



## *A Guide to Native Plants for the Roadsides of Pound Ridge*

*Almost every person, from childhood, has been touched by the untamed beauty of wildflowers. –Lady Bird Johnson*

Local roads were once known for their wildflowers. Let's add native plants to the roadside for pleasure, to provide for the birds, bees, and butterflies, and perhaps to stop invasive plants from taking hold on our properties. Just planting one flowering native tree adds beauty and supports wildlife.

All plants growing along the side of the road encounter

- Competition with other plants
- Too much or too little water
- Soil compaction plus road salts, sand, and gravel
- Erosion on steep slopes
- Deer browse and buck rub
- Mowing, scraping, plowing with heavy equipment to maintain safe roads (sight lines, road widths, and snow clearing) and tree trimming to prevent power outages

These tough conditions and routine disturbances favor invasive plants.  
No wonder it is called “the hell strip”.

Taking on the challenge

To start, know what plants are growing along your roadside. Ask yourself, “How realistic –and safe— is it to plant along this road? Is it feasible to manage existing weeds and invasive plants? Then, consider your goal, including your aesthetic, for the roadside. Would it look better to repeatedly mow a stand of invasive plants, leave it alone, feature already established natives, or plant some tough native plants in spots? Perhaps violets for the spring, black-eyed Susans for the summer, and wood asters for the fall. Or plant a small area and encourage tough plants, such as golden ragwort, mountain mint, or New York ferns, to spread over time. A butterfly doesn't need much.

The roadside is town or state-owned right-of-way (ROW). A precise definition of ROW is not simple. The width of a ROW is generally 20 feet on both sides of the roadway centerline, but it varies. In addition, utility companies have ROW. Be aware that the state may use herbicides in the ROW of state-owned roads; the town does not. The ROW may be mowed to maintain sight lines.

Problem Plants

Some common roadside invasive plants	Some basic management strategies <a href="#">Species Information   Lower Hudson Partnership for Regional Invasive Species Management.</a>
Mugwort ( <i>Artemisia vulgaris</i> )	Repeated mowing throughout the growing season for several years
Japanese Knotweed ( <i>Polygonum cuspidatum</i> )	Repeated mowing throughout the growing season for several years
Japanese stiltgrass ( <i>Microstegium vimineum</i> )	Prevent reseeding (remove by pulling or mulch)
Garlic mustard ( <i>Alliaria petiolate</i> )	Prevent reseeding in the spring
Multiflora rose ( <i>Rosa multiflora</i> )	Dig out root
Wineberry ( <i>Rubus phoenicolasius</i> )	Dig out root
Japanese barberry ( <i>Berberis thunbergii</i> )	Dig out root
Winged Euonymus ( <i>Euonymus alatus</i> )	Year 1: Cut at 6-18" and Year 2: Cut to the ground

PS/ Before you dig, consider calling 811, the national phone number, to request the marking of approximate location of buried utilities with paint or flags so that you don't unintentionally dig into an underground utility line.

For further reading (online)

[Hellstrip Plantings: Creating Habitat in the Space Between the Sidewalk and the Curb](#)  
[107 thoughts on "How to Fight Plants with Plants"](#)

[Native Species Planting Guide for New York City 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition](#)

Available at the Pound Ridge Library

Hadden, E. J. (2014) [Hellstrip Gardening](#). Timberlane Press.

## Native Plants that work

As the saying goes, success breeds success. Look around for native plants thriving nearby. If you have similar conditions on your property, duplicating what nature has done nearby will probably work and also create impact.

For advice, turn to the following lists, assembled to help the beginner gardener and inspire the more experienced. These plants work well in our area, tend to be deer-resistant, and have other qualities that make them suitable for the roadside, yet may be difficult to establish under certain conditions. Other native plants could have been included. Virginia creeper, a woody vine, is difficult to categorize, as it can grow low and serve as a ground cover. The spreadsheets (one for herbaceous plants and one for small trees and shrubs) allow you to choose according to height, bloom time, and sun/shade preferences. Height is particularly important in regard to the right-of-way and to maintain sight lines. Low-growing plants are particularly suited for “the mow-zone”. Taller trees and shrubs should not be planted close to the road or under utility lines. Some of the trees and shrubs need to be protected until they reach a height above the deer browse line and a size that discourages bucks from rubbing their antlers. For this activity, bucks prefer small-diameter, smooth-barked trees and shrubs. Before planting, it is advisable to learn more about the horticultural requirements and growth habits of each plant. Some of these plants are aggressive!

