

HB 836 - Maryland Native Plants Program

Sponsor: Senator Benjamin Brooks

Garden commentary by Margie Brassil,
Legislative Director to Delegate Dana Stein

Native Garden in Spring: One view of a front yard native garden planted in 2010.



Native Garden in July: A different view of the same front yard garden, planted in 2010.



Close-up view of flowers in Slide 3. A slightly blurry closeup of the Echinacea in slide 3, with a commercial description of the plant. I bought it because it looked great with the Yarrow and Black-Eyed Susan and because of the description—I wanted pollinator friendly plants. However, as I’ve since learned, “Hot Papaya” is an Echinacea hybrid that produces no seeds for birds to eat, and I haven’t seen a single bee or butterfly on the plant in the 12 years I’ve had it. It’s just pretty.



Echinacea “*Hot Papaya*”

- Beneficial for Pollinators
- Attracts Butterflies
- Good for Cut Flowers
- Deer Resistant
- Fragrant
- Long-Blooming
- Winter Interest

The photo on the left is another closeup from Slide 3 showing Terracotta Yarrow. Turns out, it is also not a Maryland native; however, it does attract bees. On the right is a photo of Common Yarrow—not from my garden—which I’ve seen on some lists as being native to Maryland. On the other hand, the University of Maryland Extension (UME) classifies it as a weed.



Achillea millifolium “Terra Cotta”
Terracotta Yarrow

The parent species, common yarrow, is native to temperate regions of Eurasia and is naturalized in North America.



Achillea millefolium
Common Yarrow
Considered native to Maryland in some lists.
UME lists it as “a perennial broadleaf weed”

CONCLUSION:

Gardeners need a reliable list of Maryland Native Plants

Thirteen years ago, there were no good lists of what is or isn't native in Maryland. I thought since Echinacea was a native plant, the Hot Papaya version would be fine.

Today, there are lists of native plants on a variety of websites, but they aren't necessarily helpful or complete, nor are all plants on these lists available to purchase in a local Maryland nursery.

Many of my garden plants were bought online from out-of-state nurseries because it was just so difficult to find them in Maryland.

I would much rather have bought them locally.