | | |
|  |  |  | Jul - Sept | 2' - 3' | |
| Color | Light | Moisture | Season | Height | |
| Cardinal flower | | | | | |
|  |  |  | Jul - Sept | 2' - 5' | |
| Color | Light | Moisture | Season | Height | |
| Purple coneflower | | | | | |
|  |  |  | Jul - Sept | 2' - 4' | |
| Color | Light | Moisture | Season | Height | |
| Anise hyssop | | | | | |
|  |  |  | Jul - Sept | 2' - 4' | |
| Color | Light | Moisture | Season | Height | |
| New York aster | | | | | |
|  |  |  | Aug - Oct | 3' - 5' | |
| Color | Light | Moisture | Season | Height | |
| Showy goldenrod | | | | | |
|  |  |  | Aug - Oct | 3' - 4' | |
| Color | Light | Moisture | Season | Height | |

Designing your garden Sample Design: Sunny Expansion Kit

This five species design can be used as is or easily modified to fit your chosen space and your gardening goals.



Design Considerations

Your Landscaping Style

These plants can fit any style from a formal garden to a naturalistic garden like this design to a wild garden with clumps. Pollinators will be equally happy with any of these.

Your Garden

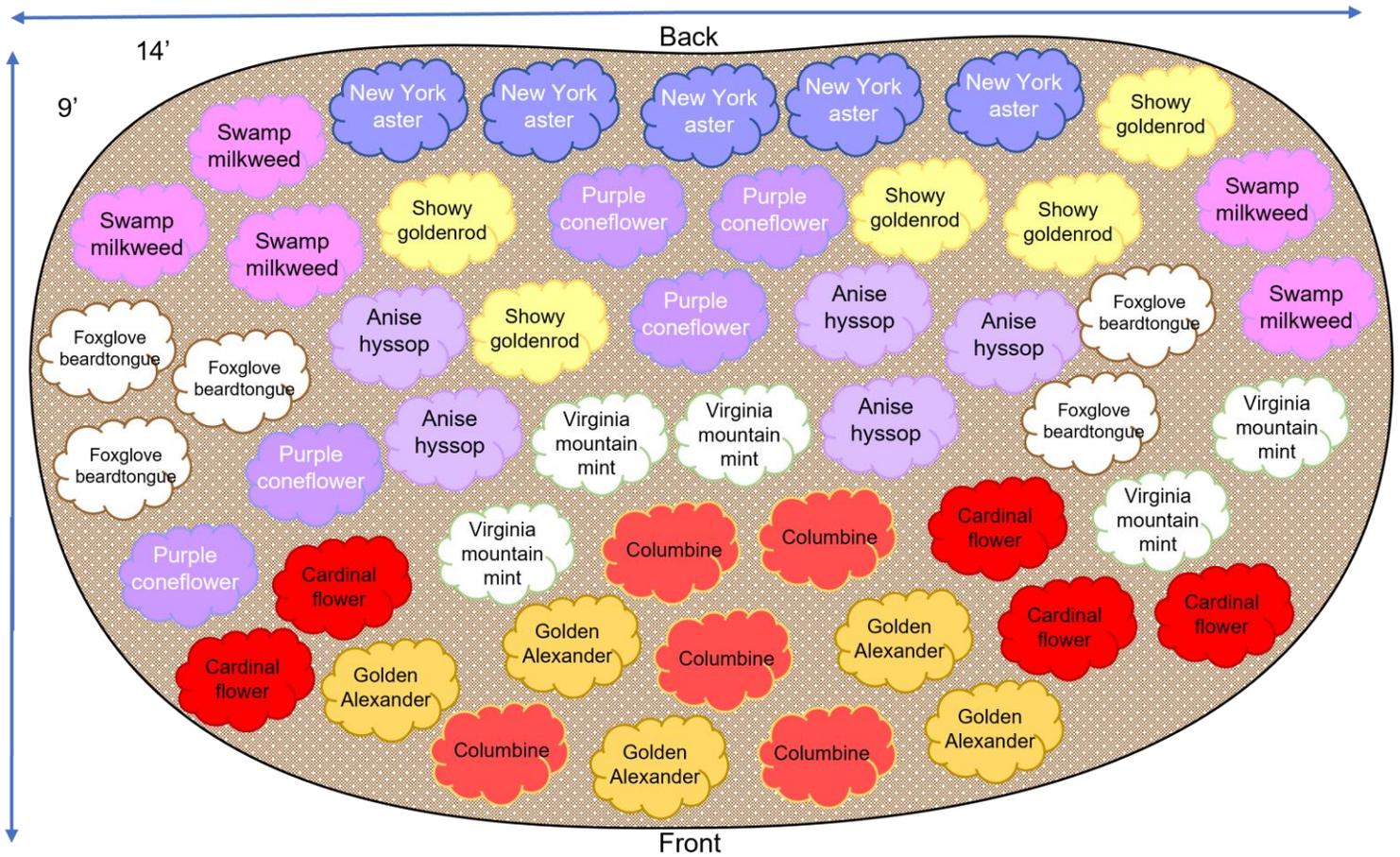
This design can be easily altered to fit a deeper, wider, or curved garden bed. These designs use moderate 18-inch center-to-center plant spacings to easily fill a 100 or 50 square foot area. The goal is to have plants pressing shoulder to shoulder for easier maintenance. Tightly spaced plants create a “green mulch” reducing the opportunity for weeds to sprout so that annual mulching is no longer required. You can choose to plant on a tighter spacing. A larger spacing will require more maintenance and mulching to manage weeds.