To minimize the cost of buying plants

- Look to friends for divisions or cuttings
- Gather seeds to propagate by winter sowing

## Herbaceous Plants for the Roadside

Common name	Scientific name	Height	Light	Moisture	Season of Bloom	Notes
Beebalm	<i>Monarda</i> spp.	tall	Sun to part shade	mediium	July-Aug	
Black-eyed Susans	<i>Rudbeckia hirta</i>	low	Sun	med	June -Sept	
Black cohosh	<i>Actaea racemosa</i>	tall	part /full shade	moderate	June-July	
Blue mist flower	<i>Conoclinium coelestinum</i>	tall	Sun to part shade	medium	July-October	aggressive
Boneset	<i>Eupatorium perfoliatum</i>	tall	Sun to part shade	med to wet	July-Sept	
Canadian anemone	<i>Anemone canadensis</i>	low	Sun to part shade	med to wet	April-June	
Christmas Fern	<i>Polystichum acrostichoides</i>	low	part /full shade	moderate	nonflowering	
Coneflower	<i>Echinacea purpurea</i>	tall	Sun to part shade	dry to med	june-Aug	

Golden Alexander	<i>Zizia aurea</i>	low	Sun to part shade	moderate	May-June	
Golden ragwort or packera	<i>Packera aurea</i>	low	sun to shade	moist	spring	
Goldenrod	<i>Solidago spp.</i>	tall	sun	moderate	Aug-Sept	
Hay-scented Fern	<i>Dennstaedtia punctilobula</i>	tall	part /full shade Sun to part	medium	nonflowering	aggressive
Joe Pye Weed	<i>Eutrochium purpureum</i>	tall	shade	mediium	July-Sept	aggressive
Little bluestem grass	<i>Schizachyrium scoparium</i>	tall	Sun	dry to med	insignificant	
Milkweeds	<i>Aesclepius spp.</i>	tall	sun	med to wet	July-Aug	
Mountain mint	<i>Pycnanthemum spp.</i>	tall	sun/part shade	moderate	July-Sept	aggressive
Native ginger	<i>Asarum canadense</i>	low	part /full shade	med to wet	April-May	aggressive
New York or New England Asters	<i>Symphyotrichum spp.</i>	low	Sun	mediium	Aug-Sept	
Nodding Onion	<i>Allium cernum</i>	low	sun/part shade	dry to med	june-Aug	
Pearly everlasting	<i>Anaphalis margaritacea</i>	low	Sun/part shade	moderate	July-Aug	
Pennsylvania sedge	<i>Carex pensylvanica</i>	low	part /full shade	dry to med	May	
Pussytoes	<i>Antennaria plantaginifolia</i>	low	full/partial	Dry/medium	Spring	
Sensitive Fern	<i>Onoclea sensibilis</i>	low	part /full shade	moderate	nonflowering	
Spiderwort	<i>Tradescantia spp.</i>	tall	sun/part shade	dry to med	May-July	
Sunflowers (perennial)	<i>Helianthus spp.</i>	tall	sun	dry to med	July-Aug	
Violets	<i>Viola spp.</i>	low	sun/part shade Sun to part	moderate	spring	
White snakeroot	<i>Ageratina altissima</i>	tall	shade	med to wet	Sept to frost	aggressive
White Wood Aster	<i>Eurybia divaricata</i>	low	part/full shade Sun to part	dry to med.	Aug-Sept	
Wild geranium	<i>Geranium maculatum</i>	low	shade Sun to part	medium	April-May	
Wood oats	<i>Chasmanthium latifolium</i>	tall	shade	med to wet	Aug-Sept	aggressive

## Native Trees and Shrubs for the Roadside

Common name	Scientific name	Height	Spread	Sun/shade	Moisture	Bloom
Bayberry, Northern	<i>Myrica pensylvanica</i>	2-9'	6-20'	Sun to part	moist to wet	insignificant
Blueberry	<i>Vaccinium corymbosum</i>	6-12'	2-20'	sun to shade	moist to wet	May-June
Flowering dogwood	<i>Cornus florida</i>	25'	20' crown	Part shade	well-drained	spring
Fragrant sumac	<i>Rhus aromatica</i>	5-12"	4-6'	Sun to shade	dry to moist	fall foliage
Grey dogwood	<i>Cornus racemosa</i>	6-15'	10'	Sun to shade	Dry to wet	May-June
Pussy willow	<i>Salix discolor</i>	15-25'	12-25' crown	Sun	moist	Feb-March
Serviceberry, shadblow	<i>Amelanchier laevis</i>	15-40'	15-40' crown	Sun to part	moist	early spring
Staghorn sumac	<i>Rhus typhina</i>	10-15'	2' crown	Sun to shade	dry to wet	June-July
Summersweet	<i>Clethra alnifolia</i>	6-16'	4'6'	Sun to shade	moist	summer
Sweet fern	<i>Comptonia peregrina</i>	1-4'	4+	Sun to part	well-drained	insignificant
Witch hazel	<i>Hamamelis virginiana</i>	15-20'	15-20'	Sun	moist	late fall



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