

**LIVING ON THE COAST IS EASY?**  
HOW NATIVE PLANTS ARE BUILT FOR LIFE NEAR THE BEACH

# NC PLANT TOOLBOX

[plants.ces.ncsu.edu](https://plants.ces.ncsu.edu)

“Find a Plant” search tool, uses filters to narrow your search by characteristics:

**Cultural Conditions** (Light, pH, Drainage, Region, Hardiness Zone)

**Landscape** (Location, Theme, Design Feature, Attracts, Resistance to Challenges [deer, etc.], Problems to Exclude)

**Whole Plant Traits** (Type, Woody Leaf Characteristics, Habit/Form, Growth Rate, Maintenance, Texture)

**Flowers** (Color, Value to Gardener, Bloom Time, Leaf Fall Color)

plants.ces.ncsu.edu/find\_a\_plant/?nc\_region\_id=1&landscape\_location\_id=1&plant\_type\_id=11&page=3

Managed bookmarks

NC STATE EXTENSION

North Carolina  
Extension Gardener  
Plant Toolbox

Home Find a Plant Identify a Plant Design Gallery Help Give Now Contact

Search Search

Find a Plant

Nc Region: Coastal Landscape Location: Coastal Plant Type: Native Plant

154 plants by Scientific Common Name Display: [Grid] [List]

**Quercus laevis**  
Oaks, Turkey Oak

**Quercus minima**  
Dwarf Live Oak, Oaks

**Quercus phellos**  
Oaks, Willow Oak

1 Cultivar/Variety

**Quercus virginiana**  
Bay Live Oak, Live Oak, Oaks, Plateau

**Rhexia alifanus**  
Savanna Meadow Beauty, Smooth

**Rhexia mariana var. mariana**

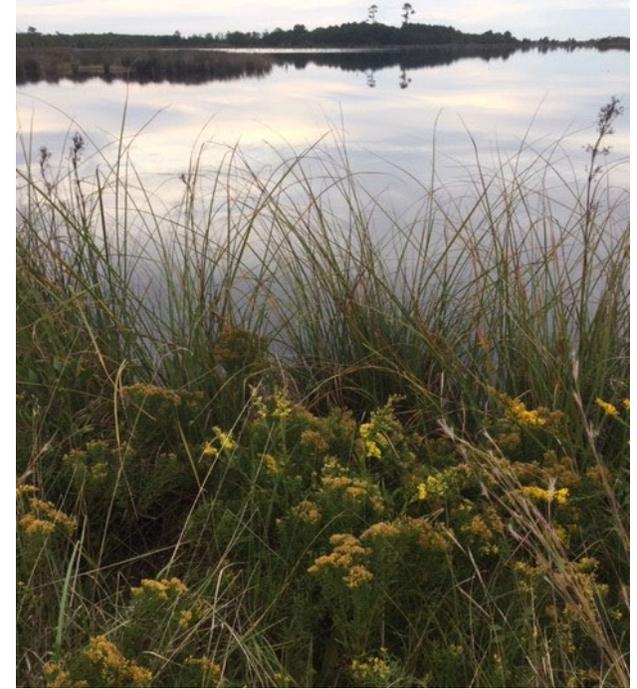
**Cultural Conditions**

- Light
- Soil Texture
- Soil pH
- Soil Drainage
- Available Space To Plant

**NC Region**

- Coastal 154
- Mountains 76
- Piedmont 109

**USDA Plant Hardiness Zone**



WHAT MAKES NORTH CAROLINA COAST  
SUCH A UNIQUE PLACE?

MUCH OF OUR COAST REPRESENTS THE  
FLORISTIC TRANSITION BETWEEN THE  
VIRGINIAN AND CAROLINIAN  
BIOGEOGRAPHIC REGIONS





**NORTH CAROLINA IS A HOT SPOT FOR  
BIODIVERSITY!**

CLIMATE CHANGE  
IS REAL AND WE  
ARE ONE OF THE  
HOT SPOTS





HOMEOWNERS  
HAVE THE  
POWER TO  
MAKE POSITIVE  
CHANGE

YOU CAN DO YOUR PART TO KEEP NORTH  
CAROLINA'S COAST UNIQUE BY SELECTING  
AND PROTECTING NATIVE PLANTS



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## WHY NATIVE PLANTS?

