SITE-TO-SOURCE / SAMPLE CONSULTATION

Native plants chosen with documentary care

Onondaga Hill, New York

$249 Native Plant Palette • Three planting areas; documentary native status

Illustrative report for a fictional client and site; no real property inspection or purchase. Sample edition: 7 Nov 2026 | PHY-SAMPLE-001-249_Onondaga_Hill_Documentary_Native

Your recommended direction

Plan a phased habitat-minded garden with 28 options, while treating county occurrence claims as evidence labels—not absolute certification of an individual plant or seed source.

The client behind the question

Fictional client: Dorothy Gale

"I like the wider plan, but I keep running into different definitions of 'native' when I shop. A nursery may call a plant native to the Northeast, and I want to know whether there is actual information for Onondaga County. Please show where the documentation is strong, where it's just a regional recommendation, and what I ought to ask the nursery before buying. I still need the plants matched to my sunny front, wet patch and wooded edge - and I have Toto to think about."

Illustrative mock submission, not an actual customer testimonial. Its wording is reconstructed from the original scenario.

Selected answers from the client intake

Intake question	Client's answer
The additional question	How well documented is each species for New York and Onondaga County, rather than simply the eastern United States?
The same three habitats	Sunny front, spring-wet rear depression and mature-tree woodland edge.
What I value	Practical habitat choices plus transparent documentary nativity categories, even where evidence is incomplete.
Specific concerns	Historical county listings may not prove an extant population or the origin of nursery stock.
Shopping instructions	Identify trade names, confirm plant origin and buy only lawfully propagated stock, especially for protected species.
Project rhythm	Phase the planting rather than spending the entire implementation budget in one order.

How we answered the client's questions

Client asked	How this report responds
Does a historic county record prove a plant is locally native today?	No. The report labels historic listings separately from regional candidates whose county voucher was not verified.
Do I still get the actual garden design choices?	Yes. The 28-option palette retains sun, wet-area and shade suitability and adds documentary notes to those decisions.
Which plants deserve sourcing care?	Christmas fern and white turtlehead require attention to lawful propagation; scarlet bee-balm is also on New York's exploitably vulnerable list and should be sourced lawfully.
What if a catalog uses a different scientific name?	The plant list supports name verification and requests for propagation source rather than accepting an unexamined trade label.

What we clarified in the simulated written intake

Follow-up question	Client reply and resulting decision
Are you looking for evidence categories rather than a formal new herbarium survey?	Client: Yes. I want the strength and limits of published records made clear. Report decision: Provide historic-local versus regional-candidate categories without implying new voucher examination.

The plant recommendations and next steps that follow show the result of these client-specific choices. Site observations remain fictional, and conditions must be confirmed before real installation.

How we interpreted this project

The same sunny, wet and shaded Onondaga Hill garden is reviewed at a more evidence-intensive tier. An additional objective is to distinguish broadly regional natives from plants with reported historical Onondaga County records.

The $249 Native Plant Palette retains the residential planning elements and adds documentary nativity notes, with one consolidated clarification rather than a redesign. No new herbarium survey or onsite inspection is claimed.

Three decisions that matter most

01 Choose species by microhabitat first: sunshine, summer moisture and root competition.

02 Use the county evidence notation to understand the strength and geographic reach of each claim.

03 Favor legally propagated stock and confirm the plant name and seed origin before ordering.

What the extra documentary review adds

Along with planting recommendations, the native-plant tier distinguishes historical county collection listings from broader regional native candidates. A historical compilation is not a substitute for examining every voucher or certifying nursery provenance.

Plant recommendations

28 screened plant choices are presented below. They are alternatives organized by planting environment and use—not a shopping list you must buy in full. Mature dimensions and growing conditions remain approximate; confirm the supplied plant form, actual site light and water before purchase.

