



## Mille Lacs Lake Watershed Management Group

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### Topic of the Month - January 2018

#### Is It Time To Think About Spring and Summer Flowers Yet?

I am starting to think about warmer weather and yearning for patches of color. There are so many beautiful native flowers that can accentuate a shoreline, rain garden, or flower bed.

What is a native plant or a wildflower? Native plants are those that were growing here before European settlement. A wildflower, sometimes called a forb, is a native flowering plant that grows without human care. It is not true that native plants require no maintenance or care. They can be easy to grow – but it really depends on the plant and the site. Picking the right plant for your site can increase the chances of success.

Native plants have deep roots that hold soil in place and promote water infiltration. They can help to bind a shoreline in place and keep it from eroding into a lake or river. If used in a rain garden, the roots provide channels into the ground that captured stormwater can use to percolate into the soil. They also provide needed habitat for native wildlife species – especially bees and butterflies.

Some favorites that are easy to grow and provide beautiful color include:

- Black Eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia hirta*)
- Butterfly Weed (*Asclepias tuberosa*)
- Purple Coneflower (*Echinacea purpurea*)
- Redosier Dogwood (*Cornus sericea*)
- Wild Bergamot (*Monarda fistulosa*)



Area sources of native plants include your local Soil and Water Conservation Districts. Mille Lacs SWCD sells native trees and shrubs. The Aitkin County and Crow Wing SWCDs sell native trees and shrubs as well as native grasses and flowers. Check out their websites for varieties available and ordering information.

Aitkin County SWCD [www.aitkincounty swcd.org](http://www.aitkincounty.swcd.org)

Crow Wing SWCD [www.crowwing swcd.org](http://www.crowwing.swcd.org)

Mille Lacs SWCD [www.millelacsswcd.org](http://www.millelacsswcd.org)

