



NATIVE PLANT SPECIALIST PROGRAM

The mission of the Native Plant Specialist program is to foster stewardship, sustainable landscaping, and management of ecologically-threatening invasive species through public education about native plants.

Would you like to learn more about the beautiful plants that grow in nature? Would you like to learn how to use them in your landscape? Native Plant Specialist (NPS) courses are a fun way to gain knowledge about the native plants of Ohio.

Why Choose Native Plants?

Ohio has a wealth of native plants, colorful wildflowers, grasses, shrubs, and trees that are well-adapted to our variable climate, soils, and temperatures. Native plants are great for home landscaping because of their adaptability.

What is a Native Plant Specialist Course?

One NPS course consists of three outdoor field sessions that are four hours in length. There are three courses offered throughout the year: spring, summer, and fall.

NPS courses are taught at various locations with diverse displays of flora in Medina and surrounding counties by qualified field naturalists and botany experts.

In each course, you will learn common and scientific names, ecological relationships, and human uses of 40 to 50 plants. You will also develop skills in using family features and a botanical key to identify plants. The course includes special emphasis on natives useful for landscaping and alien invasives that threaten native ecosystems.



What Course Options are Available?



1. Earn a Native Plant Steward certificate by completing each of the three (3) Native Plant Specialist courses (spring, summer and fall) in this, or future, years.
2. Become a Certified Native Plant Specialist by fulfilling all requirements listed below.

****Applicants for both options of the NPS Program must be 18 years old or older.**

What is a Certified Native Plant Specialist?

A certified Native Plant Specialist receives training and certification from the NPS program, then uses the knowledge gained from the program to educate the public about the importance of native plants.

Requirements for certification status are as follows:

- Demonstrate the interest and ability to educate others through employment or volunteer status with an agency
- Complete each of the three (3) Native Plant Specialist courses (spring, summer and fall) in this, or future, years.
- Pass all field exams
- Teach at least 20 people per course taken (60 total) about Ohio plants using knowledge gained from program
- Report the number of public educational contacts made to the Northeast Ohio Native Plant Specialist program coordinator

How Do I Apply?

Contact Shelley Tender, NPS coordinator, at stender@medinacounty.gov for an application and course guidelines. **Deadline for the fall course is July 22, 2025.**

****The NPS Program is modeled after an award-winning program offered through Colorado State University County Extension offices.**