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## Frequently Asked *Questions*

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### **Do you offer your plants to homeowners?**

Absolutely! Our plants are a great fit for anyone who is wishing to create habitat and restore areas of their property with native plants. Whether you have a small urban property or a large rural piece of land, we would love to have you visit the nursery! Business owners and organizations are also welcome.

### **I have a small property. I'm not sure if it is large enough for a habitat corridor. Does the corridor need to be a certain size?**

Habitat corridors can be any size, from just a few square feet to many acres. No matter the size, they create habitat and useable space for both native plants and wildlife to dwell.

### **What qualifies as a habitat corridor?**

Habitat corridors have a loose, meadow-like layout with both short and tall plants mixed throughout the planting. These areas are meant to create a safe place for native plants and wildlife, and they help to restore land to a more natural state. The species planted are truly native to the site and would naturally exist together in combination. The designated area serves an ecological function year round and dead stems are left upright in the planting, allowing plants to set seed.

Naturally-occurring natives that come in as volunteers at the site are encouraged and native wildlife is always welcome. The goal for a habitat corridor is to have an area thick with vegetation with little ground showing. Besides removing non-natives that come up in the planting, little maintenance is required, and the area should be left as undisturbed as possible.



Habitat corridors have a year-round function, and seedheads are left standing in the cold months.

### **My property doesn't adjoin woods or a natural area. Can I still have a habitat corridor at my site?**

Yes! If there aren't other natural areas nearby, existing wildlife will certainly welcome a new piece of habitat. You may invite new wildlife into the area, while creating a seed source from which native plants can spread. Habitat corridors can be virtually anywhere: in areas where lawn used to grow, in front of a house, bordering a fence on the side of the property, along a woodland edge, etc. Anywhere where you would like to have an area of habitat that is beneficial to wildlife is a great spot to start!

### **Why does Hummingbird Hill ask me not to put their plants in a garden setting?**

A very reasonable question! Since we grow these plants from local wild seed and always have only limited quantities of the plants we offer, we think it's important that these go where they will be of highest ecological value. And that place is in a habitat corridor, with a carefully-selected combination of plants that would naturally occur together in nature, planted in a meadow-like formation. Because gardens are a mix of plants (often native to other areas and differing habitats) arranged by height and often disrupted for pruning, weeding, managing, or rearranging, they are unable to fulfill a similar role as habitat corridors. For those passionate about gardening, we encourage having a designated habitat corridor in one or more sections of the property and gardening in other areas. We hope that all our clients will consider establishing a habitat corridor. Even a small one makes an ecological difference!

### **How do you sell your plants? Do you offer seeds for purchase?**

Our plants are available at our nursery location for purchase. Perennials are available in 1 quart/4 inch pots. We are excited to now be offering a small assortment of woody species grown from local seed. They are available in 1 gallon, 2 gallon, and 3 gallon pots, and we look forward to continuing to expand our selection of these. We don't currently offer seeds. As an affordable option for large projects, we have plug trays available which include 50 young plants per tray.

### **Your nursery doesn't carry some species of plants that I've read about or that people commonly plant as natives. Why is that?**

Key to our mission is that we offer only species native to our area of Virginia. This way, wildlife can use them, and they can also help create habitat and boost native plant populations. Unfortunately, it's very common to read or hear that a plant is simply "native," without any more information. Even if a source does go further and says, for example, that a plant is "native to the eastern U.S.," that doesn't mean that the plant is native to every one of the eastern states -- let alone to every part of every state. In fact, there are many plants native to some parts of Virginia but not to our area. Or, they may be only native to specialized habitats in our area (such as rock outcrops). Many plants that have become famous and are regularly sold as 'natives' do not actually occur here or wouldn't be suitable for local habitat corridors.

### **How do you know if a plant is native to our local area?**

Our main source is the county-level information on the Digital Atlas of the Virginia Flora: [www.vaplantatlas.org](http://www.vaplantatlas.org). That info is the result of a vast field project conducted by botanists over many years. We believe it's the most precise source on the distribution of plants found in Virginia. We encourage everyone to use this as source. In addition, when recommending plants for a given site,



If you live outside of this area, we are still very happy to offer advice and guidance on making a habitat corridor on your property. Please don't hesitate to email us and ask any questions you may have!

**How do I schedule a time to visit the nursery, and how do appointments work?**

Appointment times are available Wednesdays through Saturdays. We have an online appointment form on our website for signing up. On this form, you can write times that work well for you and a description of your site conditions.

During your visit, we'll discuss your location and planting site with you, and offer you a list of plant species from our selection that are native to your specific property and provide ecological benefits in your habitat corridor. We encourage you to bring any information you may have about your project/plans when you visit. These include photos, descriptions, lists of natives you've identified on your property, and, of course, questions!

We look forward to seeing you at the nursery during the 2023 growing season!