

# Life on the Coast is Easy?

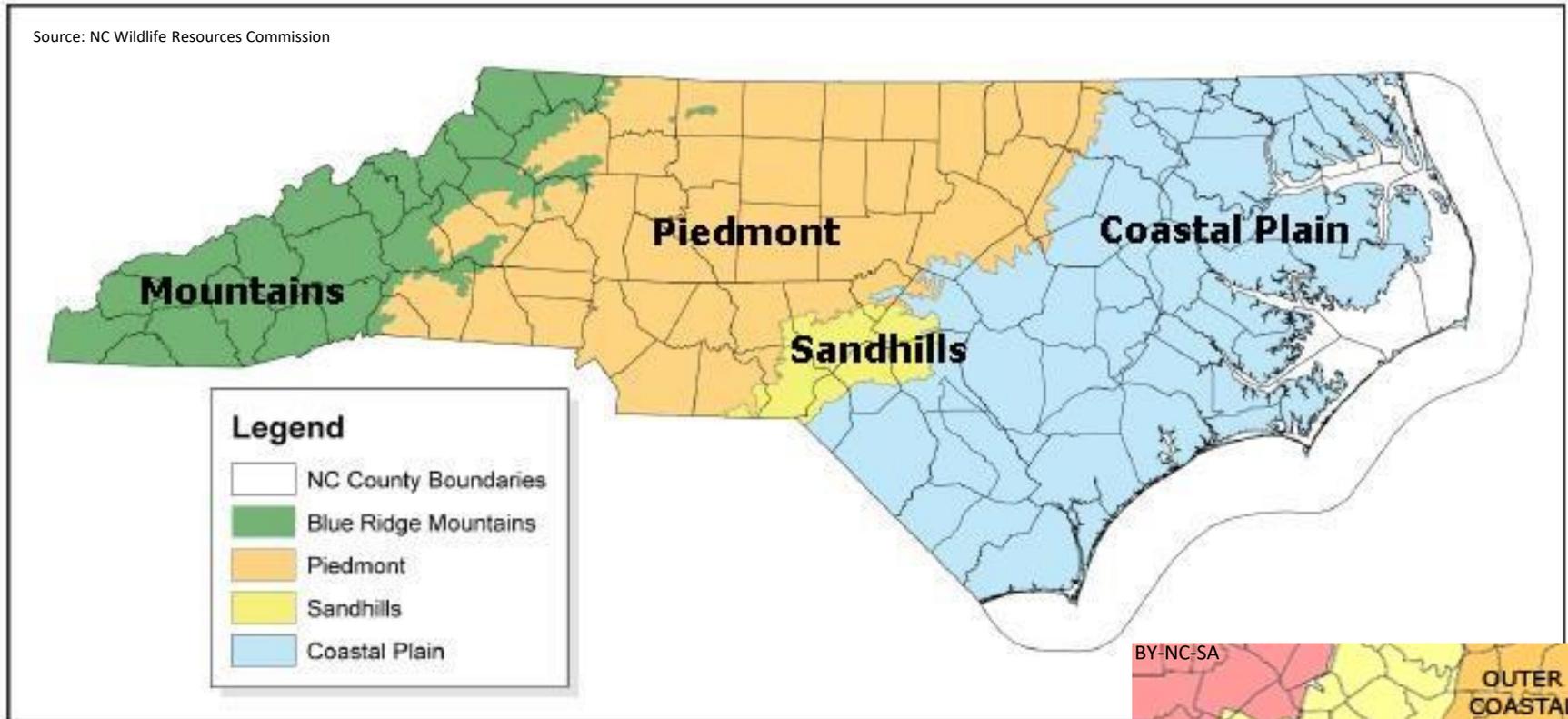
## How native plants are built for life near the beach



