



## Fall Is a Good Time to Start Going Native!

Bob Eddleman

Why plant native trees and plants? The answer is that native plants and trees have developed on their own through thousands of years of self selection, resulting in species that vary genetically in their adaptation to particular locations and environmental conditions. Using these hardy natives insures the greatest potential for success in your planting efforts. The most common native trees being planted throughout central Indiana are the oaks, maples, hickories, gums, hackberry, tuliptree, river birch, redbud, dogwood, white pine, coffee-tree and sycamore. Commonly planted native plants include New England Aster, Coreopsis, Fire Pink, Wild Geranium, Ferns, Goldenrods and many others including shrubs. A brochure on Landscaping with Plants Native to Indiana is available at Extension and Soil and Water Conservation District Offices. Most of central Indiana was originally under a woodland cover, so woodland type plants often do much better than the prairie plants common to areas further west.

Michael A Homoya, Division of Nature Preserves of the Indiana Department of Natural Resources, sums it up well when he says, "Indigenous (native) plants are a significant part of a region's geographic context. In fact, they help define it. They have proven themselves capable of surviving in a landscape for millennia. What better plants can there be, if not the natives, to confront the soil conditions, climate, pests, and diseases of the local areas?"

So have fun going native for many of the following reasons:

Native plants benefit wildlife by providing them with the types of food and cover to which they have become accustomed.

Native plants usually will require fewer pesticides and less fertilizer and water to maintain a healthy growing condition. An added benefit to maintaining good water quality in our streams.

Native plants may support 10 to 50 times as many species of wildlife as non-native plants. Too often, as is the case with bush honeysuckle, exotic plants brought in from other countries for their horticultural or wildlife value spread rapidly and take over wooded areas and decimate native plants and animals.

Native plants are more resistant to diseases and insect attack.

In most cases native plants will require less maintenance, saving time and money.

Planting the many species of native trees available to us insures the landscape will be healthy and diverse and not a monoculture of short-lived and stressed plants.

Many of our native trees grown larger and are longer-lived than the non-natives. They are more effective in removing carbon dioxide from the air and storing the carbon in the roots, wood, bark, and soil making them natural air purifiers.

Finally planting natives is more patriotic and you will be preserving the outstanding natural heritage of America.