



APCC Cape Cod Native Plant Growers' Cooperative

Green Growing Standards: Plant Selection

Executive Statement: APCC requires that growers participating in the program grow only those perennial plant species as appear on the program's most current list. These species are native to Barnstable County and are available from our recognized ethical seed sources: the Northeast Seed Collective and the Wild Seed Project. This list will be updated as seed availability changes and/or expands.

Background/Why: Native plants are the foundation of a healthy and resilient ecosystem, and have evolved for thousands of years alongside insects, birds, and mammals in their regions to form complex relationships. These connections are undermined when our landscapes are filled with non-native plants, which offer far fewer benefits to our local fauna.

Native plants support 15 times more species of moths and butterflies than non-native plants, which means that landscapes dominated by non-native plants lack not only the crucial pollination services these insects provide, but also their existence as a food source for our native birds.

About 96 percent of terrestrial birds feed caterpillars to their young, and no small sum of caterpillars either. Just one clutch of chickadees needs upwards of 9,000 caterpillars over two weeks to fledge, and more after they leave the nest. Landscapes with less than 70 percent of native plants have been shown to cause steep declines in fledgling survival. Without native plants that serve as the host plants for these caterpillars to eat, our bird populations will continue to dwindle. Our current landscape paradigm has already caused the loss of over [three billion birds in North America since 1970](#). The research is clear: the reduction of native plants in our landscapes has cascading effects to the food web, meaning that the key to restoring the biodiversity of our ecosystems begins with increasing the presence of native species in our managed landscapes and preserving and restoring native plant communities where possible.

Native plants provide a myriad of benefits,: For more information on their importance, view the recording of [Why Grow Native Plants? ~ An Overview on the Ecological Importance of Native Species](#); read *Bringing Nature Home* by Doug Tallamy.