Add On!

These species can be planted alone, with our Sunny Basic Kit, or with more individual species.

Sample Design: Sunny Basic and Expansion Kits Combined

This ten species design incorporates both the plants in the Sunny Basic Kit and the Sunny Expansion Kit. The combination provides more variety and a more continuous bloom. This design can be easily modified to fit your chosen space and your gardening goals.



Site Preparation

Know your sun, moisture, and soil conditions

The five plants in the Sunny Expansion Kit require 4-6 hours of sunlight but more sun is always better.

Moist soil is best for these species. You may need to water your plants during dry summer periods during the first season, after that they should only need watered during drought. Once their roots are established, they will generally not suffer permanent damage even without watering.

These native plants are selected for the clay-silt-loam soils typical for our piedmont or highlands area.

Prepare the bed

If planting in a prepared basin, remove grass and any other unwanted plants that may compete with your new native garden while establishing. Minimize soil disturbance.

To prepare a new native plant bed replacing previous plantings:

Sheet mulching is a great way to start! It is a back-saving “no-dig” strategy that kills unwanted weeds and grass by blocking out sunlight, allowing everything to die and decompose, minimizing soil disturbance and stirring up the weed seed bank.

- Mow the area you’d like to transform. Use a garden hose or a length of rope to create the garden outline.
- Cover the area with tapeless clean cardboard or 5 to 8 sheets of newspaper (don’t use glossy pages.) Overlap the edges to prevent gaps so that the turf is solidly covered. Wet down as you go.
- Cover cardboard with 3-4” of composted mulch. No soil amendments, no fertilizer. Native plants grow best in simple soils.
- Poke many small holes through the cardboard to maintain rainwater infiltration.

During spring and summer, this will take at least a month, usually two, to kill enough weeds and turf. Dig spot planting holes straight through to plant plugs.

For more information, go to [The Lasagna Method \(Sheet Mulching\)](#)

If not planting immediately

- Keep plugs in a sheltered spot with enough sun and protect from frost/wind.
- Keep them moist but do not over-watered.
- Trim plants back to 6-12” and pinch off flowers if they will not be planted for more than a month. With proper care, landscape plugs should stay healthy for many weeks

Planting your plugs

- The only tool you need is a garden knife, trowel, or lightweight one hand pick.
- Extract each plug gently from its socket. Squeeze the sides to loosen. Push up from the bottom or use a narrow spatula to ease the plug out. Avoid pulling on the plant stem!
- Lay out where you want to place each plug. Dig a hole large enough for the plug.
- Plant so the top of the plug is even with the top of the soil. Tamp firmly.
- Water the plugs in.

Pollinator Garden Management

Native plants are low maintenance, but every garden requires management.

Over-watering can be harmful. Through the first year, water them when the surface is dry. The second year and beyond you should only need to water during a drought.

Insects may chomp on plants, but these plants are larval host to butterflies and will recover.

