

**Native American Garden Plants**  
**Teaching Herb Garden**  
**The New England Unit of The Herb Society of America**

**Note: The Herb Society of America does not advise on the medicinal uses of herbs.** The information provided here is intended to help educate visitors to the garden about the many uses of herbs. Although this list was compiled in 2003, most of the plants are still being grown in the garden. Plants found not to be native, have been moved to other beds.

Number	Common Name	Latin Name		Comments
1	Wild Strawberry	Fragaria vesca	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mild astringent, diuretic. Used for eczema, intestinal malfunctions such as diarrhea, dysentery, affectations of the urinary organs. Will also prevent night sweats, acting as a general tonic. Tea used as a gargle will strengthen gums. IHONA, p 264</li> <li>• Indians used leaf for nerve tonic, bladder and kidney ailments, jaundice, scurvy, diarrhea, stomachaches, gout. Considered slightly astringent. Fresh leaf tea used for sore throats, Berries eaten for scurvy, gout. Root tea traditionally used to treat gonorrhea, stomach and lung ailments, irregular menses, diuretic. PFGMP, p 38</li> </ul>	P. ground cover Extremely fragrant flower, small sweet fruit in June, sun
2	Wintergreen	Gaultheria procumbens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Potawatami, Menominees and Ojibwas used tea from the leaves for rheumatism. Potawatomis used tea for fevers and lumbago. Indians ate wintergreen berries “esteeming them as very balsamic and invigorating or the stomach”. Also used for asthma by Indian tribes. Considered stimulant, aromatic, astringent and anodyne and was used for dysentery, amenorrhea, the promotion of mammary secretions, toothache and as a flavoring agent. AIM ref p 394-5</li> </ul>	Evergreen creeping shrublet, full sun to shade, moist, acid soil, red berries

3	True Solomon's Seal	<i>Polygonatum biflorum</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It was called "reviver" by the Menomini and Fox because the smoke of the root heated over coals was funneled into the nostrils of an unconscious patient to revive him. Native from Conn. To Ont., Nebr., s. to Fla., Tex., NHG ref.</li> <li>• Used in a decoction of wintergreen, wild indigo, clears vision, spikenard root, moosewood and boneset by the Penobscots for gonorrhea. AIM ref p 213</li> </ul>	P., 12-18", grows in colonies, small white/greenish flowers in spring, blueish/black berries Tall perennial, propagated by division.
4	Bog Rosemary	<i>Andromeda glaucophylla</i>		
5	American Ginseng	<i>Panax quinquefolius</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Penobscot women drank a tea of the root, believing it would increase fertility. Regarded as a panacea herb, it never attained the mystique with the Native Americans that it did with the people of the Orient. Native from Que. To Minn., s. to Ga., Okls. Also Medicinal. Caution" Large doses are said to raise blood pressure. NHG ref.</li> </ul>	P., 12", moist, rich, slightly acidic soil, shade Low to medium perennial, propagated by stratified seed.
6	Self Heal	<i>Prunella vulgaris</i>	Not native	
7	Bird's Foot Violet	<i>Viola pedata</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Considered a useful expectorant and lubricating medicine in pulmonary complaints and given in syrup or decoction. AIM ref p 387</li> </ul>	
8	Foamflower	<i>Tiarella cordifolia</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A tea of the root was used as a mouthwash by the Cherokee to remove the white coating of the tongue. The Malecite gave this tea to children with diarrhea. Native from Nov. Sc., Appalachian Mountains to Ga., Ala. NHG ref.</li> </ul>	Medium perennial, propagated by division or seed.
9	Horsetail	<i>Equisetum arvense</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diuretic, astringent, Indians and Mexicans used the stems for scouring pots. Stems used as a diuretic in kidney and dropsical disorders. Strengthens heart and lungs. IHONA, p 157</li> </ul>	

