

Hummingbird Hill Native Plant Nursery

October 2024 Newsletter

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We hope you are enjoying this cooler fall weather! If you would like to add native plants to your property, it's not too late to plant. We have a wide variety of species available and will continue to be open by appointment until the end of October. Appointment times are available on Saturdays, Sundays, Mondays, and Tuesdays. Please visit our website to set up a time to visit.

What's New At the Nursery



NEW SPECIES!

Carolina Rose (*Rosa carolina*)

WE ARE EXCITED TO HAVE A BATCH OF THIS NATIVE ROSE SPECIES AVAILABLE THIS FALL IN 1 GALLON POTS!

Carolina Roses have large pink, 5-petaled flowers with a sweet rose fragrance. This species is typically 1-3 feet tall but occasionally can grow taller. The red rose hips form in August to October and are a food source for a variety of wildlife including bobwhites, rabbits, native mice, and skunks. Spreads gradually over time to form small non-aggressive colonies.

At this time of year, we are busy potting up plants for Spring 2025! We will overwinter these plants at our nursery under row covers. We are also working to create habitat corridors at the nursery and have planted several hundred new plants in the ground at the nursery this fall! (One site being cleared for planting is pictured to the right).



Exploring Asters

Asters are the quintessential flower of autumn, with their conspicuous daisy-like flowers that are prolific and highly attractive to native insects. But, asters aren't one and the same: native asters are a varied bunch, with some species thriving in wet areas, while others live only on dry slopes. Here, we explore some of the many aster species native to our area, looking at the habitat where each thrives and the life that it supports.



Purple Stem Aster



Purple Stem Aster (Symphyotrichum puniceum):

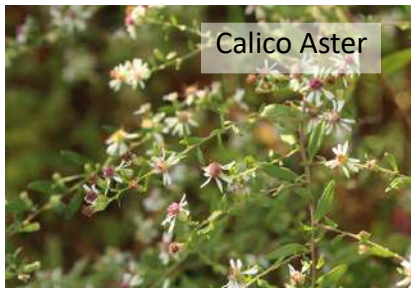
Soil: *Wet*
Sun: *Full sun to part shade*
 Purple Stem Asters live in wet habitats, including wet meadows, growing 3 to 6 feet tall. They bloom September to

October, with large light purple flowers that are a favorite of many butterflies, including Monarchs that stop for their nectar as they migrate south in fall.



Look for a wide variety of late-season insects using Calico Aster for nectar and pollen, from

bees to beetles and butterflies. It has white to pinkish flowers with yellow centers that transform to purple as they age.



Calico Aster

Calico Aster
(Symphyotrichum lateriflorum):
Soil: *Wet, Moist, Medium, Dry, or Very Dry*
Sun: *Full sun to part shade*

A bushy plant that reaches 3 to 4 feet tall, Calico Aster is full of insect life during its long bloom time, which lasts into November.



Frost Aster

Frost Aster (Symphyotrichum pilosum):
Soil: *Medium, Dry, or Very Dry*

Sun: *Full sun to part shade*
 Blooming
 September to
 November,
 Frost Aster
 has a long
 and prolific
 flowering



period. During its bloom time, its white flowers attract many types of native insects: everything from bees, wasps, flies, and beetles to small and mid-sized butterflies and moths. Later, Frost Aster's flowers turn to fluffy white seedheads that are eaten by birds, such as sparrows. It grows 2 to 3 feet tall, with a bushy structure, and can even thrive in dry, inhospitable-seeming areas.



Panicked Aster

Panicked Aster

(*Symphyotrichum lanceolatum*):

Soil: *Wet or Moist*

Sun: *Full sun to part shade*

Panicked Aster has large white blooms and grows in moist habitats, such as wet meadows, moist open forests, along streambanks, and along ditches. It reaches 4 to 6 feet tall and, unlike



some asters, spreads underground to form groups that provide dense shelter for wildlife.

Wavy-leaved Aster
 (*Symphyotrichum undulatum*):

Soil: *Medium, Dry, or Very Dry*

Sun: *Full sun to part shade*

Wavy-leaved Aster grows 2 to 3 feet



Wavy-leaved Aster

tall and produces large light purple flowers late in the year, into November. Its natural habitats include well-drained woods, woodland edges, and clearings.

Though it can be found in full sun habitats, it often grows in areas of partial shade and in



dappled sunlight settings. Look to its heart-shaped leaves as an identification tool, above: they clasp the stem in a unique way.



White Wood Aster

White Wood Aster

(*Eurybia divaricata*):

Soil: *Moist, Medium, Dry, or Very Dry*

Sun: *Part shade to shade*

White Wood Aster is a woodland species with flat-topped clusters of white flowers that appear in

late summer and fall. Plants have a low-growing, sprawling habit with heart-shaped leaves and dark-colored, wiry stems. White Wood Asters



thrive in a variety of shaded and partially-shaded environments, from dry woods and banks to moist, rich forests.

Blue Wood Aster

(Symphyotrichum cordifolium):

Soil: *Medium, Dry, or Very Dry*

Sun: *Part shade*

Blue Wood Aster is an aster species that thrives in part shade wooded areas, such as along woodland edges and in other habitats with dappled light. Also called Heart-leaved Aster, it has light purple flowers that bloom in clusters. Bees, as well as butterflies and beetles, are frequent visitors to these blooms. Blue Wood Aster grows 3 to 4 feet tall.



Asters are workhorses in nature: their blooms provide nectar and pollen for a wide variety of insects, they collectively host a whopping 112 species of native caterpillars, and their seeds are an important food source for overwintering birds. Their foliage provides structure and support within a habitat.

But, just like the goldenrods or mountain mints or any other genus of native plants, every species within the aster group is unique and lives in a specific habitat thanks to years of adaptations. Next time you look at a naturally-occurring native plant, we urge you to think about the long history of adaptation that has led it to grow in that very spot where you see it, the slow battle of trial and error that has resulted in soil, sun, and plant being an exact match.

NATIVE CATERPILLAR SIGHTINGS

Many native caterpillars are out on their host plants in late summer and fall! While working at the nursery, we are fortunate to see a diversity of species, and we encourage and support these critters. Check out some of our recent sightings below!



Above: Tiger Swallowtail



Left: Carolina Sphinx Moth



Below: Snowberry Clearwing

All photos in this newsletter courtesy of Hummingbird Hill.



Trumpet Vine Sphinx Moth on Trumpet Vine



Spiny Oak Slug



Turbulent Phosphila on Common Greenbrier



Brown-hooded Owlet Moth on Goldenrod