**Amy Mead**  
**Area Natural Resources Agent**



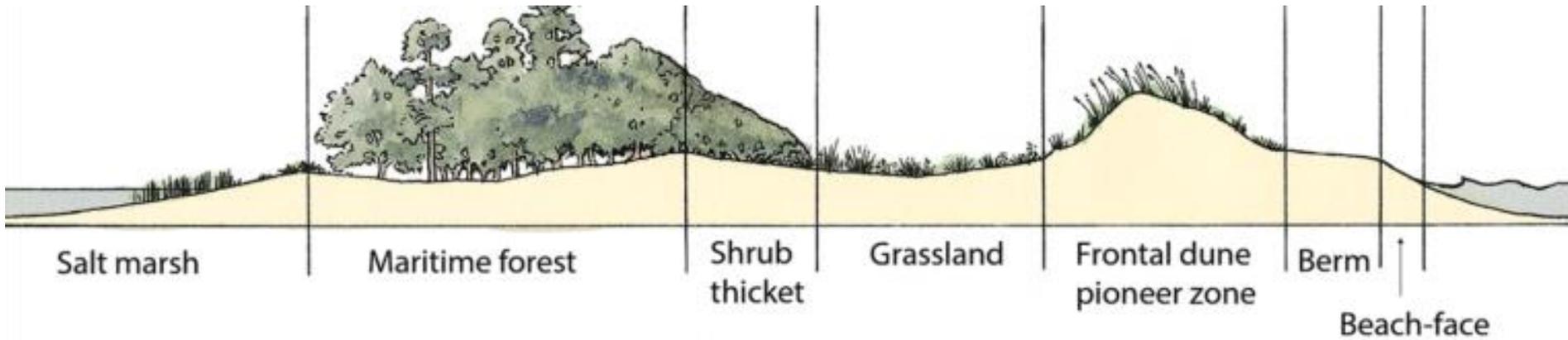
# Our “Ecological Backyard”



Critical Ecosystems Partnership Fund  
World’s 36<sup>th</sup> biodiversity hotspot  
-more than 1,500 endemic vascular plants and  
greater than 70 percent habitat loss



# Barrier Island Vegetation



# Coastal Landscaping Challenges

- Plants growing near estuaries, sounds, and lagoons must tolerate atmospheric salts as well as elevated soil salinity
- Salt-aerosol damage: reduced stem growth, browning on margins of leaves, thinning of the leaf crown, and death of twigs on the windward side of a tree or shrub
- Poor, sandy soil
- Drought conditions/storms



# What is “Native”?

Species that evolve naturally in an environment without human intervention

Plants are adapted to local soil and climate conditions over thousands of years

Co-evolve with other species and form interdependent and highly specialized relationships that are necessary for the other's survival



# Why plant Natives?

- Uniquely adapted to local environmental conditions
- Generally require less care and less water once established
- Protect local water quality by reducing the need for fertilizer
- Supports beneficial insects and yields more berries and fruit than non-native plants





Lucy Bradley CCO



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# Live Oak

*Quercus virginiana*

---

40-80' tall, 40-100' spread, not a "true" evergreen

Adaptable to both clay and sandy soils that are acidic and well-drained

Most wind resistant tree

'Cathedral' cultivar



Imperial Moth (*Eacles imperialis*)

Hosts: *Pinus* sp., *Acer* sp., *Quercus* sp. *Liquidambar styraciflua*, *Sassafras albidum*



Gitta Hasing



# Shumard Oak

*Quercus shumardii*

---

40-80' tall, 40-50' spread

Adaptable to wide variety of soils, very stress tolerant

Great tree for urban settings

Wildlife value





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# Eastern Red Cedar

*Juniperus virginiana*

---

Evergreen tree that can grow to 30+' tall, width 12-24'

Fast growing conifer

Extremely drought tolerant

Provides cover and food for wildlife

Magnus ManskeCC BY-SA 3.0



# Persimmon

*Diospyros virginiana*

---

30-70' tall

Full sun to partial shade

Will tolerate hot and dry

Fruit for birds, small mammals, white-tailed deer, foxes, raccoons, and black bears



