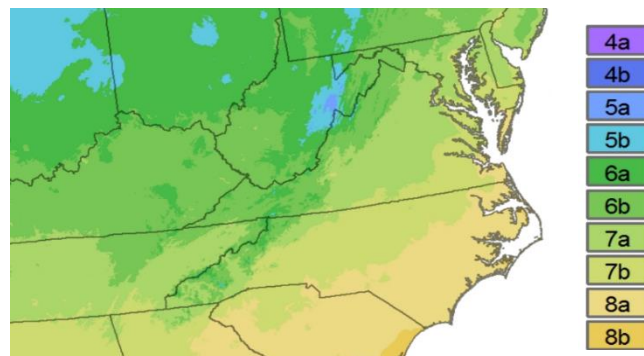


How Can We Promote Native Species?

Each of us exist as a part of our local ecosystem. Whether we have a sprawling yard or planter boxes, we can all positively impact the plant species native to our homes. The primary method for promoting these species is straightforward: plant these species within their native range! However, it can be hard to know which plants are considered native and which plants are best for our individual situations. We have included a few tips and resources below to help answer those exact questions!

- **Plant species within their native range.** Many local organizations are able to provide in-depth details about which plants are native to your area. For example, [here is a short list](#) of recommended native species for Maryland. It is also important to identify the plant hardiness zones for any native species you plan to use. Many plants have specified hardiness zones, like those shown in the image below. Multiple zones can exist across the same state, meaning slightly different plants are ideal for each area.



A map showing the USDA Plant Hardiness Zones

- **Purchase native species from local sellers.** Some species of plants have evolved to cover a very large natural range. If a plant is moved to a drastically different climate, even if that plant is a native species to the new area, it may struggle to survive. For example, red maple trees are native across much of the eastern U.S. and into Canada.¹ A red maple seedling that is from Florida may struggle to survive a Canadian winter. Likewise, a red maple seedling from the northeastern U.S. may struggle to survive a summer in the southeastern U.S. Purchasing local plants also reduces greenhouse gas emissions associated with transportation.
- **Adapt your native plant species to your specific circumstances.** Plants have many needs from the environment, such as water, soil and sunlight. Finding native plants that fit the conditions of your planting area is crucial for their survival.

- **Create a no-mow area in your yard.** Native plants have evolved over thousands of years without the need for human maintenance. Creating a no-mow area with native plants will provide food and shelter for local animals and will reduce the amount of gardening required for your yard.



- **Replace invasive species and non-native species that require extra care.** [Invasive species](#) will outcompete many native species if left unchecked. Invasive species also typically provide fewer benefits for the local ecosystem and reduce biodiversity. Non-native species, while less harmful to native species, often require extra care since they have not evolved to survive in this climate (i.e., fertilizer, weed control, pest control, etc.). Both invasive and non-native species can be replaced with native species to benefit the local ecosystem.