



On The Farm

Newsletter of the Bucks County Farm Bureau

Serving Bucks County and Eastern Philadelphia County

Affiliated with Pennsylvania Farm Bureau & American

Farm Bureau Federation www.pfb.com Winter 2021



Herbaceous (non-woody) perennial plants add year-round interest to any landscape and are a popular choice of plants among gardeners. Though thousands of perennials are available, native perennials have a special role in the garden.

Why Natives? By definition, a native Pennsylvania plant is one that grew in Pennsylvania before the European settlers arrived, as opposed to exotic plants which came from other countries after that time period. Natives have many advantages. Because they evolved here, they are well-adapted to our climate and are generally easy to care for once they are established. Many native perennials like less fertile soil and require the addition of little or no fertilizer. Perhaps the most compelling reason to choose natives is to

preserve Pennsylvania's biodiversity. Development is rapidly reducing natural areas that shelter a wealth of our native plants; the landscapes that replace the natural areas consist mostly of lawns and exotic plants. Recent research from Dr. Doug Tallamy of the University of Delaware has determined that 90 percent of our native insects are specialists that feed on three or fewer families of plants. The insects rely on native plant hosts and cannot eat the exotic plants that have become common in our yards. A reduction of native insects means that birds have fewer insects to feed to their young, and that will lead to a reduction of bird species. In the next fifty years, what we plant in our yards will determine the kind of wildlife that can live in Pennsylvania. By planting natives, gardeners can help retain our natural history and the beauty and diversity of Penn's Woods.

Choosing Native Perennials

Though native plants have the home advantage, matching their needs to the growing site is still very important. The soil around many of our home sites is often removed prior to home construction and may not be replaced afterwards.

Determine your soil type--do you have heavy clay or silty loam? Is it high or low in organic matter? Does it tend to dry out quickly after a rainfall or does it hold moisture?

Other factors must also be considered. Is the site in sun or shade? How much room does the site allow for perennials to grow to their maximum size without crowding? Combining plants that grow well in the same natural habitats will help create healthy, vigorous plantings. If you do some homework and place plants in the proper environment, you will be rewarded with gardens that thrive with less care.

Note: Natives have many advantages. Because they evolved here, they are well-adapted to our climate and are generally easy to care for once they are established. Featured species: *Chrysogonum virginianum*.

Planting & Care

Spring, early summer, and fall are the best times to establish native perennials. Test your soil before planting and, if needed, amend the nutrients according to the soil test results. Remember that many natives do not require the addition of fertilizer and may do poorly in highly-fertilized soil. Plants that require moist soil high in organic matter will do well if compost is added. Cultivate the soil to a depth of eight to ten inches and incorporate any soil amendments.

Buying Native Perennials

Do **not** collect from the wild! Collecting plants from the wild causes the depletion of native species and disruption of the ecosystem. Be sure to purchase plants from a reputable source and purchase only nursery propagated native plants. Visit your favorite nursery or seek out native plant nurseries and sales sponsored by conservation societies. Native plants are becoming increasingly popular and easier to find. Your local Penn State Extension office can help.

Herbaceous (nonwoody) perennial plants add year round interest to any landscape and are a popular choice of plants among gardeners.

Source: Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center Mid-Atlantic Recommended Native Plant Species List, 2001

Suggested Plants for Pennsylvania Perennial Gardens—see list @ Penn State Extension website.

IF YOU HAVE NOT RENEWED YOUR 2021 FARM BUREAU MEMBERSHIP, PLEASE GO ON LINE AT www.pfb.com or contact Ken & Sandy Herstine, Membership Processors, at ksherstine@verizon.net or 215-795-2385.



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Member Benefit Spotlight

Save Big on Everyday Purchases with New My Deals Member Benefit

Pennsylvania Farm Bureau members now have access to the nation's largest, private discount network, offering exclusive savings on everything from routine purchases to vacations.

Savings from the new My Deals member benefit could easily pay back your annual PFB membership dues and then some!

The program provides deep discounts at more than 300,000 businesses, from local restaurants and retailers in your community to national brands such as Target.com, Disney and Advance Auto. You can save on everyday purchases such as grabbing a meal out, going to a movie, and shopping for clothes, household items, gifts and more. You can even save on special purchases such as vacations and cruises and amusement park tickets. You can also access grocery coupons totaling more than \$100 in savings.