Sunny front

Plant / selection status	How it may work and what to check
Wild columbine *Aquilegia canadensis* First choice Geography: Historic local listing (not newly examined voucher)	Early red/yellow flowers; use shaded front edges rather than the hottest strip. **Best fit:** Part sun; dry-mesic; 2–3 ft · spring
Hairy beardtongue *Penstemon hirsutus* First choice Geography: Regional candidate; county voucher not verified	A restrained flowering accent for lean, rocky soil; avoid soggy ground. **Best fit:** Sun; dry, free-draining; 1–2.5 ft · early summer
Wild bergamot *Monarda fistulosa* First choice Geography: Regional candidate; county voucher not verified	Strong pollinator appeal; allow air circulation and some spread. **Best fit:** Sun; dry-mesic; 2–4 ft · midsummer
Little bluestem *Schizachyrium scoparium* First choice Geography: Regional candidate; county voucher not verified	Warm-season bunchgrass with copper fall/winter structure. **Best fit:** Sun; dry; 2–4 ft · summer–winter
Early goldenrod *Solidago juncea* Alternative Geography: Historic local listing (not newly examined voucher)	Brings yellow flowers earlier than many fall goldenrods. **Best fit:** Sun; dry-mesic; 2–4 ft · summer
Gray goldenrod *Solidago nemoralis* First choice Geography: Historic local listing (not newly examined voucher)	Smaller goldenrod for sunnier, poorer soils; allow informal drifts. **Best fit:** Sun; dry, lean; 1–2.5 ft · late summer
Smooth aster *Symphyotrichum laeve var. laeve* First choice Geography: Historic local listing (not newly examined voucher)	Late pollinator bloom; may need support in rich or shaded conditions. **Best fit:** Sun; dry-mesic; 2–4 ft · late season
Poverty oatgrass *Danthonia spicata* Alternative Geography: Historic local listing (not newly examined voucher)	Specialist option for difficult lean patches; trade availability less predictable. **Best fit:** Sun; very dry, thin soil; 0.5–1.5 ft · fine texture

Woodland edge

Plant / selection status	How it may work and what to check
Pennsylvania sedge *Carex pensylvanica* First choice Geography: Regional candidate; county voucher not verified	Low grass-like texture under trees; establishment can be slow. **Best fit:** Part shade–shade; dry; 0.5–1 ft · foliage
Plantain-leaved sedge *Carex plantaginea* First choice Geography: Historic local listing (not newly examined voucher)	Broad, pleated leaves suit the better-moistened shaded margin. **Best fit:** Shade; moist-mesic; 0.5–1.5 ft · foliage
Loose-flowered sedge *Carex laxiflora* Alternative Geography: Historic local listing (not newly examined voucher)	Subtle native texture for richer wooded soil; availability may be limited. **Best fit:** Part shade; mesic; 0.5–1.5 ft · foliage
Wild blue phlox *Phlox divaricata* First choice Geography: Historic local listing (not newly examined voucher)	Spring flowers; keep sheltered from hard summer drought. **Best fit:** Part shade; mesic; 0.7–1.5 ft · spring
Christmas fern *Polystichum acrostichoides* First choice Geography: Historic local listing (not newly examined voucher)	Winter foliage; ASPCA lists as non-toxic to dogs; nursery-propagated only. **Best fit:** Shade; mesic–dry; 1–2 ft · evergreen Check: New York lists this species as exploitably vulnerable under 6 NYCRR 193.3. Use documented, lawfully propagated stock; do not collect it from the wild for this project.
Blue-stemmed goldenrod *Solidago caesia* First choice Geography: Historic local listing (not newly examined voucher)	Delicate golden flowers along stems in a lightly shaded edge. **Best fit:** Part shade; dry-mesic; 1.5–3 ft · fall
Zigzag goldenrod *Solidago flexicaulis* Alternative Geography: Historic local listing (not newly examined voucher)	Good woodland bloom; can spread strongly in richer beds. **Best fit:** Shade; mesic; 1.5–3 ft · fall
Blue wood aster *Symphyotrichum cordifolium* First choice Geography: Historic local listing (not newly examined voucher)	Late flowers in partial shade; leave room for self-seeding. **Best fit:** Part shade; dry-mesic; 2–4 ft · fall

Plant / selection status	How it may work and what to check
Creeping foamflower *Tiarella stolonifera* Alternative Geography: Regional candidate; county voucher not verified	Low native groundcover; verify true stoloniferous species at purchase. **Best fit:** Shade; mesic; 0.5–1 ft · spring Check: Current Kew treatment recognizes Tiarella stolonifera; nurseries may use Tiarella cordifolia broadly. Check the supplied plant identification before substituting.

