

Grow native!

Gardeners and land owners looking to add plants to their property can help the local pollinators and ecosystem by choosing trees, shrubs and plants that are native to our area.

West Virginia University Extension Service agents reminds us that native plants are accustomed to local soil makeup, so they need less fertilizer and soil additives to thrive.

Because native plants have survived here over an extended period of time, they can handle local weather without needing to be covered or shielded from extremes.

Native plants have "learned to get along well with the local wildlife," say the plant experts. That means they are naturally resistant to local pests and beneficial to wildlife that lives here.

"Natives pass on the West Virginia Garden of the past to our children," the University says.

Non-native plants, while appealing and interesting, sometimes turn into invasive species, crowding out local plants and trees that are a food source of wildlife in our area. Bamboo and purple loosestrife are two examples of plants that can take over an area once planted.

Plants that do well in shade in West Virginia:

- Eastern Redbud
- Arrowwood Viburnum
- Maidenhair Fern
- Cardinal Flower
- Wild Columbine

Plants that do well in sun here:

- Butterfly Weed
- Brown-eyed Susans
- Coral Honeysuckle
- Garden Phlox
- Spotted Joe-Pye Weed
- Common Milkweed.

For more information on native plantings, contact the Morgan County Extension Service at 304-258-8400 or visit the West Virginia University Extension Service website.



Local Wild Columbine

Eidolon Nature Preserve: a mountain ideal

A 354-acre forested property along the top and east sides of Sideling Hill west of Great Cacapon was so treasured by its owners as a wild place in the county that it was left to the Nature Conservancy after the deaths of its last owners. Since 2006, the Nature Conservancy and the Potomac Valley Audubon Society have cared for Eidolon Nature Preserve as a place for birders and nature lovers to explore.

Located at 2146 Orleans Road in Great Cacapon, the property was most recently the vacation home of Louis and Marguerite Zapolean. The couple bought it after many visits in 1945 for \$700. They named it Eidolon, taking the name from women of Greek mythology that were created by Zeus from mist and light. Eidolon means "image of the ideal."

The Zapolean's built a stone cottage on the property off Orleans Road in 1951. They and friends used the cottage until an accidental fire gutted the cottage in 1962. The stone structure still stands on the property, and has been given a new roof to protect its interior in recent years.

After the death of her husband, Mrs. Zapolean continued to visit the property and helped make a listing of the plants and animals she saw regularly on the land there. She also oversaw the creation of the first trails there. Now there are several miles of marked trail that criss-cross the preserve. An



The Zapolean house at Eidolon.

photo by Stuart Gloyd

old coach road there dates back to the 1780s.

The preserve is known to be the home of Cerulean warblers and many other species of birds, reptiles and special plants.

Visitors can reach the preserve by taking Route 9 west over Cacapon Mountain, through the village of Great Cacapon and further west. Turn onto Detour Road and follow 9/10 of a mile. Take a right on Orleans Road and follow 2.1 miles up Sideling Hill. The entrance to Eidolon will be on the right, marked by a green gate and two

stone pillars. There is a parking area outside the gate.

Visitors are reminded the preserve is home to wild animals, including venomous species of snakes. Deer hunting is permitted in season. ATVs and horseback riding are not permitted. Visitors should carry out what they carry in to the preserve.

For more information, call the Potomac Valley Audubon Society at 304-676-3397 or visit www.potomacaudubon.org/preserves/eidolon/. A trail map and brochure are available for download.