Undesirable insects like Japanese beetles or aphids may become a problem. Find a caterpillar-safe way to mitigate the problem (Rutgers agricultural extension hotline can help). Even “organic” insecticides can kill desirable insects like Monarch caterpillars or butterflies.

- Healthy pollinator gardens host beneficial insects like lady bugs that eat pests.
- Mechanical removal, eg. spraying, wiping, or picking off large bugs works well.

Deer may also chomp some of these plants. Some species are more deer resistant than others.

- Plants are most palatable when young and don’t have deep roots to recover.
- Organic deer repellents successfully repel deer and rabbits but require re-applications
- Cages and fences can be effective physical barriers but check local ordinances.
 - Deer fences should typically be 7-8’ tall but for small enclosures 5’ is effective.

If your soil is rich, tall-growing bushy plants may grow taller than wanted and can flop over. Avoid this by cutting back by $\frac{1}{3}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$ from Memorial Day to July 4th to shorten plant height.

A slightly messy garden is the best habitat!

- Leaving the stalks through the winter provides food and shelter for wildlife as well as visual interest
 - Cut the stalks in early spring after insects are active.
- Leave fall leaves to protect overwintering pupae and firefly eggs in your yard. Leaves decompose, enriching the soil but ensure they are removed in the spring to protect basal rosettes.

Monitoring your garden as it changes

Remove invasive plants and weeds little and often. If species prove too prolific, divide and share. Diverse yards incorporate multiple layers and support more wildlife.

Experiment and have FUN!

About each Sunny Expansion Kit plant

Columbine



Flowers: April - May
Light: Sun to Part-Shade
Moisture: Average to Moist
Height: 1-2.5 ft

Description: Drooping bell shaped red and yellow bi-colored flowers float over delicate feathery foliage. Provides nectar for hummingbirds and early pollinators and is a larval host plant for many butterflies and moths as well. Mixes well with other early bloomers.

Foxglove Beardtongue



Flowers: May- June
Light: Sun to Part-Shade
Moisture: Dry to Moist
Height: 3-4 ft

Description: Tubular white flowers with pale pink throat on elegant stalks. Important for bees. Low basal rosette when not in bloom.

Anise hyssop



Flowers: July - Sept
Light: Sun to Part-Shade
Moisture: Average to Moist
Height: 2-4 ft

Description: Long blooming lavender-bluish flower spikes begin in mid-summer and persist as beautiful seed heads into winter. Plants are excellent for pollinators, and finches eat winter seeds.

Cardinal flower



Flowers: July - Sept
Light: Sun to Part-Shade
Moisture: Moist to Wet
Height: 2-5 ft

Description: Showy, scarlet-red spikes of flowers bloom July through September. A late-summer nectar source used especially by hummingbirds, bees, and butterflies. Short lived perennial but will repopulate if seed meets slightly disturbed soil.

Showy goldenrod



Flowers: August - October
Light: Sun to Part-Sun
Moisture: Dry to Moist
Height: 3-4 ft

Description: Spectacular, unbranched stems topped with large pyramidal golden-yellow flower plumes from late summer until fall. Important to a variety of late season pollinators, hosting over 100 species of Lepidoptera. Pollen is not windborne and so does not contribute to hay fever or allergies.

[Put your garden on the Map](#)

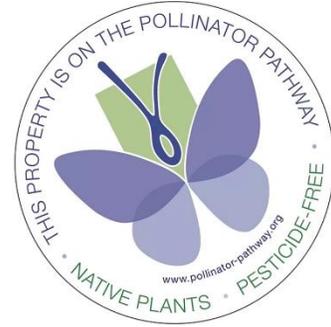
Each new native planting adds to the Pollinator Pathway that renews and extends wildlife habitat across our neighborhoods and region, whether it is one container on the patio or fully native backyard.

If you plant it, the pollinators and birds really will come!

Please take a minute to [Register Your Pollinator Garden](#) on the map to encourage the growing sustainable landscaping community.

To encourage your neighbors, we also recommend attractive explanatory garden signs.

You can purchase a Pollinator Pathway Garden sign through the GSWA plant sale.



If you have questions about your native plant garden

Feel free to email us at plantsale@greatswamp.org We want your pollinator garden to get a good start so it will provide you with years of enjoyment!



Great Swamp Watershed Association

The Passaic River **WATERKEEPER**® ALLIANCE Affiliate

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