- Built for our coastal ecosystems
- Part of the web of relationships within each ecosystem
- Promote biodiversity in ways we might not fully realize
- Eco-system Services: clean air & water, heat mitigation, flood abatement, decreased crime, habitat, slower traffic, positive effect on mental & physical health

# OUR NATIVES ARE BUILT TOUGH



# APPROPRIATE PLANT SELECTION: “RIGHT PLANT, RIGHT PLACE”



Wetland

Maritime Forest



Dune



**OAKS**  
(*QUERCUS SPP*)  
GET THE PRIZE FOR HOSTING  
THE MOST BIODIVERSITY



© jeff lewis





live oak



southern red oak

swamp chestnut oak



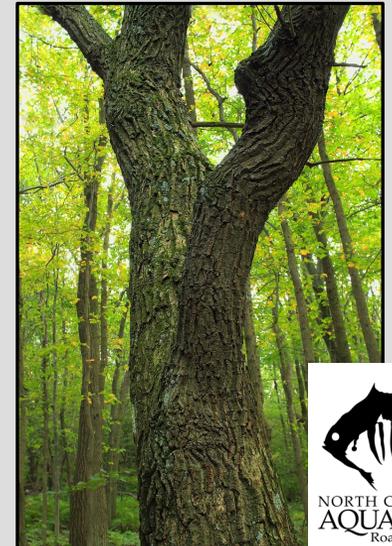
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# CHOOSING YOUR OAK

white oak



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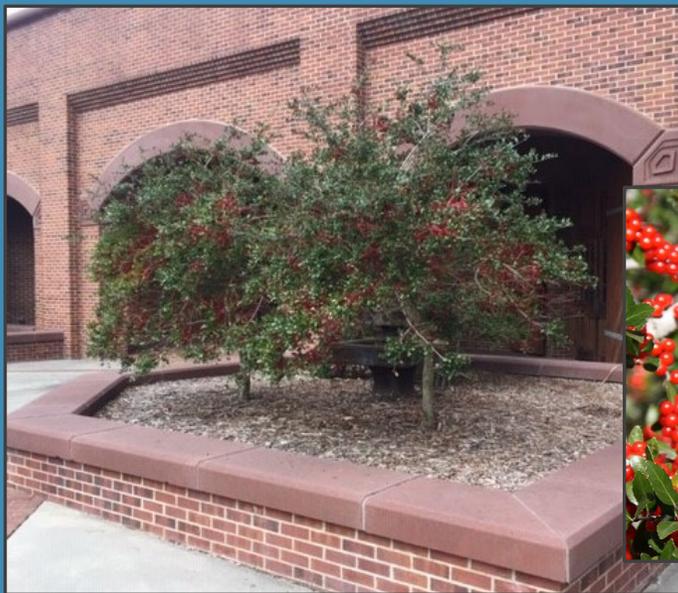




## HOLLIES (*ILEX SPP*)

- Evergreen and deciduous species available
  - Not all are prickly
- Native bees *love the* flowers
- Berries are beautiful in winter and attract birds
- Thrive in range of growing conditions

**yaupon:** Highly adaptable



**CHOOSING  
YOUR  
HOLLY**

**American:** Upland and drier sites, has prickly leaves



**inkberry:** prefers shade and moist soil, but will grow in drier, sunnier sites...

...“dwarf” forms available



**dahoon:** grows in low swampy areas, but adaptable to “average” garden soil



# WAX MYRTLE (*MORELLA CERIFERA*)



- Evergreen
- Smaller selections available
- Leaves aromatic and are food source for caterpillars of several native butterflies
- Can be used in more formally as hedging or specimen tree
- Great winter bird habitat (myrtle warbler)





THE “SUSANS”  
*RUDBECKIA SPP*

BEAUTIFUL, BENEFICIAL  
**GOLDENRODS...**  
*SOLIDAGO SPP*



...different  
from ragweed!

