

NATIVE PLANTS IN THE LANDSCAPE: APLD'S COMMITMENT

The APLD is committed to the principle of sustainability as a guiding foundation for our landscape design practice. We acknowledge that the use of native plants is fundamental to the concept of sustainability in the landscape.

We define the native plant as a species that grows in the same habitat in which it originated. We concur with the widely accepted description of the North American native plant: Any plant found in North America prior to the arrival of Columbus and the subsequent settlement of the continent by the Europeans. The same basic definition holds true for native plants found in any global geographic area.

We recognize the following benefits of native plants in our landscapes:

- As important elements in reclaiming and restoring degraded land.
- As central to building and maintaining bio-diverse environments.
- As critical to developing and maintaining wildlife habitat.
- As inspirational in creating and supporting regionally appropriate landscapes.
- As essential to using our water and soil resources wisely.
- As responsible in conserving our native flora.
- As beautiful components of any landscape.

In order to support these values, we will strive to utilize a native plant palette as we design our landscapes.

A goal of environmentally responsible gardening is using plant materials well adapted to the local environment. By their very nature, native plants have adapted to the growing conditions of a particular area and often to a widespread physiographic region with a predictable pattern of succession, e.g., the American Eastern hardwood forest. The health and diversity of local fauna are directly dependent on native plant habitats as sources of food and shelter.

While opinions differ about the importance of using plants native to a region vs. horticultural varieties, the goal of APLD is to encourage designers to learn all they can about how to best incorporate native plants into every one of their designs.

It remains the prerogative of the designer working with the client to apply the native plant community appropriately. While native plant materials are often associated particularly with naturalistic designs, these plants can have a place in every designed landscape, even the most formal, and can be successfully used as specimen plants, for privacy screens, in mixed and perennial borders, etc., and certainly in conjunction with safe and carefully chosen non-native plants.

As landscape professionals we have the opportunity and responsibility to educate our clients and serve as advocates to the larger community as proponents of the value of native plants in the designed landscape.