Pink, Purple and Yellows Kit

2023 Owner’s Manual

Great Swamp Watershed Association

Five native species that bloom from Spring to Fall to provide beauty in your yard and critical habitat for pollinators

Great Swamp Watershed Association Native Plant Program 2023
Kit Contents

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

The kit includes:

- Anise Hyssop, *Agastashe foeniculum* 5 plugs
- Blunt Mountain Mint, *Pycnanthemum muticum*, 5 plugs
- Lanceleaf Coreopsis, *Coreopsis lanceolata*, 5 plugs
- New England Aster, *Symphotrichum novae-angliae*, 5 plugs
- Swamp Milkweed, *Asclepias incarnata*, 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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Color</th>
<th>Light</th>
<th>Moisture</th>
<th>Season</th>
<th>Height</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anise Hyssop</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Jul - Sept</td>
<td>2-4’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blunt Mountain Mint</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Jun - Aug</td>
<td>1’-3’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lanceleaf Coreopsis</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>May - Jul</td>
<td>1’-3’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New England Aster</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Aug - Nov</td>
<td>3’-5’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swamp Milkweed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Jul - Aug</td>
<td>3-4’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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 eventually 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, until plants establish.

Add On!
These species can be planted alone or can be combined with other sun-loving kits or your favorite individual species to make a larger planting.
Site Preparation

Know your sun, moisture, and soil conditions

The plants in the Pinks, Purple and Yellows Kit need 6 hours of sunlight per day but more sun is always better.

Average to 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 region.

Prepare the bed

If planting in a prepared bed, 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 avoiding 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, nutrient poor 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)] on or resources page.

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-water.
- 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 soil firmly.
- Water the plugs in well.

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 soil 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 hosts to butterflies and plants 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 ladybugs 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 exclosures 5’ is effective.

Shortening up giants. If your soil is rich, tall-growing bushy plants may grow taller than wanted and can flop over. Avoid this by cutting back by ⅓-½ 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. In the fall, leave the autumn leaves to protect overwintering pupae and firefly eggs in your yard. The leaves decompose, enriching the soil, but ensure they are removed in the spring to protect basal rosettes.

Monitor 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 plant

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plant</th>
<th>Flowers</th>
<th>Light</th>
<th>Moisture</th>
<th>Height</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anise Hyssop</td>
<td>Jul - Sept</td>
<td>Sun to Part-Sun</td>
<td>Dry - Moist</td>
<td>2-4 ft</td>
<td>Long blooming lavender-bluish flower spikes begin in mid-summer and persist as beautiful seed heads well into winter. 2-4 ft. tall plants are excellent for pollinators, and finches eat winter seeds. Its strong licorice scent makes this plant unfavored by deer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blunt Mountain Mint</td>
<td>June - Aug</td>
<td>Sun to Part-Shade</td>
<td>Dry to Moist</td>
<td>1-3 ft</td>
<td>A pollinator magnet, blunt mountain mint is beloved by numerous native bee and other insect pollinators. With minty fragrant leaves on a clumping form reaching 1-3 ft, and tiny whitish-cream flower clusters on the tips of stems, this plant, is unpalatable to deer and rabbits. Sun to part sun, dry to moist soils</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lanceleaf Coreopsis</td>
<td>May - June</td>
<td>Sun to Part-Shade</td>
<td>Dry to Moist</td>
<td>1-3 ft</td>
<td>Large, golden sunny daisy-like flowers on rigid 1-2 feet stems bloom for weeks on end on this valuable pollinator magnet. Bees and butterflies pollinate this plant, while finches love the ripe seeds. Endlessly adaptable, this plant is good for new meadow plantings. It will slowly move around the yard, through self-seeding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New England Aster</td>
<td>Aug - Nov</td>
<td>Sun to Part-Shade</td>
<td>Dry to Moist</td>
<td>3-5 ft</td>
<td>Flashy prolific purple daisy-like flowers with bright yellow centers that flower for weeks in late summer and throughout fall. Provides fall nectar to myriad pollinators and is a host plant of the pearl crescent. Complements many of the yellow blooming fall perennials such as goldenrod and coreopsis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swamp Milkweed</td>
<td>July - Aug</td>
<td>Sun to Part Sun</td>
<td>Average to Wet</td>
<td>3-4 ft</td>
<td>Fragrant pink blooms July to August. Large, interesting seed pods. Up to 4 ft. tall. Beloved Monarch nectar and larval food source. Caterpillars may defoliate early leaves but the plant will rebound to feed more caterpillars! Sun to part sun. Moist to wet soil.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Your native garden throughout the year

