

# PLANT VIRGINIA NATIVES INITIATIVE

## Plant Virginia Natives



PLANTVIRGINIANATIVES.ORG

*The Plant Virginia Natives Initiative includes two facets: a statewide marketing partnership and regional native plant marketing campaigns.*

### Regional Native Plant Campaigns

The regional native plant marketing model uses proven Community-Based Social Marketing tools and techniques, and focuses on establishing a social norm for use of native plants in the rural, suburban and urban landscape. It is based on research funded and conducted through the Virginia Coastal Zone Management Program that identified structural and psychological barriers that may prevent people planting natives, including:

- lack of information about which plant species are native
- lack of knowledge of the interdependence between native plants and animals
- lack of availability of native plants at retail centers
- lack of, or knowledge of, publicly accessible demonstration sites showcasing native landscaping

The regional native plant campaigns address the following **goals**:

- Increase the knowledge and use of plants native to the region, according to the Flora of Virginia.
- Help landowners learn more about their property and the benefits of a native plant landscape and conservation landscaping, and how by planting natives they can impact the ecological diversity and sustainability of natural landscapes beyond their property, neighborhood, and community.
- Engage with local garden centers in the region to promote the native plants they currently carry, and to increase the supply and variety of the native plants they carry.
- Engage with local jurisdictions on policies that could be strengthened in favor of native plant landscaping.

Regional native plant marketing campaigns also highlight and leverage partner resources and contributions, and create consistent messaging that promotes the use of native plants and provides a rallying point for partners.



Coastal regional native plant marketing campaigns, including regional guide production, initiated and funded in large part by grants from NOAA to the Virginia CZM Program, a network of state agencies and coastal localities led by DEQ. Maintaining and increasing valuable native vegetative cover is a critical goal shared by the Virginia CZM Program and the Habitat Partners Program at the Department of Wildlife Resources, which collaborated with the Virginia CZM to conduct workshops to build the capacity of regional and local partners to expand the regional campaign model beyond Virginia's coastal zone and into the rest of the state. The Virginia Native Plant Society also has contributed significant funding for guide printing.







## TOOL: Captivating Communications



Vivid, personal, concrete.

- Know your Audience.
- Use a Credible Source.
- Frame your Message – this is how it is presented, in general, you should emphasize the losses that occur as a result of inaction
- Carefully Consider Threatening Messages - do so with caution - present concrete actions that individuals can take to reduce the threat.
- Make Your Message Easy to Remember.
- Provide Personal or Community Goals.
- Emphasize Personal Contact.
- Provide Feedback.

### Campaign Strategy Components

- Regional Native Plant Guide  
Demonstration Gardens, Plant ID Markers and Interpretive Signage
- Radio Ads/PSAs
- Public TV Interviews
- PlantVirginiaNatives.org and Partner Websites
- Newspaper and Partner Publication Articles
- Social Media (the usual and NextDoor.com)
- Webinars
- Campaign Exhibits, Events & Presentations
- Scripted Campaign Presentation
- Inexpensive Give-Aways, e.g. native plant seed packets, and merchandise with campaign logo
- Targeted Brochures/Fact Sheets
- Yard Signs
- Videos

## TOOL: Prompts - Point of Sale



Behaviors that support sustainability are susceptible to the most human of traits: forgetting.

- Make the prompt noticeable.
- Make the prompt self-explanatory.
- Present the prompt in as close proximity as is possible to where the action is to be taken.
- Use prompts to encourage people to engage in positive behaviors.

### Campaign Strategy Components

#### **Garden Center Banner or Flag**

Advertises that center sells native plants.

#### **Garden Center Plant Signage/Poster**

Placed next to groupings of native plants (idea - kiosk with inventory of native plants available and a laminated copy of regional native plant guide.)

#### **Plant Tags**

Featuring campaign logo, and website, to identify native plants at retailers. Also worked with garden centers to set aside a separate sections for natives or to group natives, such as organizing potted natives in sample landscaping schemes.

#### **Please Carry Cards**

If a native plant is not available, customer leaves card with the retailer.

## TOOL: Commitments/Social Norms



If we observe others acting sustainably, we are more likely to act similarly.

- Make the norm visible.
- Use personal contact to reinforce norms.
- Facilitate the adoption of new behavior through social diffusion:

1. Make commitments public and durable
  - a. Make the actions visible in the community – an effective way to increase the visibility of invisible behaviors is to ask for public commitments.
  - b. Whenever possible, these public commitments should be durable.
2. Recruit well known and well respected people, who can have an inordinate impact upon the adoption of new behaviors.

### Campaign Strategy Components

#### **Signed Pledge Banners**

Pledge signatures gathered publicly at exhibits and other events. Those signing receive a pledge decal.

#### **Pledge Decal**

**Distributed to those who pledge to visibly display and show their commitment to plant native.**

#### **Community Leader Program**

Trained and help implement all facets of the campaign strategy.

# PLANT VIRGINIA NATIVES MARKETING PARTNERSHIP

The second facet of the Plant Virginia Natives Initiative is on state-wide collaboration on native plant marketing. In August 2011, with regional native plant marketing campaigns expanding, the Virginia CZM Program established a partnership with state and regional agencies and organizations to:

*Identify and prioritize opportunities to collaborate on Virginia native plant communication and marketing efforts and form cohesive and coordinated messaging and strategies to increase local availability and use of native plants state-wide.*

A core team of member organizations identified projects that would be more efficiently and effectively addressed through the partnership: a) support for a Virginia conservation landscaping certification; b) strategies to help increase the availability of native plants including a framework and guidelines for native plant seed collection/propagation; and, c) coordination of state-wide native plant marketing strategies.

The partnership drafted an **Action Plan** based on these priorities, core team discussions and feedback from open partner forums. The Action Plan focuses on strategies and actions to address four goals:

- 1. Increase collaboration and coordination among partners engaged in native plant education, communication and marketing;*
- 2. Increase Virginia Grown native plant stock;*
- 3. Increase the availability of native plants at local plant retailers*
- 4. Increase demand and use of Virginia native plants by landscape and land use professions, homeowners, landscaping and demonstration restoration projects on public and private lands.*

Download the Action Plan at  
[www.PlantVirginiaNatives.org](http://www.PlantVirginiaNatives.org)

A status report highlighting the work of partners to address the actions in the plan is available upon request.

## Plant Virginia Natives Core Partnership Team

Virginia Coastal Zone Management Program (Chair)  
Virginia Dept of Wildlife Resources (formerly Game and Inland Fisheries)  
Albemarle County  
Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay  
Blue Ridge PRISM  
Chesapeake Bay Foundation  
Chesapeake Conservation Landscaping Council  
Flora of Virginia  
Friends of the Rappahannock  
Garden Club of Virginia  
Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden  
Norfolk Botanical Gardens  
Piedmont Environmental Council  
Planning District Commission and Regional Commissions statewide  
Virginia Dept of Agriculture and Consumer Affairs  
Virginia Dept of Conservation and Recreation, Natural Heritage Division

Virginia Dept of Environmental Quality  
Virginia Dept of Forestry  
Virginia Department of Transportation  
Virginia County Extension Offices  
Virginia Institute of Marine Science  
Virginia Master Gardener Program  
Virginia Master Naturalist Program  
Virginia Native Plant Society  
Virginia Society of Landscape Designers  
VA Soil and Water Conservation Districts  
Wetlands Watch  
Wild Ones Richmond  
Williamsburg Botanical Gardens  
Virginia Native Plant Provider Reps

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