Seasonal wet area

Plant / selection status	How it may work and what to check
White turtlehead *Chelone glabra* First choice Geography: Historic local listing (not newly examined voucher)	Reserve for soil that remains moist well into summer; nursery-propagated only. **Best fit:** Part sun; moist-wet; 2–4 ft · late summer Check: New York lists this species as exploitably vulnerable under 6 NYCRR 193.3. Use documented, lawfully propagated stock; do not collect it from the wild for this project.
Golden alexanders *Zizia aurea* First choice Geography: Historic local listing (not newly examined voucher)	Bridges spring bloom and moist-to-average conditions. **Best fit:** Sun–part shade; mesic; 1.5–3 ft · late spring
Allegheny monkeyflower *Mimulus ringens* Alternative Geography: Regional candidate; county voucher not verified	Conditional: establish only after repeated wetness is confirmed. **Best fit:** Sun–part shade; wet; 1–3 ft · summer
Sallow sedge *Carex lurida* Alternative Geography: Regional candidate; county voucher not verified	Wet-ground sedge; not a substitute for a dry lawn edge. **Best fit:** Sun–part shade; wet; 1.5–3 ft · foliage
Bladder sedge *Carex intumescens* Alternative Geography: Regional candidate; county voucher not verified	Useful where moisture persists beside tree cover; seedheads add texture. **Best fit:** Part shade; moist-wet; 1–2 ft · foliage
New england aster *Symphyotrichum novae-angliae* First choice Geography: Historic local listing (not newly examined voucher)	Tall late-flowering accent, best toward the back of an open planting. **Best fit:** Sun; mesic-moist; 3–5 ft · fall
Blue vervain *Verbena hastata* Alternative Geography: Regional candidate; county voucher not verified	Upright flowers; site on the reliably moist side, not a drought-prone bank. **Best fit:** Sun–part sun; moist; 2–5 ft · summer

Plant / selection status	How it may work and what to check
Scarlet bee-balm *Monarda didyma* First choice Geography: Historic local listing (not newly examined voucher)	For the moist margin, not standing water; airflow helps limit mildew. **Best fit:** Part sun; mesic-moist; 2–4 ft · summer **Check:** For the moist margin, not standing water; airflow helps limit mildew. NY protected-plant sourcing: do not wild-collect; obtain lawful nursery-propagated material. New York lists this species as exploitably vulnerable under 6 NYCRR 193.3. Use documented, lawfully propagated stock; do not collect it from the wild for this project.

Shrubs and screening

Plant / selection status	How it may work and what to check
Red-osier dogwood *Cornus sericea* Alternative Geography: Historic local listing (not newly examined voucher)	Strong winter stems and bird cover; allow room for suckering. **Best fit:** Sun–part sun; moist; 6–9 ft · shrub
Northern spicebush *Lindera benzoin* Alternative Geography: Historic local listing (not newly examined voucher)	Woodland-edge screening; not for the driest root-filled area. **Best fit:** Part shade; moist; 6–12 ft · shrub
Ninebark *Physocarpus opulifolius* Alternative Geography: Regional candidate; county voucher not verified	Flexible screening option; choose straight species and size carefully. **Best fit:** Sun–part sun; dry-mesic; 5–10 ft · shrub

How to put the recommendations to work

01 Begin on the wet-to-average edge with a handful of repeatable species.

02 Expand sunny and shaded areas using observations from the first growing season.

03 Keep county-record documentation and supplier provenance with planting records.

Important site and safety considerations

- Historical county occurrence is based on a transcribed local collection compilation, not fresh inspection of original vouchers.
- Some protected native plants, including scarlet bee-balm, require lawful nursery propagation and no wild harvest.

Plant sourcing and expectations

Ask growers for the exact scientific name (including any trade synonym), the plant or seed format, the propagation source and whether stock is suitable for the local climate. A nursery listing is a lead for shopping, not proof of current inventory, correct provenance, or guaranteed establishment.

Examples of places to inquire

Local native-plant organizations and regional nursery directories. Use for lawful, nursery-propagated stock; verify species and origin before purchase.

County record notation: “Historic local listing” means a prior Onondaga County report in a secondary compilation, not a voucher examined in this project. It is evidence of reported occurrence, not proof of indigenous origin, present-day persistence or nursery provenance. Records without an audited original reference remain provisional.

Sources consulted

The references below support the regional botanical, gardening, or regulatory decisions in this illustration. Published range, nursery listings and generalized soils information do not prove parcel-scale conditions, county indigeneity or seed-lot origin. Check dated rules and availability before making real purchases.

websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov - app

plants.sc.egov.usda.gov - home

powo.science.kew.org -

millstgardens.com - native-plant-inventory

flnps.org - plants

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nyflora.org - new-york-flora-atlas

dec.ny.gov - sites

commons.wikimedia.org - wiki

law.cornell.edu - regulations

New York protected native plants - 6 NYCRR 193.3