

NLI Suggested Plant List -- Mountains

North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (DPI) Outdoor Learning Environments Initiative

Natural Learning Initiative, College of Design, North Carolina State University

Botanical Name	Common Name	Suggested cultivars	Notable features	Growth Rate	Exposure Requirement	Native	USDA Hardiness Zones
Tree Deciduous Large (Height: 40'+)							
<i>Acer rubrum</i>	red maple	'October Glory'/'Sunset'	fall color	Rapid	Shade/sun	x	2-9
<i>Betula nigra</i>	river birch	'Dura Heat'/'Summer Cascade'	fast growing, multi-stemmed, papery peeling bark, play props	Rapid	Shade/part sun	x	4-8
<i>Celtis occidentalis</i>	hackberry		tough, drought tolerant, graceful form	Moderate/rapid	Full sun	x	2-9
<i>Fagus grandifolia</i>	american beech		smooth textured bark, play props	Slow	Shade/part sun	x	3-8
<i>Fraxinus americana</i>	white ash		fall color	Moderate	Full sun/part shade	x	3-9
<i>Gleditsia triacanthos var. inermis</i>	thornless honey locust		good dappled shade, fall color, quick growing, salt tolerant	Rapid	Full sun/part shade	x	3-8
<i>Liquidambar styraciflua</i>	sweetgum	'Rotundiloba'	good fall color, play props		Full sun	x	6-8
<i>Liriodendron tulipifera</i>	tulip poplar		fall color, quick growth rate, play props,	Fast	Full sun	x	4-9
<i>Platanus occidentalis</i>	sycamore		play props, peeling bark	Rapid	Full sun	x	4-9
<i>Quercus imbricaria</i>	laurel or shingle oak		play props	Slow	Full sun	x	4-8
<i>Quercus palustris</i>	pin oak	'Hightower'	play props, good fall color, wet tolerant	Moderate/fast	Full sun	x	4-8
<i>Quercus rubra</i>	red oak		Quick growing, play props, fall color	Fast	Full sun	x	4-8
<i>Taxodium distichum</i>	baldcypress	'Shawnee Brave'	fall color, play props	Moderate	Full sun	x	4-9
<i>Ulmus parvifolia</i>	chinese elm	'Allee'/'Bosque'	peeling bark, graceful form	Moderate-Rapid	Full sun/part shade		4-9
Tree Deciduous Medium (Height: 30-40')							
<i>Acer griseum</i>	paperbark maple		peeling papery bark, fall color	Slow	Full sun		4-8

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<i>Carpinus caroliniana</i>	hornbeam		sinewy bark	Slow	Shade/part sun	x	3-9
<i>Cercis canadensis</i>	eastern redbud	'Forest Pansy'	quick growing, play props, pink flowers in spring	Rapid	Full sun/part shade	x	6-8