# Sweetbay Magnolia

*Magnolia virginiana*

---

20+' tall, semi-evergreen tree or multi-stemmed shrub, deer resistant, 10-20' width

Fragrant flowers

Larval host for Spicebush Swallowtail and Eastern Tiger Swallowtail butterflies

Medium-high wind resistance



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# American Holly

*Ilex opaca*

---

40-60' tall, full sun to part shade

Will take a broad range of soils and is pollution tolerant

Flowers are attractive to pollinators and fruits for wildlife

Highly wind resistant



# Yaupon Holly

*Ilex vomitoria*

---

Large shrub or small tree, can reach 10-20' tall, 8-12' width

Very drought tolerant

Female plants produce attractive red berries

Very attractive to pollinators





# Dwarf Yaupon Holly

*Ilex vomitoria* 'Nana'

---

Dense, compact, evergreen shrub 3-5' tall, 3-6' width

Drought and salt spray tolerant

Grows rapidly

Has a more formal appearance





# Inkberry

*Ilex glabra*

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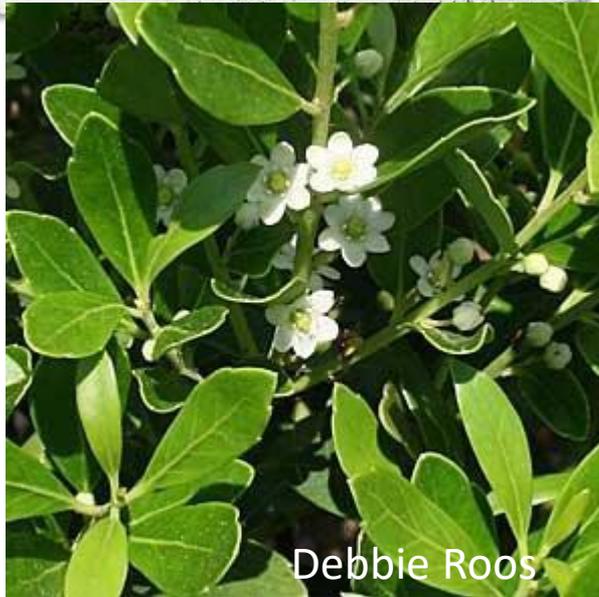
Evergreen shrub

Slow growing, 5-8' tall

Tolerates a variety of soils, moderately salt tolerant

Cover and food for birds and pollinators enjoy flowers

Dwarf cultivar:  
'Shamrock'  
3-4' tall





# Dwarf Palmetto

*Sabal minor*

---

2-5' tall, 4-6' width

Drought and moderately salt tolerant

Most cold hardy native palm

Fruits eaten by robins, raccoons, and other birds and mammals



# Wax Myrtle

*Callicarpa americana*

---

Evergreen tree/shrub,  
15-20' at maturity

Native to NC marshes,  
swamps, fresh-brackish  
streams

Great for erosion, wind  
and salt spray tolerant

Wildlife value

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UGA5126030



# Beautyberry

*Callicarpa americana*

---

3-8' tall, Full sun

Deciduous Shrub

Fruits appear August-Oct  
Valuable food source for  
songbirds and small  
mammals



# Yucca

*Yucca filamentosa*

---

Evergreen sword-shaped leaves with curly filaments

Prefers coarse, sandy soils in full sun

Tall panicle of white flowers attracts pollinators



'Color Guard'



# Muhly Grass

*Muhlenbergia capillaris*

---

4' tall, 3' width

Long-lived, little to no insect or disease pests and highly resistant to deer grazing

Tolerates heat, humidity, drought, poor soil and is highly salt tolerant





# Little Bluestem

*Schizachyrium scoparium*

---

2' tall, Vigorous, long rooted grass

Good for erosion control:  
Stream banks, slopes,  
rain gardens

Larval host plant for  
skippers, seeds eaten by  
birds

Cut back in March





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Cultivar 'Northwind'

