



Native Plant Program

Eastern North America has some of the richest floral diversity that can be found anywhere. However, due to habitat loss, invasive species, and the pressures of human encroachment, we are losing some of this diversity. It is our hope that through the Native Plant Program, our goals of conservation and education help preserve our native floral diversity.

In a collaborative effort with government agencies, nurseries, and conservation organizations we are working to develop conservation strategies regarding local native flora. In the Garden we highlight local native flora in several exhibits including the Passenger Pigeon Memorial landscape and Wolf Woods eastern woodlands. Plants are labeled for easy identification. Here are some great native plants to discover on your trip to the Zoo.

Passenger Pigeon Memorial – Native Plant Garden

Maidenhair Fern can be found in shady, moist habitats in our region. The delicate foliage grows to about 18”

Sweet Betsy Trillium grows thru southern Kentucky. Sweet Betsy blooms in mid April thru much of its range.

Blooming in late summer and early autumn, *Closed Gentian* grows in moist sites. The deep blue flowers are pollinated by bumblebees.

Catesby’s Trillium grows in the southern Appalachian forests. The flower, held just below the foliage, is white with a pink blush.

Big Leaf Magnolia has the largest leaves of any temperate tree. While this tree is endangered in Ohio, it can be commonly found in the Red River Gorge.

Wolf Woods North American Eastern Woodland

Kentucky Lady’s Slipper orchid has a large, soft yellow or ivory bloom in mid May. This orchid is not commonly found, and is of special concern.

Blooming in early spring, *Bluebells* can be commonly found in wooded areas in the region. This plant will go dormant by early summer.

The fiery red flowers of *Fire Pink* can be found from late spring thru the summer months. This native wild flower will grow in both sun and shade.

The icon of native wildflowers, the *Large Flowered Trillium* blooms in mid April. Found throughout the region, this great native grows on wooded areas.

Blooming in late spring, the bright red flowers of *Indian Pink* grace the woodlands. Endangered in Indiana, Indian Pink can be found in parts of southern and western Kentucky.