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<i>Cornus florida</i>	flowering dogwood		white flowers in spring	Moderate	Full sun/part shade	x	5-9
<i>Cotinus obovatus</i>	american smoketree		scented feathery flowers, good fall color, drought tolerant	Slow	Full sun/part shade	x	5-8
<i>Halesia carolina</i>	carolina silverbell		play props, white spring flowers, yellow fall color	Medium	Full sun/part shade	x	4-8
<i>Magnolia x soulangiana</i>	saucer magnolia	'Dark Alexandria'	play props, showy pink flowers in late winter to spring	Moderate	Full sun/part shade		5-9
<i>Pistacia chinensis</i>	chinese pistache		good fall color, drought tolerant	Moderate	Full sun/part shade		6-9
<i>Salix x sepulcralis</i>	weeping willow		good hiding place, graceful form	Fast	Full sun/part shade		5-9
Tree Deciduous Small (Height: 12-25')							
<i>Amelanchier x grandiflora</i>	apple serviceberry		white flowers in spring, good fall color		Full sun/part shade		3-7
<i>Chionanthus virginicus</i>	fringe tree		fringey white flowers in spring	Slow	Full sun/part shade	x	3-9
<i>Cornus mas</i>	cornelian-cherry		white flowers in spring, fruit is edible	Slow	Full sun/part shade		5-8
<i>Hamamelis virginiana</i>	common witchhazel		play props, yellow flowers in early winter, fall color	Slow	Full sun/part shade	x	4-8
<i>Magnolia stellata</i>	star magnolia		play props, showy white flowers in late winter to early spring	Slow	Full sun/part shade		5-8
<i>Morus alba</i> 'Pendula'	weeping mulberry		Good for hideouts, tolerates coastal conditions		Full sun		4-8
<i>Vitex agnus-castus</i>	chaste tree		child-scale, purple flowers in summer, fast-growing	Moderate	Full sun		7-9
Tree Evergreen Large (Height: 40'+)							
<i>Chamaecyparis thyoides</i>	atlantic white cedar		tolerates wet, columnar form	Moderate	Full sun/part shade	x	3-9
<i>Ilex opaca</i>	american holly		pyramidal to columnar form, red berries in winter	Slow	Full sun/part shade	x	5-9

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<i>Juniperus virginiana</i>	eastern redcedar		wildlife attraction, drought tolerant, aromatic foliage and wood	Moderate	Full sun	x	2-9
<i>Magnolia grandiflora</i>	southern magnolia		play props, showy fragrant white flowers in late spring through summer, tolerates sand, salt	Slow/moderate	Full sun/part shade	x	7-9
<i>Pinus strobus</i>	eastern white pine		graceful form, play props			x	3-8
Tree Evergreen Medium (Height: 30-40')							
<i>Ilex x attenuata 'Fosteri'</i>	Foster's holly		dense, conical habit	Slow	Full sun/part shade		6-9
<i>Magnolia virginiana</i>	sweet bay magnolia		semi-evergreen tree, play props, showy white flowers, wet tolerant	Moderate/rapid	Full sun/part shade	x	5-9
Tree Evergreen Small (Height: 10-25')							
<i>Camellia japonica</i>	Japanese camellia		flowers in spring	Slow/moderate	Partial shade		7-9
<i>Camellia sasanqua</i>	sasanqua camellia		flowers in fall, tolerates drought	Moderate	Light Shade		6-9
<i>Ilex glabra</i>	inkberry		spineless leaves, black berries, tolerates wet and salt	Slow	Partial shade	x	4-11
<i>Kalmia latifolia</i>	mountain laurel		flowers in early summer. Note: wood is toxic if burned and smoke inhaled.	Slow	Partial shade	x	5-8
<i>Rhododendron maximum</i>	great laurel, rhododendron	'Roseum Elegans'	flowers in spring. Note: wood is toxic if burned and smoke inhaled.	Slow	Full sun/part shade	x	3-8
Tree Edibles							
<i>Diospyros virginiana</i>	common persimmon		edible fruit ripens in fall, both male and female necessary for fruit	Slow / moderate	Full sun	x	4-8