**RAGWEED vs GOLDENROD**



Green Flowers



Lobed Leaves

Common Ragweed  
*Ambrosia artemisiifolia*



Yellow Flowers



Unlobed Leaves



Goldenrod  
*Solidago sp.*



Call **311**

*Solidago odora*:  
(anise-scented goldenrod)  
Early and short-statured



*S. speciosa* (showy) & *S. rigidum*  
(prairie):  
Back of the border, late summer  
pollinator magnets

## THE GOLDENRODS *SOLIDAGO SPP*



*Solidago*  
'Fireworks':  
Heralds the fall,  
evergreen foliage



*S. sempervirens*:  
(seaside goldenrod)  
Late fall monarch favorite,  
prefers low nutrient soils





muhly grass

# NATIVE GRASSES IN THE LANDSCAPE



little bluestem



panic grass  
'Shenandoah'  
(with Eryngium)

panic grass  
'North Wind'



© Nancy J. Ondra/Hayes

Partridgeberry  
*Mitchella repens*

EVERGREEN  
GROUNDCOVER FOR SHADE

FOUND IN MARITIME  
FORESTS

FLOWERS IN MAY, BERRIES  
IN FALL-WINTER



© Mark Hutchinson



## SILK ASTER OR GRASSLEAF GOLDENASTER

*PITYOPSIS GRAMINIFOLIA*

- Can grow in dry and sunny areas
- Grass-like leaves remain year-round, with flowers in fall

# CORAL HONEYSUCKLE

*LONICERA SEMPERVIRENS*

- Heavy bloomer in early spring, but sporadically blooms all summer (& winter?)
- Favorite of hummingbirds
- Host plant for caterpillars of hummingbird moths
- Several color selections available



**CROSSVINE**  
*BIGNONIA CAPREOLATA*



- Evergreen foliage- leaves great for privacy screen
- Leaves often get purple hue in winter
- Masses of trumpet shaped flowers in spring
- Adaptable to a variety of growing conditions

# PLANTS TO AVOID: COASTAL INVASIVE PLANTS



*Eleagnus*  
(Russian or thorny olive)



English ivy



pampas  
grass





## COASTAL LANDSCAPES INITIATIVE

Public and private sector partners working together to encourage sustainable practices in coastal communities by fostering coastal landscapes that are beautiful, functional, cost efficient and environmentally friendly



Check out Sea Grant's Youtube Channel – Native Plant Picks videos:  
<https://ncseagrant.ncsu.edu/news/2021/09/new-video-series-highlights-native-plants-for-coastal-landscapes/>

# BIRD-FRIENDLY SCREEN

BEST SUITED FOR DRY TO MOIST AREAS WITH SUN TO PART-SHADE

SUN: ☀️ 🌿  
 WATER: 💧 💧  
 BLOOM TIME: MAR-OCT



x1 Wax Myrtle



x4 Beautyberry



x1 Inkberry



x15 Black-eyed Susan

## DESCRIPTION

All of the plants in this design were chosen to attract birds to the yard. The Wax Myrtle, Inkberry, and Beautyberry all produce an abundance of pollinator friendly flowers in the spring and early summer, and berries in the late summer and fall that are irresistible to birds and other backyard wildlife. Many birds also enjoy eating the seeds of the Black-eyed Susan. This design would make a great screen to increase privacy or block unwanted views, but it would also make a wonderful standalone garden area for viewing birds and other wildlife. Since only female plants the Wax Myrtle and Inkberry will produce flowers and berries, make sure that you choose a female plant at the nursery and there are male plants nearby. Since these shrubs are native to the coast, pollination can probably be achieved from wild species or neighboring plants, but to play it safe, plant males of these species somewhere else in your yard.

## ALTERNATES

All of these plants should be readily available in most garden centers. You may have a choice when it comes to size; dwarf varieties are available for most of the shrubs if you prefer less height.

