



Lawns to Legumes

Native Plants, Cultivars, and Non-Natives

Only insecticide-free Minnesota native plants are reimbursable under the Lawns to Legumes grant. Learn how to tell the difference between native plants, non-natives, and cultivars/hybrids.

What is a native plant?

Native plants are plant species that have been growing in Minnesota for a long time. They have beneficial relationships with their local weather, plants, pollinators, and soil. Native pollinators have evolved alongside native plants, and rely on them for nectar and pollen. Many native plants have deep roots that help clean pollutants from soil and make it healthier over time.

Native plant example: Wild yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*)



What is a cultivar?

Cultivars, nativars, and hybrids are native plants that have been modified by humans to look or grow a certain way. Cultivars may have fun names and flashy colors, but many provide limited nutrition for pollinators and don't support the environment in the ways that native plants do.

Cultivar example: 'Pink Grapefruit' *Achillea millefolium* (A cultivar of yarrow)

What is a non-native plant?

Non-native plants are plant species that have been brought by humans into an environment they are not naturally or historically found in. Because non-native plants have not had time to evolve and adapt within these new environments, they are less beneficial to pollinators and ecosystem health compared to native plants.

Non-native plant example: Zinnia flowers (*Zinnia elegans*)

Funding Exceptions

Are you installing a pollinator lawn? You can be reimbursed for fescue grasses, white clover, self-heal (*Prunella*), and creeping thyme for pollinator lawns.

Are you planting trees or shrubs? You can be reimbursed for Serviceberries or Hawthorns.

Learn more about native plants vs. cultivars from [Wild Ones](#), [Grow Native!](#), and [Prairie Moon Nursery](#).

Native plants vs cultivars/hybrids

Identifying cultivars

- Cultivars usually have single quotes around their name
- Hybrids have an "X" in their name
- Check the plant tag! Look for whimsical names
- Shop at a native plant nursery instead of a chain store

Examples of cultivars/hybrids

- Gaillardia 'Spintop Orange Halo'
- Spintop Orange Halo Blanket Flower
- Gaillardia X grandiflora



Native
Butterfly Weed
(*Asclepias tuberosa*)



Cultivar
'Cinderella'
Butterfly Flower
cultivar of Swamp Milkweed
(*Asclepias incarnata*)

Spot the Native Plant!

Sometimes it can be tricky to tell a native plant from a cultivar. Let's do a little practice!

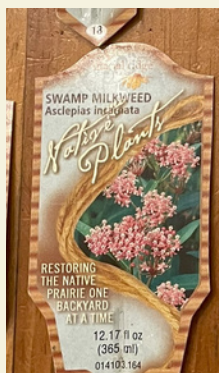
Shopping from a local native plant nursery can make things easier! Check out our [Native Plants Nurseries and Retailers list](#). When in doubt, email the L2L Helpline (l2lhelp@bluethumb.org)



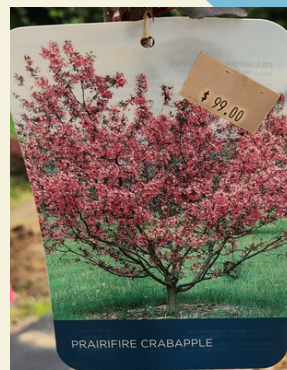
'Grape Gumball' Monarda
Cultivar X



Rattlesnake Master (*Eryngium yuccifolium*)
MN Native ✓



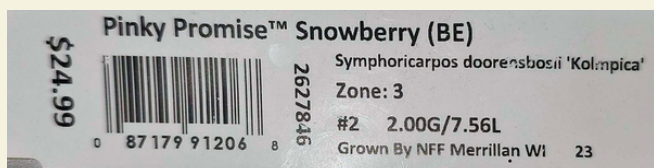
Swamp Milkweed
(*Asclepias incarnata*)
MN Native ✓



'Prairifire' Crabapple
Cultivar X



'Firedance' Dogwood
Cultivar X



'Pinky Promise' Snowberry
Cultivar X



American Plum (*Prunus americana*)
MN Native ✓



'Cinderella' Swamp Milkweed
Cultivar X



False Indigo (*Baptisia australis*)
MN Native ✓