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<i>Malus spp.</i>	apple tree		edible fruit, requires planting another variety that blooms at the same time for pollination				4-9
<i>Morus rubra</i>	red mulberry		edible fruit	Rapid	Full sun/part shade	x	5-9
Shrub Deciduous Large (Height: 10'+)							
<i>Hamamelis virginiana</i>	common witchhazel		play props, yellow flowers in early winter, fall color	Slow	Full sun/part shade	x	4-8
<i>Hydrangea paniculata</i>	hydrangea		white flowers in summer. Note: plant is slightly toxic if large	Rapid	Sun to shade		3-8'
<i>Rhus glabra</i>	smooth sumac			Rapid	Full sun/part shade	x	2-9
Shrub Deciduous Medium (Height: 6-10')							
<i>Chaenomeles speciosa</i>	common flowering quince			Medium	Full sun/part shade		4-8
<i>Clethra alnifolia</i>	sweet pepperbush		very fragrant white-pink flowers in summer, thrives in wet conditions		partial shade, but adaptable	x	4-8
<i>Forsythia x intermedia</i>	forsythia			Rapid	Full sun/part shade		6-8
<i>Lindera benzoin</i>	spicebush		spicy scent on some varieties, good fall color, attracts wildlife, shade		full sun/full shade	x	5-9
<i>Viburnum dentatum</i>	arrowwood viburnum		blue berries good play props, cream colored flowers in spring,		sun/part shade	x	2-8
Shrub Deciduous Small (Height: 1-5')							
<i>Abelia x grandiflora 'Edward Goucher'</i>	Edward Goucher' glossy abelia		semi-evergreen, lilac-pink flowers, attracts bees & other pollinators	Moderate	Full sun/part shade		6-9
<i>Callicarpa americana</i>	American beautyberry		play props, purple berries in fall	Moderate	Full sun/part shade	x	6-10
<i>Callicarpa dichotoma</i>	purple beautyberry		play props, purple berries in fall	Moderate	Full sun/part shade		5-8

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<i>Jasminum nudiflorum</i>	winter jasmine		yellow flowers in late winter, willowy green stems showy in winter,	Fast	Full sun/part shade		6-10
<i>Fothergilla major</i>	witchalder		white, fragrant flowers in early spring, good fall color, play props		partial shade	x	4-8
<i>Itea virginica</i>	Virginia sweet spire	'Henry's Garnet'	good fall color, white flowers in spring, wet tolerant	Medium	Full sun/part shade	x	5-9
Shrub Evergreen Large (Height: 10'+)							
<i>Camellia japonica</i>	Japanese camellia		flowers in spring	Slow/moderate	Partial shade		7-9
<i>Camellia sasanqua</i>	sasanqua camellia		flowers in fall, tolerates drought	Moderate	Light Shade		6-9
<i>Kalmia latifolia</i>	mountain laurel		flowers in early summer	Slow	Partial shade	x	5-8
<i>Rhododendron maximum</i>	great laurel, rhododendron		flowers in spring. Note: wood is toxic if burned and smoke inhaled.	Slow	Full sun/part shade	x	3-8
Shrub Evergreen Medium (Height: 6-10')							
<i>Juniperus chinensis 'Hetzii'</i>	Hetz blue juniper			Rapid	Full sun		4-8
<i>Juniperus communis</i>	common juniper			Slow	Full sun	x	2-8
<i>Raphiolepis umbellata</i>	Indian hawthorn		glossy leaves, white flowers, tolerates salt spray	Rapid	Full sun		6-10
Shrub Evergreen Small (Height: 1-5')							
<i>Gardenia jasminoides 'Kleim's Hardy'</i>	Kleim's hardy gardenia		scented white flowers, glossy leaves,	Moderate	Full sun/part shade		7-10
<i>Fothergilla major</i>	dwarf fothergilla	'Mt Airy'	white bloom in early spring/late winter	Moderate	sun to part shade		5-9

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<i>Lavandula x intermedia</i> 'Provence'	Provence lavender		scented herb, used in cooking, vigorous, tolerant of heat and humidity, purple flowers in summer, gray-green foliage	Slow	Full sun		5-11
<i>Leucothoe fontanesiana</i>	Doghobble		Arching, fountain-like habit, white waxy flowers, foliage turns red-green & purple in the winter		Part shade	x	5-8
<i>Pieris floribunda</i>	fetterbush		Red new growth	Moderate	Full sun	x	4-7
Shrub Edibles							
<i>Corylus</i> spp.	hazelnut		edible fruit, wildlife attraction		Full sun/part shade	x	5-10
<i>Vaccinium</i> species	blueberry		edible fruit, needs full sun for best fruit, clusters of bell-shaped flowers in spring, choose species appropriate to your area.		Full sun	x	3-8
Vine Deciduous							
<i>Lonicera periclymenum</i>	European honeysuckle		fragrant flowers in summer/fall	Rapid	Full sun/part shade		5-9
<i>Madam rosy campsii</i>	madam rosy campsii		small red to yellow flowers forming in late summer	Medium	Sun/part shade		6-9
<i>Parthenocissus quinquefolia</i>	Virginia creeper		vigorous, red fall foliage, shade tolerant	Rapid	Full sun/part shade	x	3-11