#### Emerge, Bloom and Seed Timeline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species Name</th>
<th>Spring</th>
<th>Summer</th>
<th>Fall</th>
<th>Winter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anise Hyssop</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blunt Mountain Mint</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lanceleaf Coreopsis</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New England Aster</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swamp Milkweed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Key:**
- Emerge
- Bloom
- Seed

#### Garden Maintenance Timeframe

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species Name</th>
<th>Spring</th>
<th>Summer</th>
<th>Fall</th>
<th>Winter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anise Hyssop</td>
<td>divide and replant, cut back last year's stalks to 8-15&quot;</td>
<td>leave seed heads for birds</td>
<td>leave stems for habitat</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blunt Mountain Mint</td>
<td>same as anise hyssop</td>
<td>same as anise hyssop</td>
<td>leave stems for habitat</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lanceleaf Coreopsis</td>
<td>same as anise hyssop</td>
<td>cut by 1/2-1/3 by July 4 to shorten up plant</td>
<td>same as anise hyssop</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New England Aster</td>
<td>cut back last year's stalks to 8-15&quot;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swamp Milkweed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>leave stems for habitat</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Some native pollinators that frequent these plants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species Name</th>
<th>Pollinators, Larval Hosts, and Specialist Species</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Anise Hyssop        | **Bees:** bumble, leafcutter, long-horned, small resin  
|                     | **Butterflies:** great spangled fritillary, Peck's skipper, silver spotted skipper  
|                     | **Others:** bee flies, soldier beetles |
| Blunt Mountain Mint | **Bees:** bumbles, carpenters, leafcutters, sweets  
|                     | **Butterflies:** American lady, common buckeye, Eastern tailed-blue, hairstreaks (banded, gray and juniper), northern crescent, sachems, tiger swallowtail  
|                     | **Wasps:** bewolves, cuckoo, grass-carrying, great gold digger, paper, potter, sand, thynnid  
|                     | **Others:** soldier flies, syrphid flies, wedge-shaped beetle |
| Lanceleaf Coreopsis | **Bees:** cuckoos, leafcutters, long-horned, short-tongued bees; small carpenters, small resins  
|                     | **Butterflies:** sulfurs |
| New England Aster   | **Bees:** bumbles, cuckoos, green sweets, leafcutters, long-horned, small carpenters  
|                     | **Butterflies:** arcigera flower moth, common buckeye, pearl crescent  
|                     | **Others:** bee flies, soldier beetles, syrphid flies  
|                     | **Specialist species:** mining bees  
|                     | **Larval Host Species:** Canada Sonia moth, pearl crescent butterfly |
| Swamp Milkweed      | **Bees:**bumble, leafcutter, small resin, sweat, yellow-faced  
|                     | **Butterflies:** banded hairstreak, great spangled fritillary, monarch, red admiral, skippers  
|                     | **Moths:** clearwing hummingbird  
|                     | **Wasps:** great black, great golden digger, paper, square-headed, yellowjacket  
|                     | **Others:** banded long-horned beetle, bee flies, green bottle flies, long-horned beetle, milkweed leaf beetle, red milkweed beetle, soldier beetles, syrphid flies, tachinid flies |
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 a 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](mailto:plantsale@greatswamp.org) We want your pollinator garden to get a good start so it will provide you with years of enjoyment!