10	Wild Ginger	Asarum canadense	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Canadian Indians used for palpitations of the heart. Indians west of the Mississippi used it an emmenagogue, and sometimes taken as an abortive.. Taken into the stomach it is apt to produce pyrosis, or the water brash, and nausea. The Indians apply it externally to recent wounds to prevent their bleeding. Montagnais used it for general medicinal purposes. Meskwakis used it for throat trouble, for earache and sore ears and in combination for lung trouble as well as stomach cramps. AIM ref p 391</li> <li>• The Chippewa used it to season food and chewed the root to relieve indigestion. The Iroquois used the roots to preserve meats. Native from New Bruns., s. to N.E., Mo. NHG ref.</li> </ul>	<p>P. ground cover, humusy soil in full shade, needs moisture, root used like ginger.</p> <p>Deciduous stemless perennial, propagated by division or seed.</p>
11	Jack in the Pulpit	Arisaema triphyllum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Potawatomi made the acrid, toxic root of this plant edible by steaming, this removing injurious calcium oxalates that prick the mucous membranes like needles. A tactic once practiced by the Meskwaki when fighting the Sioux was to abandon vessels of meet cooked with the fresh root, expecting their foes to eat the food and become immobilized by excruciating pain. Native from New Bruns. And Nov. Sc. To Minn., s. to Fla., Tex. The whole plant is injurious. NHG ref.</li> <li>• Osage and Shawnee used in decoctions for coughs and intermittent fevers. Pawnee dusted powdered root on top of head and on temples for headache. Meskwaki used chopped root for snakebite and missed it with plant gall for insomnia. Ojibwa and Minominees used it for treating sore eyes. AIM ref page 322</li> </ul>	<p>Medium perennial, propagated by seed or offsets.</p>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Powdered decoction used by Hopi indicated as: Used to “excite temporary sterility” for women. AIM p.243</li> </ul>	
12	Columbine	<i>Aquilegia canadensis</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The seeds were smoked with tobacco as a love charm. The Meskwaki chewed the root for stomach and bowel troubles. Native from Nov. Sc. To Fla., west to Minn., Tenn.. NHG ref</li> </ul>	Medium perennial, propagated by seed or division.
13	Liverwort	<i>Hepatica acutiloba</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>H. triloba</i> used by Potawatomis for a sweet tasting tea for vertigo. <i>H. acutiloba</i> was used by the Meskwakis for deformities like twisted mouth or cross eyes. A root tea was taken internally and used externally as a wash. The Menominees used this species with maidenhair roots in various female disorders, especially leucorrhea. The Cherokees used this plant for coughs either in tea or by chewing the root. AIM ref p. 317</li> </ul>	Planted 03
14	False Solomon’s Seal	<i>Smilacina racemosa</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Ojibwe ate the root after boiling it in lye water. Smoke from the burning root was used by the Meskwaki to revive unconscious patients, to hush a crying child, or to cast spells. Native to N. Amer. NHG ref.</li> <li>• Nevada Indians used root infusion to regulate menstrual disorders, conception prevented by tea of leaves. AIM ref p 244</li> </ul>	Tall perennial, propagated by division.
15	False Indigo	<i>Baptisia australis</i>	<p><i>B. tinctoria</i> uses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creek boiled roots and used decoction externally and internally to children who seemed drowsy and lifeless preceding possible illness. Mohegans steeped root and used it to bathe cuts and wounds. Meskwakis used it in combinations as emetic, for treatment of eczema, wounds, sores, snakebite and catarrh. AIM ref p. 323</li> </ul>	Native Uses of <i>B. leucantha</i> and <i>B. tinctoria</i> P., 3-4’, gray-green foliage, blue flowers; full sun, tolerates dry soil