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Vine Evergreen							
<i>Akebia quinata</i>	chocolate vine		burgundy/purplish flowers in spring, play props, edible fruit occasionally produced, vigorous, shade tolerant	Rapid	Full sun/part shade		5-8
<i>Bignonia capreolata</i>	cross vine		shade tolerant, orange to dark reddish flowers in spring, quick growing	Rapid	Full sun/part shade	x	6-9
<i>Lonicera sempervirens</i>	coral honeysuckle		shade tolerant, coral flowers in late-spring to summer, semi-evergreen depending on climate,	Medium	Full sun	x	4-10
<i>Rosa banksiae</i>	lady banks rose		vigorous, few to almost no prickles, clusters of yellow - white blooms in spring, some scented some not	Medium	Full sun		6-10
Vine Edibles							
<i>Actinidia kolomikta</i>	kiwi		deciduous vine, edible fruit, borne on year-old or older wood, quick growing, need male & female plants for fruit, variegated leaves, small white flowers in early summer	Rapid	Full sun/part shade		4-8
<i>Passiflora incarnata</i>	passion flower		deciduous, hardy vine, spreads from seed, unique showy flowers bloom in summer. play props, edible fruit	Rapid	Full sun	x	5-9
<i>Vitis rotundifolia</i>	muscadine grape		deciduous vine, edible fruit - grapes, bears large fruit in small clusters. Some self-fertile, some need both male & female plants to produce fruit	Rapid	Full sun	x	5-9
Perennials							

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<i>Allium schoenoprasum</i>	chives		purple flowers, leaves used in cooking	Rapid	Full sun	x	4-8
<i>Aster divaricatus</i>	blue wood aster	Woods blue'	Blue flowers appear in August and last into October. Great for attracting butterflies		Full sun		4-9
<i>Coreopsis verticillata</i>	threadleaf coreopsis		sunny yellow blooms in summer, sun loving, drought tolerant		Full sun	x	5-9
<i>Echinacea purpurea</i>	purple coneflower	Ruby star'	big purple flowers in summer, can handle sun-light shade		Full sun	x	3-8
<i>Galax urceolata</i>	beetleweed		Low growing, with a white flower bloom from mid spring to mid summer		Part-full shade		5-8
<i>Geranium maculatum</i>	native geranium		wide array of bloom color. Blooms mostly in early summer		sun/part shade		3-8
<i>Hosta</i> spp.	hosta		lots of varieties to choose from, grown mostly for leaf color & patterns, also blooms with blue-purple flowers in summer.		Part-full shade		3-8
<i>Liatris Spicata</i>	blazing star		Large purple spike flowers appear late summer to early fall		sun-part shade		3-10
<i>Monarda didyma</i>	bee balm		early summer red blooms, attracts butterflies & bees, leaves are scented, likes sun-part shade		Part sun	x	3-8
<i>Osmunda cinnamanooides</i>	cinnamon fern		large spreading foliage. Possible play props from shoots		Part-full shade		3-10
<i>Osmunda regalis</i>	royal fern		broad triangular fronds, likes shade, wet tolerant		Part shade		3-8
<i>Phlox stolonifera</i>	creeping phlox		mat like growth with star shaped purple flowers	Rapid	Part shade/part sun		5-8
<i>Polystichum acrostichoides</i>	Christmas fern		small evergreen fern, likes moist soil		Part-full shade	x	3-8

