

# Seed Share

at Main Library in Hillsborough



Seed Share makes seeds of wildflowers native and naturalized to NC available to everyone from February through May.

## WHAT'S A NATIVE PLANT?

A native plant is one that occurs naturally in an area because it evolved there. In the Americas, native plants are generally recognized as those that were here before European settlement. Plants that don't fit this description are considered *non-native*. Native plants can be trees, bushes, grasses, wildflowers, "weeds," and more.

## WHAT'S AN INVASIVE PLANT?

An invasive plant is a self sustaining plant that causes harm in an environment. Most invasive plants are non-native, though a native plants can also become invasive in certain rare circumstances. There are levels and categories of harm that an invasive plant can cause, but the damage can be widespread and threaten entire ecosystems.

Controlling and removing invasive plants is important, but doing so on a large scale isn't simply a matter of ripping them out of the ground or using herbicides. Invasive plant removal takes professional knowledge, training, an ecologically holistic approach, and extended management. Without those things, removing invasives can cause more harm to an environment than the invasives themselves.

## DOES BEING NON-NATIVE MEAN A PLANT IS INVASIVE?

No. There are many non-native plant categories, including ornamental plants, exotic plants, naturalized plants, cultivated versions of native plants, domesticated food crops, etc. Some are more likely to be potentially invasive than others. Only about 10% of non-native species are able to thrive and reproduce in a new ecosystem. Only about 1% becomes invasive, though even that small percentage can cause overwhelming and lasting harm on a broad scale. A non-native plant species that can thrive and reproduce without human aid but is not considered invasive is often referred to as a *naturalized* species.

## HOW CAN WE HELP STOP THE SPREAD OF INVASIVE PLANTS?

Being aware that invasive plants are a problem and being able to identify whether a plant is native to your area or not are the first two steps in combating the spread of invasive plants. USDA's National Invasive Species Information Center is a good starting point for ongoing learning about invasives as well as resources for identifying a plant as native, naturalized, or invasive. You can also take action by prioritizing (1st) native species and cultivars, then (2nd) naturalized plants in gardening and landscaping.

**Sources:** US Forest Service; National Invasive Species Information Center; University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources; Virginia Dept. of Conservation and Recreation; Florida Native Plant Society