16	Bloodroot	<i>Sanguinaria canadensis</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The rhizome furnished a very important orange-red dye used to paint the faces of Meskwaki warriors and to dye the rush mats made by the women. For the Narragansetts this root was a treasured cosmetic with insecticidal value. Native to e. N. Amer. Caution: Toxic NHG Ref</li> </ul>	Low to medium rhizomatous weedland perennial, propagated by seed or division” self-sows readily.
17	Bearberry	<i>Arctostaphylos uva-ursi</i> 'Massachusetts'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This is another of the kinnikinnicks (tobacco additives) of the Native Americans. Native to Eur., n. Asia, N. American (also Dye and Medicinal uses). Contains toxic substances. NHG. Ref.</li> <li>Astringent, diuretic, tonic. Used to treat inflammations of the urinary track and for diabetes, chronic diarrhea, dysentery, profuse menstruation, piles, spleen, liver and the pancreas. IHONA, p 29</li> </ul>	Low prostrate and creeping evergreen shrub, propagated by seed, cuttings, layering, budding or grafting. The common name reflects the fondness bears have for the fruit.
18	Berggarten sage	<i>Salvia officinalis</i>	Sage is native to southern Europe	<b>Note: Used as an edging plant throughout the garden.</b>
19	Hardy Prickly Pear	<i>Opuntia vulgaris</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The fruit, raw or cooked, was eaten by the Native Americans of the Great Plains after the spines were scorched off in a hot fire. It was dried for winter use. Occasionally the succulent pads were also used as food. The peeled pads were used for poultices on wounds. Native from Mass. To Mont., s. to Fla., e. Tex.. NHG ref.</li> <li>In cases of difficult birth caused by a malpositioned fetus, the Aztecs peeled the leaves, ground them up and gave in water as a drink. AIM p 234</li> </ul>	Spreading cactus to 8”, hardy zone 4, dry, sandy soil, full sun; yellow flowers <i>Opuntia humifusa</i> : Prostrate or spreading perennial, propagated by seed or joints.
20	Phlox	<i>Phlox paniculata</i>		
21	Blackberry Lily	<i>Belamcanda chinensis</i>	Not native	<b>Moved to Medicinal garden bed.</b>
22	Anise Hyssop	<i>Agastache foeniculum</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Leaf tea used for fevers, colds, coughs, induces sweating, strengthens weak heart. PFGMP, p 190</li> </ul>	

23	Jerusalem Artichoke	Helianthus tuberosus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Indians drank leaf and stalk tea or ate flowers to treat rheumatism. Folk use has suggested that the edible tubers, which contain insulin, may aid in treating diabetes. PFGMP, p 132</li> </ul>	
24	Canadian Violets	Viola canadensis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ojibwas used a decoction of the roots for pains in the region of the bladder. AIM ref p 387.</li> </ul>	
25	Bee Balm – Stones Throw	Monarda didyma	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monarda didyma, Oswego tea. Indians used leaf tea for colic, gas, colds, fevers, stomach aches, nosebleeds, insomnia, heart troubles, measles and to induce sweating. Poultice used for headaches. PFGMP, p 162</li> </ul>	
26	Black Eyed Susan	Rudbeckia hirta L.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>American Indians used root tea for worms, colds; external wash for sores, snakebites, swelling, root juice for earaches.</li> </ul>	
27	Cone Flower	Echinacea pupurea	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It was one of the most important medicinal plants of the Plains Indians as its root was the universal antidote for snakebite and all kinds of venomous bites and stings. Native from Ohio to Iowa, s. to La., Ga. NHG ref</li> </ul>	P. to 3', deep loamy soil. Full sun, attracts butterflies, 1 planted 03
28	Beach Plum	Prunus maritima	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Berries for jams and jellies</li> </ul>	Shrub to 6' good soil binder, white flowers;
29	Bayberry	Myrica pensylvanica	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Astringent, stimulant, tonic. General and special stimulant to the mucous membranes without increasing a rise in temperature, aid for digestion, nutrition and blood building. Used to treat uterine hemorrhage. Used for bathing skin ulcers, sores, boils, carbuncles. IHONA, p 29</li> </ul>	Shrub to 8'; poor soil; semi-evergreen, grayish-white berries, boil for wax
30	Jacob's Ladder	Polemonium caeruleum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The roots were used as an emetic and physic by the Meskwaki of Wisconsin, who called the plant "fine hair woman medicine". Native from New Hamp. To Ga., w. to Minn., Okls., Ala. NHG ref.</li> </ul>	Planted 03 Medium perennial, propagated by division or seed sown in fall.

