

Herbaceous Plant List for Conservation Buffers

CAPE COD COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

The following list of herbaceous plants was constructed to provide guidance for green industry professionals and conservation commissions for planting herbaceous plant material in conservation buffers. The list consists of primarily native plants that are suitable for planting within conservation buffers. The list is not exhaustive and alternative species may be considered for specific management goals.

A conservation buffer should enhance natural resources such as soil, water, air quality and provide wildlife habitat. Natural succession should be allowed to proceed in most ecologies where herbaceous plants do not represent the climax species. A well-designed planting should be diverse and include several graminoid and forb species suited to the specific conditions of a site.

Additional UMass Extension Landscape, Nursery and Urban Forestry Resources:

[Guidelines for Planting Within the 100 Foot Buffer](#)
[Trees and Shrubs for Coastal Environments and Freshwater Resource Buffer Zones](#)

| Wetland Indicator Status | | |
|--|---------------------|---|
| OBL | Obligate | Almost always occur in wetlands |
| FACW | Facultative Wetland | Usually occurs in wetlands but may occur in non- wetlands |
| FAC | Facultative | Occurs in wetlands and non-wetlands |
| FACU | Facultative Upland | Usually occurs in non-wetlands, but may occur in wetlands |
| UPL | Upland | Almost never occurs in wetlands |
| Sunlight | | Soil Texture |
| Su | Full Sun | D Dry C Coarse (Sand) |
| PS | Part Shade | M Moist Medium (Loams) |
| Sh | Shade | W Wet F Fine (Silts, Clay) |
| *Tolerant of coastal exposure conditions | | |



| Scientific | Common | Wetland Indicator Status | Sunlight | Soil Moisture | Soil Texture | USDA Hardiness Zones | Type | Height | Spread | Plant as |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|------------|---------------|--------------|----------------------|-------------|----------|---------|---------------|
| <i>Ammophila breviligulata*</i> | American beach grass | UPL | Su | D | C, M | 4-8 | Rhizomatous | 1.5-3.5' | 6-10' | Dormant culms |
| <i>Andropogon gerardii</i> | Big bluestem | FACU | Su, PS | D, M, | C, M | 4-9 | Bunch | 2-8' | 2-3' | Plug/Seed |
| <i>Carex pennsylvanica</i> | Pennsylvania sedge | UPL | PS, Su | D, M | C, M | 3-8 | Bunch | 0.5-1.5' | 0.5-1' | Plug |
| <i>Deschampsia flexuosa</i> | Wavy hair grass | FACU | PS | D, M | C? | 4-7 | Bunch | 2-3' | 1-2' | Plug/Seed |
| <i>Dichanthelium clandestinum</i> | Deer-tongue | FACW | Su | D, M, W | C, M, F | 4-9 | Bunch | 1.5-4.5' | 1-3' | Seed |
| <i>Elymus canadensis</i> | Canada wildrye | FACU | Su, PS, Sh | D, M | C, M, F | 3-8 | Bunch | 2-5' | 2-3' | Seed |
| <i>Elymus virginicus</i> | Virginia wildrye | FACW | Su, PS, Sh | D, M | C, M, F | 3-8 | Bunch | 1.5-5' | 1-2' | Plug/Seed |
| <i>Fectusa rubra</i> | Red fescue | FACU | Su, PS | D, M, W | C, M, F | 2-7 | Rhizomatous | 0.5-2' | 0.25-1' | Plug/Seed |
| <i>Leymus mollis*</i> | American dune-grass | FACU | Su | D | C | 2-7 | Rhizomatous | 3-6' | 3-6' | Plug/Seed |
| <i>Panicum amarum*</i> | Bitter panic grass | FACU | Su | D, M | C, M | 5-9 | Rhizomatous | 3-6' | 2-3' | Plug/Seed |
| <i>Panicum virgatum</i> | Switchgrass | FAC | Su | D, M, W | C, M, F | 5-9 | Bunch | 3-6' | 2-3' | Plug/Seed |
| <i>Schizachyrium scoparium</i> | Little bluestem | FACU | Su | D | C, M, F | 3-9 | Bunch | 1-3' | 1-2' | Plug/Seed |
| <i>Sorghastrum nutans</i> | Indiangrass | FACU | Su | D, M | C, M, F | 4-9 | Bunch | 3-5' | 1-2' | Plug/Seed |
| <i>Spartina alterniflora</i> | Smooth cordgrass | OBL | Su | W | C, M, F | 4-10 | Bunch | 2-7' | 2-10' | Plug |
| <i>Spartina patens</i> | Saltmeadow cordgrass | FACW | Su | W | C, M, F | | Rhizomatous | 1-2' | | Plug |
| <i>Spartina pectinata</i> | Prairie cordgrass | FACW | Su | M, W | C, M | 4-9 | Rhizomatous | 3-8' | 4-7' | Plug/Seed |
| <i>Tripsacum dactyloides</i> | Eastern gamagrass | FAC | Su | M, W | C, M, F | 4-9 | Bunch | 4-8' | 4-6' | Seed |

