

Identifying Your Plant Purchase

Helpful Definitions

- **Native** plants occur naturally in an area prior to European settlement. These plants are adapted to local conditions, are easy to care for, and usually present an increased value to wildlife.
- **Exotic** plants are introduced by human intervention from another area or country.
- **Naturalized** plants are exotic plants that escaped cultivation and now grow in the wild.
- **Wildflowers** are flowering plants that grow in the wild.
- **Invasive** plants compete vigorously and take over habitat. The Ohio Department of Agriculture defines invasive plants as those non-native to Ohio whose introduction is likely to cause economic or environmental harm, or harm to human health.
- **Noxious plants** can injure agricultural crops and livestock due to their invasiveness, toxicity and other harmful characteristics. They are subject to state or federal laws.
- A **Genus** is a larger category that usually contains many separate species. For example, the *Phlox* genus can contain many different species:

Woodland phlox (*Phlox divaricata*)

Smooth phlox (*Phlox glaberrima*)

Moss phlox (*Phlox subulata*)

- **Cultivars or “Nativars”** are native plants cultivated for the nursery trade. Some occurred naturally and others are hybrids or clones. Sometimes these plants when grown from seed will look different than their parent plant. You will sometimes encounter varieties, abbreviated as “var.” These plants are natural genetic mutations.

**Straight species,
cultivars, or varieties
of native plants are
preferred Community
Backyards purchases.**



- All plants have a **Common Name** or what the plant is usually referred to regionally. This varies and can even change depending on who’s trying to sell the plant! Because of this variability, a consistent two-part botanical name in Latin is the best way to identify plants. Both names are usually present on the plant tag that comes with your plant.

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Reading Your Plant Tag



Common names:

Candy stripe phlox, moss phlox, creeping phlox

Botanical/Latin name:

Phlox subulata 'Candy Stripe'

↑
Genus

↑
Species

↑
Cultivar (if present)

Common names:

Spiderwort, dayflower, spider-lily

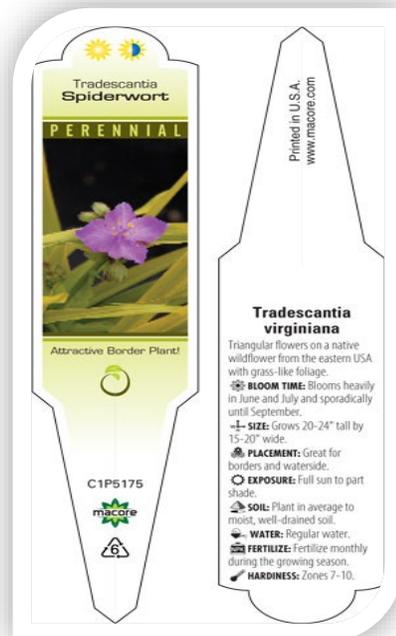
Botanical/Latin name:

Tradescantia virginiana

↑
Genus

↑
Species

No cultivar name in single quotes is present.
This is called a *straight species*.



The following vendors specialize in Ohio-natives. You may find less common perennial and woody (shrubs/trees) natives here that are sure to be eligible Backyards purchases even if not pre-listed by our staff. All local nurseries do sell some native plants, but you may have to know what you're looking for!

- Franklin Soil and Water Spring Plant Sale, Jan-mid-March. 614-486-9613. Columbus. www.franklinswcd.org
*Also sells exotic edible plants; ask for natives.
- Natives in Harmony. 419-688-9800, Marengo. www.nativesinharmony.com
- Riverside Native Trees and Shrubs, 740-815-3230. Delaware. www.riversidenativetrees.com
- Scioto Gardens Nursery, container plants on site. 470-363-8264, Delaware.
www.sciotogardens.com
*Also sells exotic plants; ask for natives.