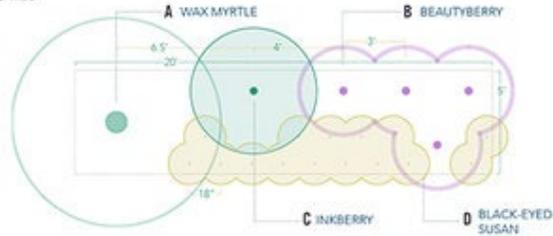
## MAINTENANCE

For the first growing season, ensure that all plants receive adequate moisture from rainfall or supplemental watering. Depending on weather and natural soil moisture, new plants may require watering several times per week. Mulch between plants to conserve water and control weeds. If needed, shrubs can be pruned in late fall or winter. Beautyberries can be cut back to the base every year or two if you want to keep it as a smaller shrub, but it also does great if left to grow. Dried plant material provides important winter forage and habitat for birds and beneficial insects, so waiting until late winter or early spring to cut back the dead flowers of the Black-eyed Susan will help you achieve the most ecologically beneficial garden. At that time, cut them back to about 4"-6" by hand or with a weedwacker.



ELEVATION VIEW

PLAN VIEW  
5' x 20'



## PLANT SELECTION

KEY	QTY	COMMON NAME	BOTANICAL NAME	PLANT TYPE	SPACING	SEASONAL COLOR																	
						J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D						
A	1	Wax Myrtle	Morella cerifera	SHRUB	6.5' O.C. TO PANSY																		
B	4	Beautyberry	Callicarpa americana	SHRUB	3' O.C.																		
C	1	Inkberry	Ilex glabra	SHRUB	6.5' O.C. TO WAXMYRTLE																		
D	15	Black-eyed Susan	Rudbeckia hirta	PERENNIAL	18" O.C.																		



# COASTAL LANDSCAPING TEMPLATES

# NATURE AT HOME



## New Hanover County Center

6206 Oleander Dr, Wilmington, NC

HOURS: MON-FRI 9A-5P

(910) 798-7660

Oct 3-4-5 staff will be out of the office. The Plant Clinic and Gift Shop will be closed all 3 days and the Admin Office on 3rd & 4th.

Events

Meet Our Staff

TV, Newsletters & Articles

Newsletter Sign-Up

Local Foods Guide

Local Native Plant Vendors

Horticulture

Extension Master Gardener Volunteer Program

[Home](#) » **Nature at Home**

# Nature at Home

> [en Español](#)

## Nature at Home Certification Program

- [COASTAL LANDSCAPES INITIATIVE-NCSU](#) Includes design to plant guides, brochures, and more
- [LANDSCAPING FOR WILDLIFE WITH NATIVE PLANTS-NCSU](#)
- [BUTTERFLIES IN YOUR BACKYARD-NCSU](#)
- [MANAGING BACKYARD AND OTHER URBAN HABITATS FOR](#)
- [HOW TO MAKE WILDLIFE FRIENDLY LANDSCAPES-NCSU](#)
- [PLANT TOOLBOX—FIND OR IDENTIFY PLANTS-NCSU](#)
- [ORGANIC LAWN CARE GUIDE-NCSU](#)
- [CITIZEN'S GUIDE TO PROTECTING WILMINGTON'S WATER](#)
- [CAPE FEAR AUDUBON](#)
- [AUDUBON'S NATIVE PLANT FINDER](#)
- [AREA NATIVE PLANT VENDORS](#)
- [NORTH CAROLINA INVASIVE PLANT COUNCIL](#)
- [REPLACE INVASIVES WITH NATIVES FLYER](#)
- [SMARTYARDS NC COASTAL FEDERATION](#)
- [KEYSTONE NATIVE PLANTS EASTERN TEMPERATE FOREST](#)
- SLIDES: [NC Native Plants for Coastal Landscape – Charlotte Gle](#)
- BOOKS: [Extension Gardener Handbook Chapter 12 – Native Plan](#)
- Bringing Nature Home and Nature's Best Hope by Doug Tallar [presentation](#) by Dr. Tallamy called [Native Keystone Plants for W](#)

## Native Plants for Coastal North Carolina Landscapes

*"We can each make a measurable difference almost immediately by planting a native nearby. As gardeners and stewards of our land, we have never been so empowered—and the ecological stakes have never been so high."*