# Switchgrass

*Panicum virgatum*

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3-5' tall, full sun

Moist clay or sandy soils

Bluish cast in the summer, pink flowers in fall

Slightly salt tolerant

Plant in masses

# Maritime Forest Wildlife

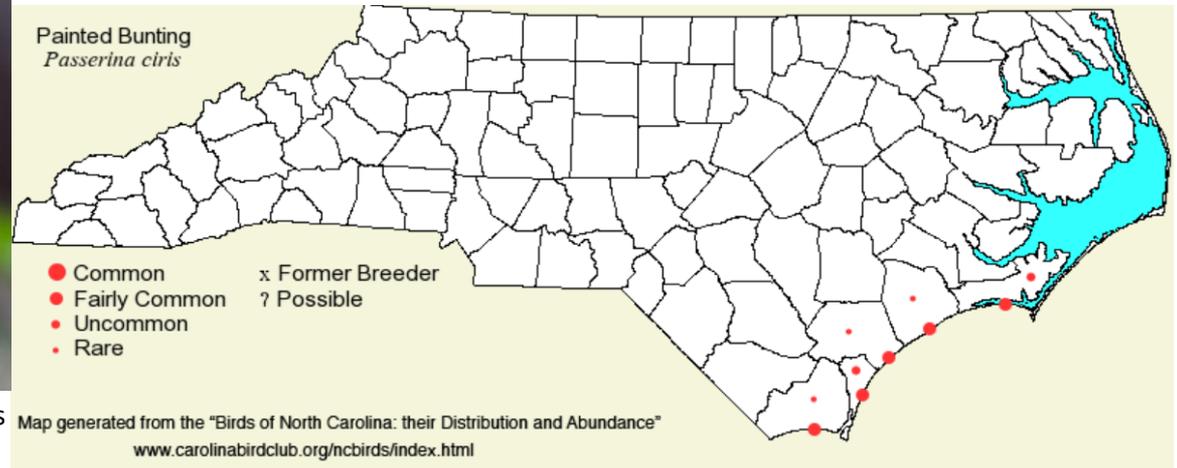


Photo: Lorraine Minns/Audubon Photography Awards

## Painted Bunting *Passerina ciris*

“The flying rainbow”

Breeding in maritime thickets April through October



Seed eaters for most of the year (grass seeds, some berries)  
Insects in breeding season (caterpillars, beetles, grasshoppers)