31	Common Sweetshrub, Carolina Allspice	<i>Calycanthus floridus</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cherokees used root or bark tea as strong emetic, diuretic for kidney and bladder ailments. Cold tea used as eye drops for failing eyesight. PFGMP, p 242</li> </ul>	
32		<i>Epimedium sp.</i>	Not native	
33	Trumpet Weed	<i>Eupatorium fistulosum</i>		Leaves Different color than 43 which is smaller/ younger
34	Great Blue Lobelia	<i>Lobelia syphilitica</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In eighteenth century Europe this plant had a reputation as a remedy for syphilis because Native Americans reportedly used the roots to achieve miraculous cures. Native from Me. To S. Dak., s. to N.C., Miss., Kans. Caution: The whole plant is poisonous. NHG ref.</li> </ul>	Medium to tall perennial, propagated by seed, cuttings or division.
35	Black Cohosh	<i>Cimicifuga racemosa</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Other common names for this plant were squawroot and snakeroot, indicating its use by Native Americans as a parturient and for treatment of snakebite. Native from Mass. To Ont., s. to Ga., Tenn, Mo.. Also medicinal. Tincture should be avoided during pregnancy. NHG ref.</li> </ul>	Planted 03 Tall perennial, propagated by seed, layering or division.
36	Goldenseal	<i>Hydrastis canadensis</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Cherokee applied a decoction of the rhizomes and roots for skin diseases and sore eyes. The Iroquois treated liver and heart problems with goldenseal. The bright yellow roots provided a dye. Mixed with bear grease it was an insect repellent. Native from Vt. To Minn., s. to GA., Ala. Caution” Should be avoided during pregnancy”. NHG ref</li> </ul>	Planted 03 Low to medium perennial, propagated by seed or division.
37	Blue Cohosh	<i>Caulophyllum thalictroides</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It was also called squawroot and papoose root because of its use by north-central tribes to assure quick delivery and to ease menstrual cramps. Native from N. Bruns. To S.C., Mo. Caution: the berries and roots are cytotoxic.</li> </ul>	Planted 03 Medium to tall rhizomatous perennial, probated by seed or division.

38	Sea Lavender	Limonium carolinianum		
39	Sweet Fern	Comptonia peregrina	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The leaves of this fragrant shrub were thrown on fires by the Potawatomi of Michigan to create a smudge to deter mosquitoes. The Ojibwe used the leaves for a tea to cure stomach cramps. Native from Nov. Sc., to N.C., Ind., Mich. NHG ref.</li> </ul>	Low to medium shrub, propagated by seed, layering or division.
40				
41				
42	Cardinal Flower	Lobelia cardinalis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>L. cardinalis was used by the Indians as an anthelmintic. AIM p 332</li> </ul>	
43	Joe Pye Weed	Eupatorium fistulosum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Menomini used a decoction of the root to treat the genitourinary tract. The Potawatomi made a poultice of fresh leaves to treat burns, and the Ojibwe bathed babies in a solution of the root to strengthen them. Native to e. N. Amer. NHG ref.</li> <li>Iroquois and Cherokees used it as a diuretic. AIM p 329</li> </ul>	Planted 03 Tall perennial, propagated by seed or division.
44	Cardinal Flower	Lobelia cardinalis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Meskwaki pulverized the dried plant and threw this “dust” into the grave at the end of a funeral. Native from New Bruns. To Min., s. to Fla., e. Tex. Caution: The whole plant is poisonous.</li> </ul>	Tall, short-lived perennial, propagated by seed, cuttings or division.
45				
46	Blue Flag Iris	Iris versicolor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Meskwaki, Ojibwe and Montagnai valued the rhizome for making poltices for swellings, sores and pain. Native from e. Can., s. to Penn., Minn. Caution: Considered poisonous. NHG ref.</li> </ul>	Tall perennial, propagated by division of rhizome or by seed.

47	Boneset	Eupatorium perfoliatum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A tea of the leaves was considered a tonic and cure for colds and fevers by the northern Iroquois. Native to e. N. Amer. Also Medicinal. Caution: May damage the liver. NHG Ref</li> </ul>	Planted 03 Tall perennial, propagated by division or seed
48	Four Leaf/Whorled Wild Yam	Discorea quaternata	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meskwaki used the root to ease pains of childbirth (D. villosa) AIM ref p. 392</li> </ul>	Planted 03
49	Labrador Tea	Ledum groenlandicum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Used by Indians for stimulant, diuretic and emetic effects. AIM ref p 169</li> <li>• Ledum tea used by the Montagnais to “purify the blood” and for chills. AIM ref p 65</li> </ul>	Planted 03
50	Celandine Poppy	Stylophorum diphyllum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cathartic, Diuretic, diaphoretic, expectorant, purgative, vulnerary, alternative. Used in decoctions or tinctures for hepatic affectations or liver complaints. Has a special influence on the spleen. It is often used in dropsy and skin complaints. Externally for progressive spreading ulcers, malignant running sores and other spreading skin conditions such as tetter, ringworm or cancers. The fresh juice rubbed on warts will take them away. IHONA, p 74</li> </ul>	Planted 03

Information compiled and researched by Winnie Nelson, a member of The New England Unit of The Herb Society of America, 9/21/03  
Note: minor edits; replaced existing web file with .pdf version. 12.07 rkh