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<i>Rudbeckia fulgida</i>	black-eyed susan, orange coneflower		yellow flowers in summer, drought tolerant, clump-forming		Full sun- light shade	x	4-10
<i>Sedum</i> spp.	stonecrop, sedum	'Autumn Joy'	textural leaves, flower head good play prop, sun loving, drought tolerant		Full sun		3-8
<i>Stachys byzantia</i>	lamb's ears		soft fuzzy leaves, textural & play props, drought tolerant		Full sun		4-8
<i>Solidago rugosa</i>	goldenrod	'Fireworks'	brilliant yellow flowers that clump together attracting butterflies. Note: also attracts bees in early fall		Sun		3-9
<i>Tradescantia virginiana</i>	spiderwort		white/blue/purple flowers in spring-summer, clump-forming and grass-like, wet tolerant, likes sun to part-shade to full shade		Part-full shade	x	5-8
Grasses							
<i>Calamagrostis x acutiflora</i>	feather reed grass		play props	Rapid	Full sun/part shade		4-9
<i>Carex pennsylvanica</i>	Pennsylvania sedge		pale green foliage in summer, turning sandy-tan in fall	Moderate	sun/part shade		
<i>Carex appalachica</i>	Appalachian sedge		Long grass which swirls in the wind giving movement to any garden. Also good for any woodland garden	Moderate	Full shade/slight sun		5-7
<i>Juncus effusus</i>	corkscrew rush	'Spiralis'/'Blue Arrows'/'Blue Dart'	rush with spiralling foliage, good play props.	Moderate	Full sun/part shade		4-9
<i>Miscanthus sinensis</i>	flame grass	'Adagio'	clump forming, graceful and textural, foliage turns reddish in fall, with silver plumes, good hiding places	Moderate	Full sun/part shade		3-9

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<i>Muhlenbergia capillaris</i>	pink muhly grass		delicate pink hazy flowers in early fall, easy to grow, tolerates some drought & some wet, sun loving	Moderate	Full sun/part shade	x	6-9
<i>Nassella tenuissima</i>	Mexican feather grass			Moderate	Full sun/part shade	x	6-9
<i>Panicum virgatum</i>	switch grass	'Shenandoah'/'Cheyenne Sky'/'The Blues'/'North Wind'	upright clumping, textural, drought tolerant, salt tolerant, good hiding places	Rapid	Full sun/part shade	x	5-9
<i>Pennisetum alopecuroides</i>	fountaingrass		clump forming, play props, textural	Moderate	Full sun		5-9
<i>Pennisetum setaceum</i>	crimson fountaingrass		clump-forming, soft, textural grass, red-tinged blades, play props, perennial at the coast, annual elsewhere	Rapid	Full sun/part shade		9-10
<i>Sorghastrum nutans</i>	nash indiagrass		grows from summer to fall, obtains a small inconspicuous yellow flower	Moderate	Full sun		3-9
Groundcover							
<i>Ajuga reptans</i>	ajuga		evergreen matting groundcover with blue flowers in spring. Good at spreading out, handles some drought. full sun to full shade.		Partial shade		4-8
<i>Heuchera americana</i>	heuchera	'Dales Strain'	Dark healthy purplish foliage stands out through winter months as other plants die back	Medium	sun-shade		4-7
<i>Iberis sempervirens</i>	candytuft		evergreen, tends to spread, white flowers in spring	Moderate	Full sun		3-8
<i>Liriope muscari</i>	liriope		evergreen, forms large clumps, purple flowers, play props.	Moderate	Part shade to shade		6-9

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<i>Salvia lyrata</i>	lyreleaf sage		low groundcover, pale lavender flowers in early spring, easy to grow		Sun to shade	x	6-8
<i>Thymus vulgaris</i>	common thyme		scented herb, tiny lilac flowers in late spring/summer, gray-green leaves, drought tolerant, wildlife attraction	Moderate	Full sun		5-9
Fern							