# Coral Honeysuckle

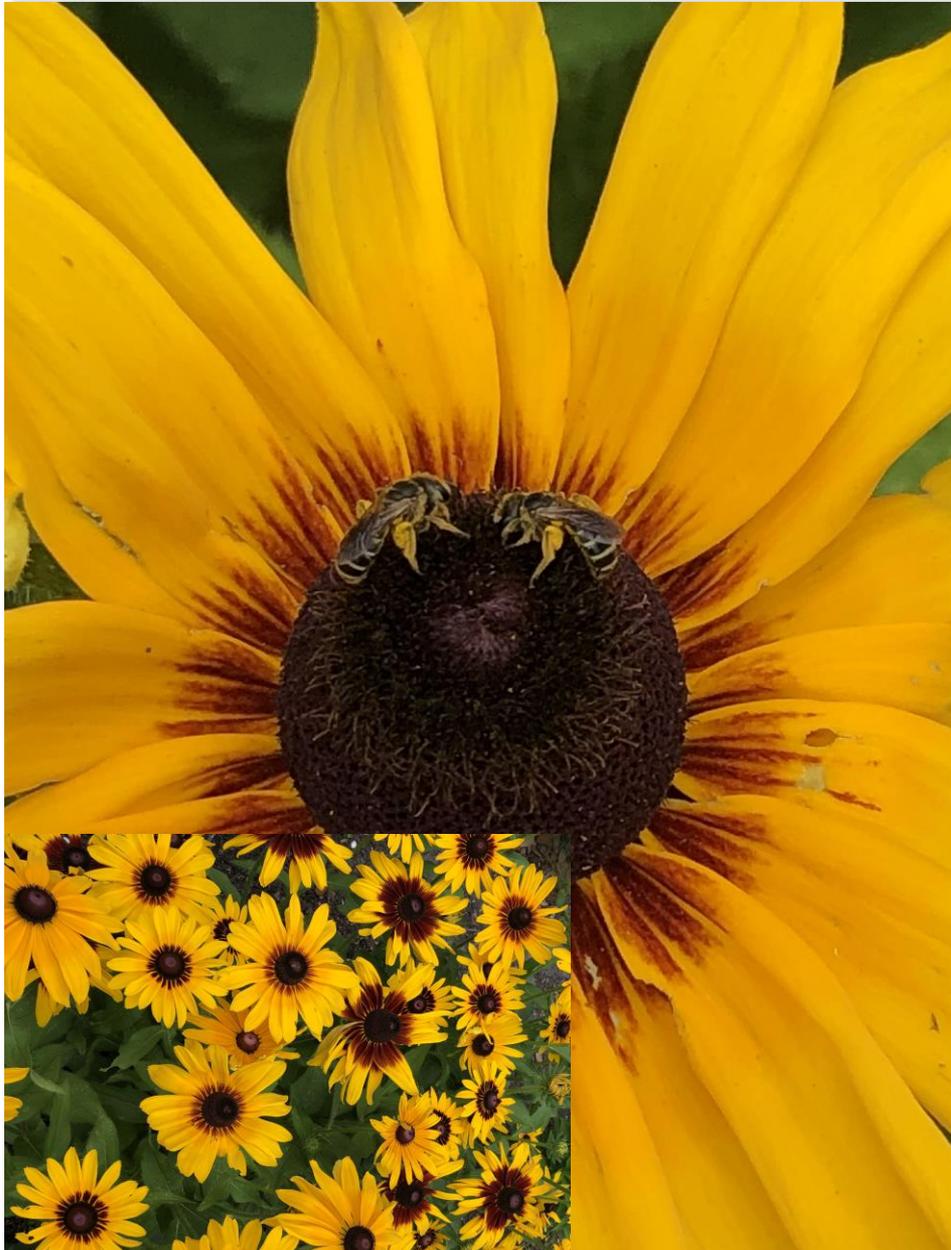
*Lonicera sempervirens*

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Non-Invasive

Blooms in spring

Red flowers are very attractive to Ruby-throated hummingbirds



# Black-eyed Susan

*Rudbeckia hirta*

---

Full Sun

Blooms summer through fall

Short lived perennial,  
easily reseeds



# Blanket Flower

*Gaillardia pulchella*

---

Naturalized in NC

Barrier island, sandy  
soils, full sun

Drought and salt tolerant

Blooms summer to fall

Attracts butterflies



# Spotted Horsemint

*Monarda punctata*

---

2-4' tall

Herbaceous perennial

Drought tolerant

Excellent cut flower

Deer and rabbit resistant









**Inkberry**  
*Ilex glabra*



**Dwarf Yaupon Holly**  
*Ilex vomitoria* 'Nana'