To get started online, visit the My Deals savings portal at <https://pfb.enjoymydeals.com> and sign up using your PFB membership number.

You can also download the My Deals app for your mobile device. Log in with the email and password you used to sign up for the savings portal or click Setup Account if you haven't created an account yet. If prompted, enter program ID: 202139.

Offers can be accessed around the clock and used over and over again. Be sure to read the instructions for each offer. Most offers can be accessed through the savings portal. If using the mobile app, to redeem most of the offers, you simply need to show your phone or tablet to the cashier.

If there's a business in your town that you would love to see on the discount program, there's an option to recommend that they be included. If you have questions or concerns, you can call a dedicated hotline at **877.481.0366**.

Member Benefit Spotlight

Power Your Home with NRG Member Benefit This Winter

Keeping the lights on and staying warm this winter doesn't have to come with a high price tag. Your Pennsylvania Farm Bureau member benefits give you access to an exciting, special offer from NRG Home.

For potential savings on your electric bill and natural gas bills, turn to NRG, PFB's preferred energy supplier. By switching to NRG, you'll earn cash back while still receiving the same electric delivery service from your local utility company.

PFB members receive a \$50 sign-up bonus after two months as an NRG Home customer. And each year, you'll receive 5 percent cash back on the supply portion of your electric bill. Members can choose between a variable pricing plan or a 12-month fixed pricing plan.

As a PFB member, you can also earn bonus rewards for adding a natural gas account. Members who add a natural gas account will receive an additional \$25 cash back bonus and 5 percent cash back annually on the supply portion of their natural gas bill.

To learn more or to take advantage of this offer, visit www.pfb.com/NRG or call **1.855.500.8703** and mention offer code **PFB-7433-024** for the variable pricing offer or **PFB-7555-024** for the fixed pricing offer.

Editor's note: With the launch of the new PFB.com, we have started an online newsroom that enables us to report news about Farm Bureau, our advocacy and agriculture in general as it happens. Since the latest news will always be posted there, please feel free to use stories that appear in the PFB Newsroom if you'd like additional content or want to get the latest updates on a story between issues of Companion. You can access the newsroom at www.pfb.com/newsroom.



www.pfb.com/safetycontests

Sample Coloring Page

2021 Safety Contests—Theme “Lightning Can Strike More Than Once”

The **Safety Coloring Page Contest** is open to any youth ages **4 to 6** years old. Only the provided page will be accepted.

First Place Winner \$25.00 VISA gift card; Second Place Winner \$15.00 cash reward.

The **3-D Display Contest (7-9 & 10-12 years old)** First Place Winner \$50.00 VISA gift card; Second Place Winner \$25.00 cash reward.

The **Safety Video Contest w/Release Form (13-15 & 16-18 years old)**. First Place \$100.00 VISA gift card; Second Place winner \$50.00 cash reward.

These contests are **not limited** to children or grandchildren of Farm Bureau members, but they must be a Pennsylvania resident. Counties will select **ONE** winner from each age category.

As outlined in the contest rules, all applications are due into the **County Women's Leadership Committee (Glenda Wismer, Bucks County) by June 1, 2021.**

Absolutely no entries will be accepted after the deadline. Entries which do not include all necessary information will be automatically disqualified. **Only one entry will be accepted for each contest/age per county.**

First prize winners and parents will be invited to the PFB Annual Meeting on November 16, 2021. Winners will be announced in the **County Focus** and will be displayed at **Ag Progress Days** and **PFB Annual Meeting**.

2020 Jerry Harris Memorial Grant Recipients



Mark Scheetz, Janel Beer



Mark Scheetz, Mason Scheetz

Each recipient received \$2500.00 grant from Bucks County Farm Bureau to be used on their farm.

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A 1/3 portion of annual dues covers a one-year subscription to a PFB publication. Farmer members receive 11 issues of the Country Focus newspaper and "Friend of Farm Bureau" members receive 4 issues of the quarterly Positively Pennsylvania magazine. Applicants selecting "farmer", "part-time farmer" or "agribusiness" on the membership application are classified as "farmer" members. Should no box be checked and a farm name not be listed, member will be classified as "friend of farmer". Please contact your county Farm Bureau with questions regarding membership classification.