| Scientific | Common | Wetland Indicator Status | Sunlight | Soil Moisture | Soil Texture | USDA Hardiness Zones | Bloom Time | Bloom Color | Height | Spread |
|------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------|---------------|--------------|----------------------|------------|---------------------|--------|-----------|
| Apocynum cannabinum | Indian hemp | FAC | Su | D, M | C, M | 4-9 | June-Aug | White | 2-4' | 1.5-2.5' |
| Asclepias incarnata | Swamp milkweed | OBL | Su | M, W | C, M, F | 3-7 | July-Aug. | Pink, white, purple | 2-5' | 2-3' |
| Asclepias tuberosa | Butterfly milkweed | UPL | Su | D, M | C, M | 4-9 | June-Aug. | Orange/yellow | 1-2.5' | 1-1.5' |
| Baptisia tinctoria | Wild indigo | FAC | Su | D | C, M | 3-9 | June-Aug. | Yellow | 1-3' | 1-3' |
| Chelone glabra | Turtlehead | OBL | Su, PS, Sh | M, W | C, M, F | 3-8 | Aug- Sept | White | 2-3' | 1.5 -2.5' |
| Coreopsis rosea | Pink tickseed | FACW | Su | M, W | C, M | 3-8 | June-Sept. | Pink | 1-2' | 1.5-2.5' |
| Desmodium canadense | Showy ticktrefoil | FAC | Su | M, W | C, M, F | 3-7 | July-Aug | Pink/Purple | 3-6' | 1-2' |
| Doellingeria umbellata | Flat top white aster | FACW | Su, PS | M, W | C, M | 3-8 | July-Sept | White | 2-4' | 2-3' |
| Eupatorium perfoliatum | Boneset | UPL | Su, PS , Sh | M, W | C, M, F | 3-8 | July-Sept. | White | 4-6' | 3-4' |
| Eurybia macrophylla | Bigleaf aster | FACU UPL | Su, PS | D, M | C, M | 3-8 | Aug-Sept | Purple | 3-5' | 2-4' |
| Eutrochium dubium | Coastal Joe-Pye weed | FACW | Su, PS | M, W | C, M | 3-9 | Aug.-Oct. | Pink | 3-5' | 2-4' |
| Lespedeza capitata | Bush clover | FACU | Su, PS | D, M | C, M | 4-8 | July-Sept | White | 2-4' | 1-2' |
| Liatris scariosa | New England Blazing-star | UPL | Su | D, M | C, M | 3-8 | Aug-Oct | Purple | 2-4' | 1-2' |
| Lobelia cardinalis | Cardinal flower | OBL | Su, PS | M, W | | 3-9 | June-Aug | Red | 1-4' | 1-2' |
| Lupinus perennis | Lupine | FACU | Su, PS | D, M | C, M | 3-9 | May-June | Blue | 1-3' | 1-1.5' |
| Mimulus ringens | Blue monkey-flower | OBL | Su, PS | M, W | | 3-8 | July-Aug | Light purple | 1-3' | 0.5-1' |

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|------------------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|----------|---------------|--------------|----------------------|------------|------------------|--------|----------|
| <i>Oenothera biennis</i> | Evening primrose | FACU | Su | D, M | C, M | 4-9 | June-Aug | Yellow | 2-5' | 2-3' |
| <i>Pycnanthemum virginianum</i> | Virginia mountain mint | FACW | Su, PS | M | M | 3-7 | July-Aug | White | 2-3' | 1-1.5' |
| <i>Senna hebecarpa</i> | Northern wild senna | FACW | Su, PS | D, M | C, M | 4-8 | July-Aug | Yellow | 4-6' | |
| <i>Solidago caesia</i> | Bluestem goldenrod | FACU | Su | D, M | C, M | 3-9 | Aug-Oct | Yellow | 1-4' | 1.5-3' |
| <i>Solidago canadensis</i> | Canada goldenrod | FACU | Su | D, M | C, M, F | 3-9 | Aug-Oct | Yellow | 3-6' | 4-5' |
| <i>Solidago juncea</i> | Early goldenrod | UPL | Su | D, M | C, M | 4-8 | July-Sept | Yellow | 2-5' | 2-3' |
| <i>Solidago nemoralis</i> | Gray goldenrod | UPL | Su | D, M | C, M, F | 4-8 | Aug-Oct | Yellow | 1-3' | 0.5-2' |
| <i>Solidago sempervirens*</i> | Seaside goldenrod | FACW | Su | D, M, W | C, M, F | 3-9 | Aug-Oct | Yellow | 3-6' | 1-2' |
| <i>Solidago speciosa</i> | Showy goldenrod | UPL | Su | D, M | C, M, F | 3-8 | Aug-Sept | Yellow | 2-5' | 2-3' |
| <i>Symphotrichum cordifolium</i> | Heart-leaved aster | UPL | Su, PS | D, M | M, F | 3-8 | Aug-Sept | Light blue | 2-5' | 1.5-2.0' |
| <i>Symphotrichum ericoides</i> | Heath-aster | FACU | Su | D, M | C, M, F | 3-10 | Aug-Oct | White | 1-3' | 1-1.5' |
| <i>Symphotrichum lateriflorum</i> | Calico aster | FAC | PS, Su | D, M, W | C, M | 3-9 | Aug-Sept | White/ Purple | 2-5' | 1-2' |
| <i>Symphotrichum novae-angliae</i> | New England aster | FACW | Su | M | M, F | 4-8 | Aug-Oct | Purple | 3-6' | 2-3' |
| <i>Symphotrichum novi-belgii</i> | New York aster | FACW | Su | M | M | 4-8 | Aug-Oct | Purple/ Pink | 3-5' | 1-2' |
| <i>Verbena hastata</i> | Blue vervain | FACW | Su, PS | M, W | M, F | 3-8 | June-Aug | Purple | 2-5' | 1-2.5' |
| <i>Verbena urticifolia</i> | White vervain | FAC | Su, PS | D, M | M, F | 3-8 | June-Aug | White | 3-5' | |
| <i>Zizia aurea</i> | Golden alexanders | FAC | Su, PS | M | C, M, F | 3-8 | June-July | Yellow | 1-3' | 1.5-2' |