

## WILLIAMSBURG BOTANICAL GARDEN

Since 2000, the Williamsburg Botanical Garden, a not-for-profit corporation, has been working to bring a world-class botanical garden to our area. Our vision is “to create and sustain a garden of wonder and discovery, beauty and inspiration.” The Ellipse Garden is the first step toward establishing a permanent botanical garden and arboretum for residents and visitors.

From planning to planting, help is needed to make this community garden grow. The efforts of many people, civic groups, organizations, and businesses have blossomed into the beginning garden you see around you. We hope you will join us by providing financial gifts, in-kind donations of supplies and materials, and/or volunteer labor.

Please make this community garden your home by your participation. For more information, please contact: Paul Tubach, WBG Board Chairman at 757.259.5363



### THE ELLIPSE GARDEN

Welcome to the Ellipse Garden, sponsored by the Williamsburg Botanical Garden and James City County. Please stroll along the pathways and enjoy plant and wildlife habitat emphasizing gardening with native plants. Begun in October 2005, this miniature landscape creates a web of woodlands, meadows, and wetlands and offers glimpses of Virginia’s natural environment. The land around you is alive with plants and animals—growing, breathing, blooming, creeping, flying and sharing this fragile planet with you. Our community garden—yours and mine—illuminates this intricate and fascinating world. Walk softly and carefully as all this life needs our appreciation, nurture and respect!

*What is a weed? A plant whose virtues have not yet been discovered.”*

*--Ralph Waldo Emerson*

### WHY NATIVE PLANTS?

Our region is rich in native species that evolved in the Virginia coastal plain, and many gardeners are enthusiastic about growing plants that originate locally and preserve our natural heritage.

Growing native plants benefits you and the environment. Native plants are already adapted to local conditions and usually need less fertilizers, pesticides, and watering than other species. Also, native plants offer familiar food and shelter for a large variety of wildlife. Songbirds, hummingbirds, and butterflies flourish amidst the native flora of Virginia.

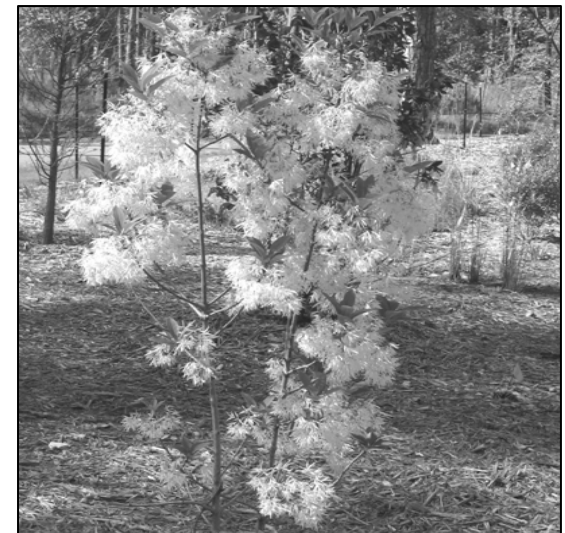
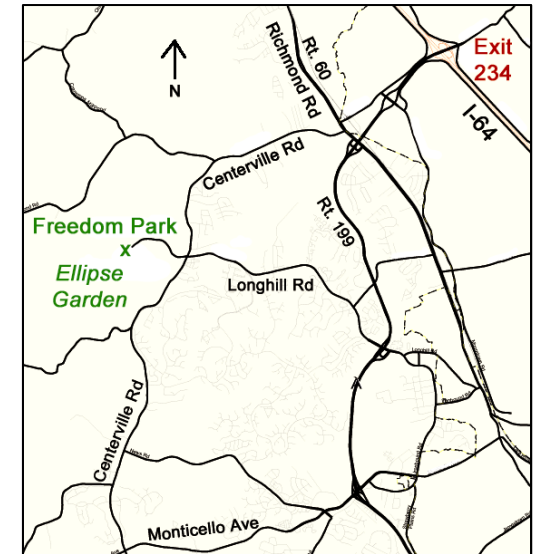
Development is removing forests and wetlands that support plant diversity in our area. Planting native species is a quiet statement on the importance of biodiversity for our planet.

Nurseries are a good source for vigorous, propagated native plants. Collecting plants in the wild is not recommended because it destroys wild areas, threatens conservation efforts, and the plants collected are highly stressed and less likely to survive.

For more information on growing native plants and finding sources for native plants:

[www.vnps.org](http://www.vnps.org)    [www.vnps.org/nurslist.htm](http://www.vnps.org/nurslist.htm)    [www.dcr.state.va.us/dnh/native.htm](http://www.dcr.state.va.us/dnh/native.htm)

[www.williamsburgbotanicalgarden.org](http://www.williamsburgbotanicalgarden.org)



## WOODLAND AND PERENNIALS

Trees, shrubs and perennials work together to create a seasonal feast of sun, shade, color, and textures that renew every year.

In the spring, look for Virginia Bluebells, Spring Beauty, Celandine Poppy, Trillium, Redbud, Dogwood and an emerging canopy of leaves on the deciduous trees and shrubs. Peek around bushes for Lady Slippers and Foam-flowers.

The summer brings a crowd of color—yellow Sundrops, orange Butterfly Weed, pink Coneflowers, white Beard-tongue, blue Monkshood, and much more!

As autumn approaches the garden Asters, eastern Coneflowers, and Cardinal -flowers blaze with color. Then leaves fall, providing protection and preserving moisture for the winter months.

## GRASSLANDS

In the past, grassland communities were more common along the Virginia coast due to fires from lightning and the Native American custom of using fire to clear land for agriculture and to improve habitat for game.

Here you will find Bluestem, Indian Grass, River Oats and Switchgrass.

Joining the grassland community are many wildflower species such as Black-eyed Susan, Asters, Milkweeds, and Butterfly Weed.

Birds, turtles, and frogs find food, homes, and breeding places in wet grassland areas.



## HERBS

Herbs can be defined broadly as plants valued for their medicinal, savory or aromatic qualities.

The savory uses of Sage, Thyme, Mint, and Oregano were as important in the 18th century kitchen as they are today. Colonists brought herbs from their native lands to flavor and preserve their familiar cuisines.

Medicinal herbs like Beebalm, Feverfew and Coneflower provided cures or relief from common illnesses.

## WILDFLOWER MEADOW

A wildflower meadow typically combines perennial flowers and grasses in an open sunny location. The meadow becomes a rich tapestry of hues and textures, changing as the season progresses.

Insect life is particularly active in the meadow—feeding, pollinating, breeding, and nurturing their communities. The meadow is a good example of the interdependency of plant and animal life.

Our meadow features Blazing Star, Tickseed, Beebalm and Goldenrods, where many butterflies such as Swallowtails, Monarchs and Fritillaries will be seen imbibing nourishing nectar.