

Native Plants for Tree Lawns: Sustainable Sidewalk Landscaping

Plantings in tree lawns require species that can thrive in **urban environments** where conditions are often challenging, including **compacted soils**, **limited root space**, **salt exposure**, **pollution**, and **drought**. Taking these factors into consideration, we also selected plants that will **complement the Brookline tree canopy** while providing **visual interest**, **pollinator support**, habitat connectivity, and **resilience** to the often harsh conditions of streetscapes.

These plants will allow us to enhance the ecological value and biodiversity of our neighborhoods by creating sustainable and attractive landscapes in the tree lawns around our sidewalk trees.

Plant	Water and Exposure	Height and Spacing	Seasonal Interest	Pollinators Supported
Wild Ginger (<i>Asarum canadense</i>)	Moist, well-drained soil Part sun to full shade (thrives under tree canopies)	1' high 1-2' apart	Heart-shaped leaves, small brownish flowers in spring	Small native bees (especially early-season pollinators).
Eastern Red Columbine (<i>Aquilegia canadensis</i>)	Moist to dry, well-drained soil Full sun to part sun	1-2' high 1-2' apart	Red and yellow flowers in spring and early summer	Hummingbirds, bees, and butterflies.
butterfly weed (<i>Asclepias tuberosa</i>)	Moderate to dry Sun to part sun	1-2' high 1' apart	Orange summer blooms	Bees, including at-risk bees, and butterflies. Host for the monarch butterfly, queen butterfly, and milkweed tussock moth
sundial lupine, wild lupine (<i>Lupinus perennis</i>)	moderate to dry sun to part shade	1-2' high 1' apart	Blue early summer flowers.	Supports bees and butterflies. Keystone larval host for many species, including Karner blue, frosted elfin, and painted lady butterflies. Provides nectar for at-risk bumblebees.

				<p>Found in meadows, used in vegetated buffers.</p> <p>Drought and compaction tolerant. Deer and rabbit resistant.</p>
purple lovegrass <i>(Eragrostis spectabilis)</i>	Dry sun	1-2' high 1' apart	Red and purple fall flowers	
Pennsylvania Sedge <i>(Carex pensylvanica)</i>	Moist, well-drained soil Part sun to full shade	1-2' high 1-2' apart	Green foliage that turns golden in fall, providing a fine-textured groundcover	Bees and other small pollinators.
Wild Blueberry <i>(Vaccinium angustifolium)</i>	Moist, acidic, well-drained soil Full sun to part sun	1-2' high 1-2' apart	Small, white to pink flowers in spring, followed by sweet, blue berries in summer	Bees, especially bumblebees.
Black-eyed Susan <i>(Rudbeckia hirta)</i>	Moist to dry, well-drained soil Full sun	2-3' high 1-2' apart	Bright yellow flowers with dark centers from late summer to fall	Bees, butterflies, and other pollinators.
seaside goldenrod <i>(Solidago sempervens)</i>	Moderate moisture Full sun	2' high 1' apart	Yellow fall flowers	Bees and butterflies. Keystone species.
gray goldenrod, old field goldenrod <i>(Solidago nemoralis)</i>	Moderate to dry Sun to part sun	2' high 1' apart	Yellow late summer flowers	Bees and butterflies. Keystone species.
Ostrich Fern <i>(Matteuccia struthiopteris)</i>	Moist, well-drained soil Part sun to	2-3' high 1-2' apart	Lush, feathery green fronds that turn	Attracts small insects, providing food for insectivorous birds.

	full shade		yellow in fall	
Smooth Blue Aster <i>(Symphyotrichum laeve)</i>	Moist, well-drained soil Full sun	1-2' high 1-2' apart	Light blue to lavender flowers in late summer to fall	Bees, butterflies, and other pollinators.

Note: Serviceberry, black tupelo, and pin cherry are all good street trees.