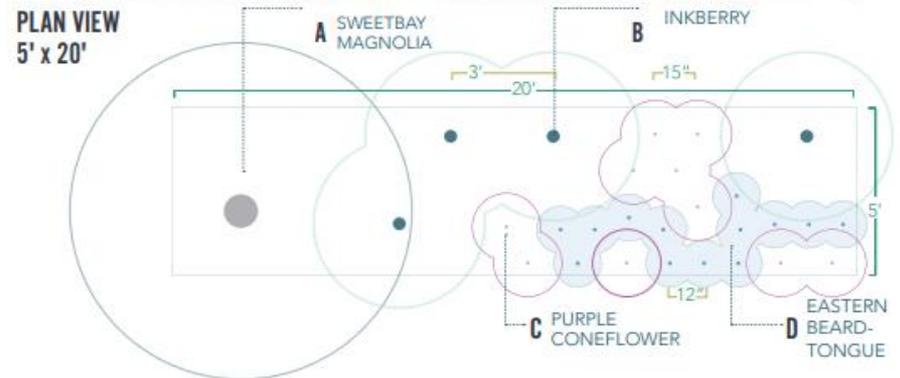


**Beautyberry**  
*Callicarpa americana*

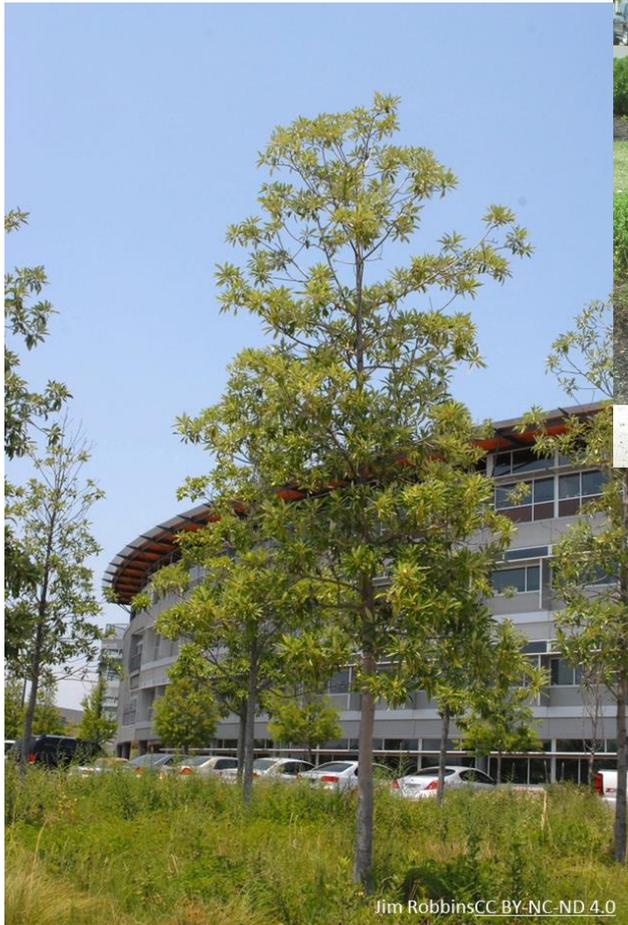


**Dwarf Palmetto**  
*Sabal minor*

# Use a Diversity of Plants



Coastal Landscapes Initiative template



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**Sweetbay Magnolia**  
*Magnolia virginiana*



**Inkberry**  
*Ilex glabra*



**Beardtongue**  
*Penstemon digitalis* 'Huskers Red'



**Purple Coneflower**  
*Echinacea purpurea*

# Surf City Roundabout

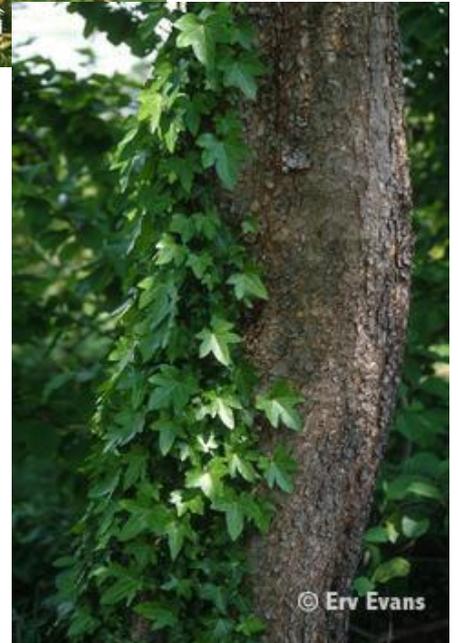


Eastern Red Cedar  
Dwarf Palmetto  
Dwarf Yaupon Holly  
Yaupon Holly  
Magnolia 'Little Gem'  
Laurel Oak or  
Darlington Oak

# Plants to Avoid



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