

# Edible wild Berries

Early summer is a great time to search for wild berries throughout Virginia. Several species of native and non-native wild berries are prevalent throughout different parts of the state. Here are some of the most common edible berries found in the arboretum.



Black Raspberry

**Black Raspberry** (*Rubus occidentalis*) - the berries on this native plant ripen in mid to late June, and are a dark purple, nearly black color when fully ripe. They grow in forests and streambanks and are some of the sweetest native wild berries.



Japanese Bramble

**Pennsylvania Blackberry** (*Rubus pensilvanicus*) - the canes of this wild blackberry can grow up to 6 feet tall with sharp thorns. They prefer open spaces, and the berries can vary from very tart to mild and sweet.

**Japanese Bramble** (*Rubus parvifolius*) - introduced to the arboretum in the 1940s, this plant has escaped and become locally invasive. It often creates dense colonies in open spaces, crowding out other plants. Its berries are edible, have a mild flavor, and remain red when ripe.

**Serviceberry** (*Amelanchier arborea*) - This tree yields exceptionally sweet berries in mid-June which taste somewhat like cherries or blueberries. The berries often grow high in the branches and are favorite foods of songbirds.



Serviceberry

**Wild Strawberry** (*Fragaria virginiana*) - Cultivated strawberries are a cross between this native wild strawberry and a species of strawberry from Chile. Though smaller than their cultivated cousins, wild strawberries are sweet. They grow along the ground and are quickly eaten up by rabbits and groundhogs.

**Mulberries** (*Morus rubra* and *M. alba*) - Mulberries are stout trees with very large and sweet fruits. The berries look like large blackberries and change from white to dark purple as they ripen. The Red mulberry tree is native to Virginia while the white mulberry is introduced and has naturalized.

Please appreciate our fruit-bearing plants, but for your safety and the health of the collection we ask that you only forage with guidance and permission from arboretum staff.



## YOUR SUPPORT MATTERS

The Native Plant Trail is supported by the Foundation of the State Arboretum. Become a member of FOSA and help preserve Virginia's Native Plants. Other benefits include discounts at other gardens across the country. Visit our website [blandy.virginia.edu](http://blandy.virginia.edu) and click on the "Support" tab for more information.

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# A Guide to the Native Plant Trail

The State Arboretum of Virginia  
at the University of Virginia's  
Blandy Experimental Farm

# Exploring the *Nancy Larrick Crosby* Native Plant Trail

The Native plant trail is a celebration of Virginia's native plants. Follow the trail through three unique habitats - a woodland, meadow, and a wetland. Each habitat features plants that showcase the beauty and diversity of our state's flora.

The gardens and landscapes in this area are intentionally left naturalistic and 'wild' feeling. While this area is managed and new native plants are added periodically, we also try to leave space for natural processes to function. Important habitat features like dead stems, fallen leaves and decomposing logs are left year-round to support wildlife. This guide provides information about many native plants along the trail.

## Early Summer flourishes

Early- to mid-summer is a vibrant time in the fields and forests of Virginia. Leaves have reached their full size and the world is covered in a rich, vigorous greenery.

Interspersed throughout the sometimes impenetrable wall of green are hundreds of species of wildflowers, each putting on a unique show of vivid color and form. The varied shapes and sizes of flowers reflect the varied types of pollinators active during this busy time of year.

Follow the pollinators' lead and explore plants on the trail, taking time to appreciate both flowers and the varying textures of greenery.



Foxglove Penstemon

**Black Cohosh** (*Actaea racemosa*) - this plant has traditionally been used by various Native American nations to treat menstrual issues and fever and it remains a popular herbal remedy today.

**Spiderwort** (*Tradescantia virginiana*) - the blue-purple flowers of this plant bloom in the morning, but close up in the afternoon during sunny days. They flower for 1-2 months.

**Wild Bee Balm** (*Monarda fistulosa*) - This plant is a preferred nectar and pollen source for bumblebees. Songbirds will eat seeds from the dead flowerheads well into the winter.

## Warm Season Grasses

The native warm season grasses that dominate the meadow begin growing in earnest in June, their first flowers typically appearing in July. These grasses are adapted to warm weather, full sun, and drought, and can sometimes reach heights of up to 7 feet tall.

**Big bluestem** is the most common grass in the meadow and has a unique 'turkey foot' inflorescence atop its tall stems. **Indian grass** is common as well, with a broader, feather duster-like inflorescence. **Switchgrass** is another tall grass that grows in dense clusters.

Smaller warm season grasses include **little bluestem**, **broomsedge**, and **sideoats grama**, which are found sporadically in the meadow.



Big Bluestem



Indian Grass

**Foxglove Penstemon** (*Penstemon digitalis*) - The wide, tube-like flowers are a prized nectar source for bumblebees, mason bees, miner bees, honey bees, and sweat bees. The similar *Penstemon laevigatus* also grows on the trail.

**Horse Nettle** (*Solanum carolinense*) - Researchers here at Blandy have discovered that this thorny, fast-growing native plant is one of the most important pollen sources for native bumblebees.

**Common Milkweed** (*Asclepias syriaca*) - Milkweeds are the only host plants for monarch butterfly caterpillars. They also host many more insects not found on any other plant including milkweed beetles, milkweed bugs, and milkweed tussock moths.

**Rosepink** (*Sabatia angularis*) - Short-lined chocolate moth caterpillars can only eat rosepink. Various butterflies and long-tongued bees visit the flowers for nectar.

**Pasture Rose** (*Rosa carolina*) - A wild rose bush, the fruits of this plant (hips) are preferred food for many bird species that nest in the wetlands nearby.

**Prickly Pear** (*Opuntia humifusa*) - This native cactus has striking flowers with stamens that 'close up' when touched. This unique adaptation makes sure any visiting bees are thoroughly covered in the plant's pollen, increasing pollination success.

**Thimbleweed** (*Anemone virginiana*) - The striking flowers of this small woodland plant grow on tall stalks and attract various species of small sweat bees.

**Rattlesnake Master** (*Eryngium yuccifolium*) - this plant's unusual name refers to its historical use by several Indigenous nations as a rattlesnake antivenom.

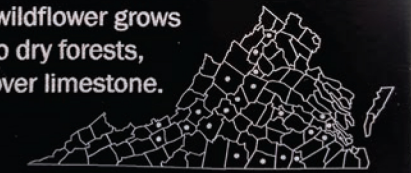
## What's in a sign?

*Use the signs along the trail to locate plants, and refer to this guide for more information about many of them.*

Common name and scientific name

**Heart-Leaf Skullcap**  
*Scutellaria ovata*

This annual wildflower grows in moist to dry forests, especially over limestone.



Description of plant form, habitat and growing conditions.

Map of wild distribution in Virginia. Counties with dots indicate where this plant has been recorded growing in the wild.