

# Pollinator-Friendly Native Shrubs for Foundations

By Elizabeth Craig

**All of the shrubs listed below have naturally compact growth habits or are available as compact cultivars; making them suitable for foundation plantings and smaller garden spaces. For best results match your plants carefully to site conditions. Water as needed to establish for 2-3 years. It may be advisable to do soil testing to determine pH near a foundation.**

**Consult the [Missouri Botanical Garden Plantfinder](#) for tips on care and habit.**

**Inkberry Holly** (*Ilex glabra*) Evergreen shrub with a boxwood-like habit, small leaves and neat, compact form. Inconspicuous white flowers bloom in May; attracting diverse bee species like small carpenter bees, below. Dwarf cultivars like 'Densa' or 'Compacta' will retain a neat, clumping habit; unlike the straight species which can get leggy and colonize. Black berries in fall enjoyed by birds. Host plant for Henry's Elfin's butterfly.



**Summersweet** (*Clethra alnifolia*) Fragrant white flowers bloom mid-summer. Attracts butterflies (like Eastern Tiger Swallowtails, below) bees and hummingbirds. Tolerates poor drainage and wet areas; drought-resistant once established. Mass planting (3 or more plants) work well.



**Dwarf Fothergilla** (*Fothergilla gardenii*) Spring blooming; fragrant, showy, white bottle brush inflorescences at branch tips. Fall color yellow, orange and red. Dwarf varieties grow 2-3 ft. Water needs moderate, full sun to part shade. Attracts butterflies and other pollinators. Mass plantings very attractive. Native to Southeastern US.



**Oakleaf Hydrangea** (*Hydrangea quercifolia*) Striking oak-shaped leaves with intense fall color: shades of pink, red, purple. Blooms in summer, large panicle flowers white to variations of pink which attract bees and hoverflies. Attractive peeling bark in winter. Full sun to part shade. Native to Southeastern US.



**Shrubby St John's Wort** (*Hypericum prolificum*) Summer-flowering with long bloom season. Plant in full sun for maximum blooms; will tolerate partial shade. Dense, erect, mounding, multi-stemmed rounded form. Heat, drought and soil compaction tolerant. Important source of pollen for bees.



**Dwarf Eastern White Pine** (*Pinus Strobus 'Nana'*) Dwarf needled evergreen, slow growing; full sun to part shade. Deer, rabbit tolerant. Host plant for 203 species of lepidoptera, including the Gray Hairstreak butterfly.



*All plant photos courtesy Missouri Botanical Garden Plantfinder*

*Insect photos: Karalyn Lamb*