Dr. David Tolson



NFWF

**BEACH VITEX**  
TASK FORCE



**NC** State University  
A&T State University  
**COOPERATIVE  
EXTENSION**  
Empowering People • Providing Solutions

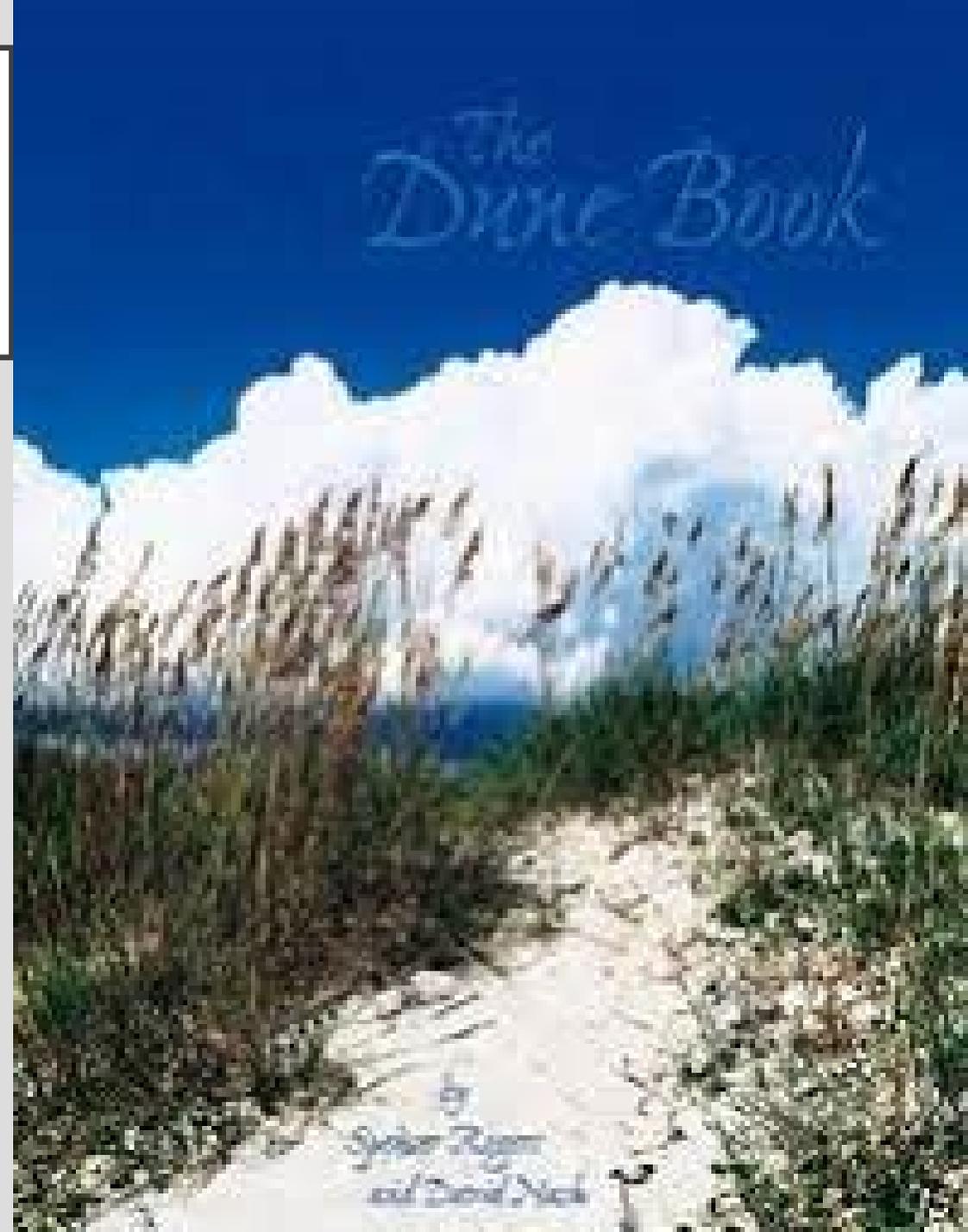


NORTH-CAROLINA  
AQUARIUM  
at Fort Fisher

**Sea Grant**  
North Carolina

# THE DUNE BOOK

*The Dune Book*





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- Supervisor – New Hanover Soil and Water Conservation District
  - <https://soilwater.nhcgov.com/>