
Drought Tolerant Plants for New Hampshire Landscapes

Below-normal precipitation during the period of 1995-2002 resulted in damage to or death of many trees, shrubs and herbaceous plants in New Hampshire and the Northeastern U.S. Even short periods (days to weeks) of hot, dry weather can threaten the health and survival of newly planted woody material, many annual flowers and other herbaceous plants. Longer drought periods harm established trees, shrubs, vines and perennials as well. Homeowners and landscapers who wish to minimize irrigation needs or who live in areas with potential water restrictions should select plants which can tolerate drought.

Evergreen plants generally need less water than deciduous trees and shrubs during the growing season, but more during the off-season. Broad-leaved evergreens such as rhododendrons, pieris, and mountain laurel, although not considered drought-tolerant, grow best in partial shade, offering some protection from dehydration. Needle evergreens (conifers) as a group have the lowest water requirements. Keep in mind that even drought-tolerant plants need water initially to encourage root establishment. Once established, they require little or no water other than natural rainfall.

To get the right plant for the site, consider other characteristics in addition to drought-tolerance. Mature size of the species, growth rate, shape and form, site conditions (light patterns, soil characteristics, wind protection), insect or disease susceptibility, and aesthetics are all important factors in selecting appropriate plant material. Choose plants that can withstand New Hampshire's variable climatic conditions, not just drought.

This list of drought-tolerant plants was compiled using several references, which were not always in agreement. The criteria for including plants on this list were:

- they are listed as drought tolerant in several sources
- they are cold hardy to zone 3 or 4
- they are considered desirable landscape plants (not weedy, invasive, brittle, or pest-prone)
- they should be available at local garden centers and nurseries

Deciduous Trees

Acer ginnala	Amur Maple
Betula populifolia	Gray Birch
Celtis occidentalis	Common Hackberry
Crataegus crusgalli	Cockspur Hawthorn
Crataegus phaenopyrum	Washington Hawthorn
Crataegus viridis 'Winter King'	Winter King Hawthorn
Fraxinus pennsylvanica	Green Ash
Ginkgo biloba	Maidenhair Tree
Gleditsia triacanthos var. inermis	Thornless Honey Locust
Gymnocladus dioicus	Kentucky Coffee Tree

Malus spp. (some)
Ostrya virginiana
Phellodendron amurense
Prunus maackii
Quercus macrocarpa
Quercus rubra
Rhus typhina
Robinia pseudoacacia
Syringa reticulata
Zelkova serrata

Crabapple
American Hophornbeam, Ironwood
Amur Corktree
Amur Chokecherry
Burr Oak
Northern Red Oak
Staghorn Sumac
Black Locust
Japanese Tree Lilac
Japanese Zelkova

Deciduous Shrubs

Caragana arborescens
Chaenomeles speciosa
Clethra alnifolia
Comptonia peregrina
Cotoneaster apiculatus
Cotoneaster multiflorus
Forsythia x intermedia
Ligustrum spp.
Myrica pennsylvanica
Physocarpus opulifolius
Potentilla fruticosa
Rhus aromatica 'Gro-low'
Ribes alpinum
Rosa rugosa
Syringa vulgaris
Viburnum dentatum
Viburnum lantana
Viburnum lentago
Viburnum opulus
Viburnum prunifolium

Siberian Peashrub
Flowering Quince
Summersweet, Sweet Pepperbush
Sweet Fern
Cranberry Cotoneaster
Many-flowered Cottoneaster
Forsythia
Privet
Northern Bayberry
Common Ninebark
Bush Cinquefoil
Gro-low Fragrant Sumac
Alpine Currant
Saltspray Rose
Common Lilac
Arrowwood Viburnum
Wayfaringtree Viburnum
Nannyberry Viburnum, Sheepberry
European Cranberrybush Viburnum
Blackhaw Viburnum

Evergreen Trees and Shrubs

Abies concolor
Juniperus chinensis
Juniperus communis
Juniperus scopulorum
Juniperus virginiana
Picea glauca
Picea pungens
Pinus banksiana
Pinus cembra
Pinus resinosa
Pinus rigida
Pinus sylvestris

White fir
Chinese Juniper
Common Juniper
Rocky Mountain Juniper
Eastern Redcedar
White Spruce
Blue Spruce
Jack Pine
Swiss Stone Pine, Arolla Pine
Red Pine
Pitch Pine
Scotch Pine

Ground Covers and Vines

Arctostaphylos uva-ursi
Campsis radicans
Juniperus horizontalis
Juniperus procumbens

Bearberry, Kinnikinnick
Trumpet Creeper
Creeping Juniper
Japarden Juniper

Parthenocissus quinquefolia
Wisteria species

Virginia Creeper
Wisteria

Perennials

Achillea spp.
Artemisia spp.
Asclepias tuberosa
Coreopsis spp.
Echinacea purpurea
Echinops ritro
Eryngium spp.
Euphorbia spp.
Gaillardia x grandiflora
Gaura lindheimeri
Geranium (several species)
Gypsophila elegans
Hemerocallis hybrids
Hosta plantaginea
Iberis sempervirens
Lamium maculatum
Lavendula angustifolia
Liatris scariosa
Malva alcea
Nepeta x faassenii
Oenothera speciosa
Phlox subulata
Rudbeckia spp.
Salvia nemerosa
Sedum spp.
Sempervivum tectorum
Solidago hybrids
Stachys byzantina
Verbascum chaixii
Waldensteinia ternata

Yarrow
Wormwood
Butterfly Milkweed
Tickseed
Purple Coneflower
Globe Thistle
Sea Holly
Spurge
Blanket Flower
Wand Flower
Cranesbill
Baby's Breath
Daylily
Plantainlily
Candytuft
Spotted Dead Nettle
Lavender
Gayfeather
Mallow
Catmint
Evening Primrose
Moss Pink, Creeping Phlox
Coneflower, Black-eyed Susan
Sage
Stonecrop
Hens-n-chickens, Houseleek
Goldenrod
Lamb's Ears
Mullein
Barren Strawberry

Annual

Cosmos bipinnatus
Gazania rigens
Gomphrena globosa
Helichrysum bracteatum
Ipomoea purpurea
Portulaca grandiflora
Sanvitalia procumbens
Senecio cineraria
Tagetes spp.
Tithonia rotundifolia
Tropaeolum majus
Verbena hybrida
Zinnia elegans

Cosmos
Treasure Flower
Globe Amaranth
Strawflower
Morning-Glory
Moss Rose, Rock Rose
Creeping Zinnia
Dusty Miller
Marigold
Mexican Sunflower
Nasturtium
Verbena
Zinnia

Ornamental Grasses

Festuca cinerea
Schizachyrium scoparium
Sorghastrum nutans
Sporobolus heterolepis

Blue Fescue
Little Bluestem
Indian Grass
Prairie Dropseed

by Catherine Neal, UNH Extension Ornamental Horticulture Specialist, 5/02

Visit our website: ceinfo.unh.edu

UNH Cooperative Extension programs and policies are consistent with pertinent Federal and State laws and regulations on non-discrimination regarding age, color, handicap, national origin, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, or veterans status.