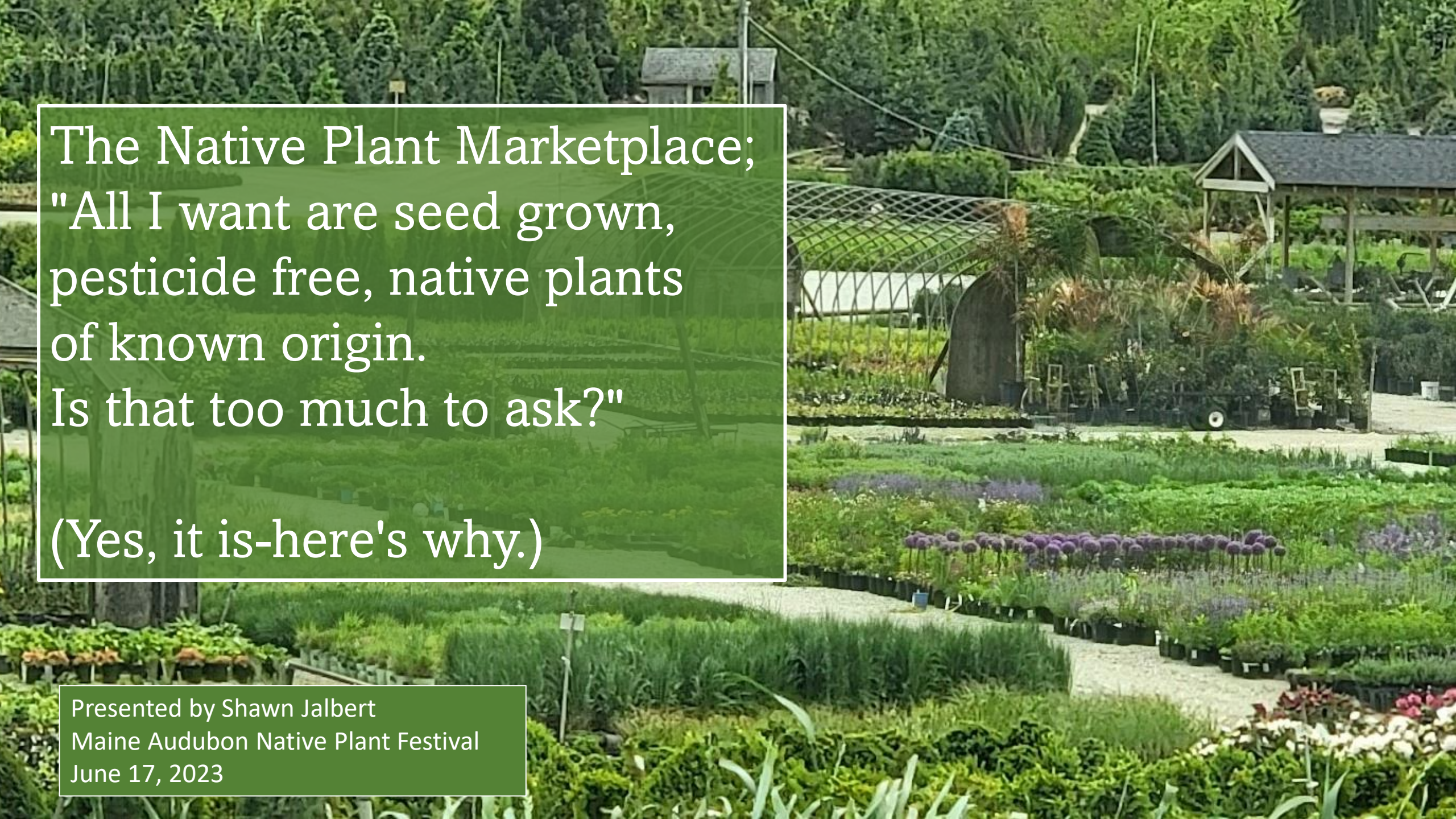


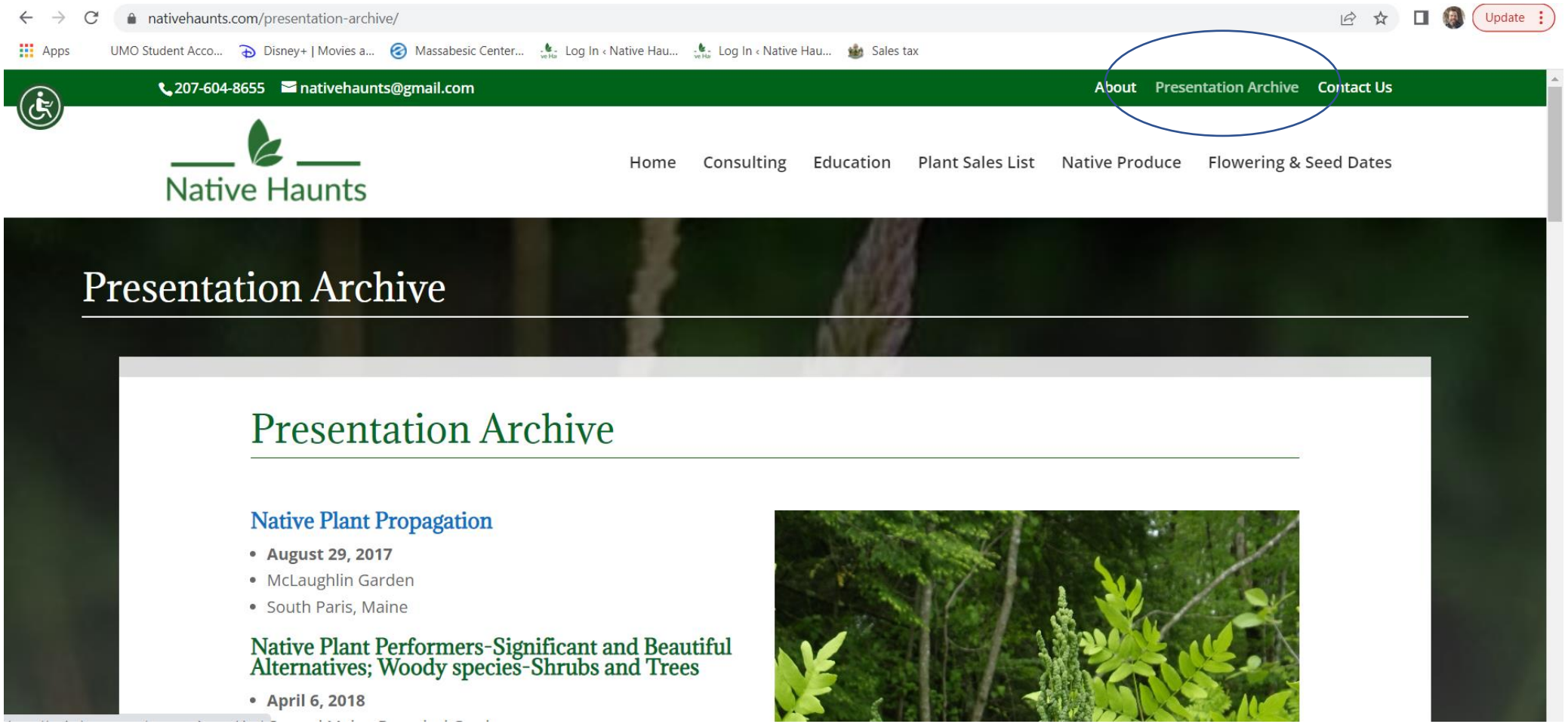
The Native Plant Marketplace;

"All I want are seed grown, pesticide free, native plants of known origin.
Is that too much to ask?"

(Yes, it is-here's why.)

Presented by Shawn Jalbert
Maine Audubon Native Plant Festival
June 17, 2023

This Power Point presentation will be available on my website nativehaunts.com under *Presentation Archive*



Your local native plant specialty nursery!
Potted trees, shrubs, and perennials.

Native Haunts

Mountain Road,
Alfred, ME

207-604-8655
nativehaunts@gmail.com
www.nativehaunts.com

- Large selection of native plant material available in a variety of sizes and quantities.
- Plants are grown in Alfred and from other area producers.
- Landscape consultation services; what to plant, where to plant it, how to get it.

"All I want are seed grown, pesticide free, native plants, of known origin. Is that too much to ask?"

Why is it so hard to buy native plants?

- Why don't most nurseries know *where* their plants came from?
- Why don't most nurseries know *how* their plants were grown?
- Why don't more conventional nurseries carry native plants?
- The "Big Hort." influence/concept.
- Why is it so hard to find native plants grown from seed?
- Are native plant varieties bad? Are "cloned" native plants bad?
- Why can't we have pesticide free native plants?
- And, *how do we know* if pesticides have been used?

Why don’t most nurseries know *where* their plants came from?

Why don’t most nurseries know *how* their plants were grown?

Plants and seeds pass through many hands before they get to their final destination.

- Point of origin and propagation information gets lost early on.
- There's little (perceived) incentive for this information to the follow the plant.

Here's one scenario;

- Seed is purchased from a company in Minnesota.
- They grow some of their seed on site or may bring in seed from another producer.
- We do not have access to this seed origin information, so already the trail has gone cold.

Here’s one scenario (continued);

- The seed from Minnesota is purchased by a nursery in Michigan.
- It is grown out to a small plant, which is called a liner.

Here's one scenario (continued);

- The liner grown out in Michigan, from seed purchased in Minnesota (from unknown sources) is now sold to a grower in Maine.
- The Maine grower now plants out the liner for a few years until it's big enough for sale.
- The finished liner now heads to a retail operation in-state or out-of-state where it is sold to its final destination, which really could be anywhere in the country.

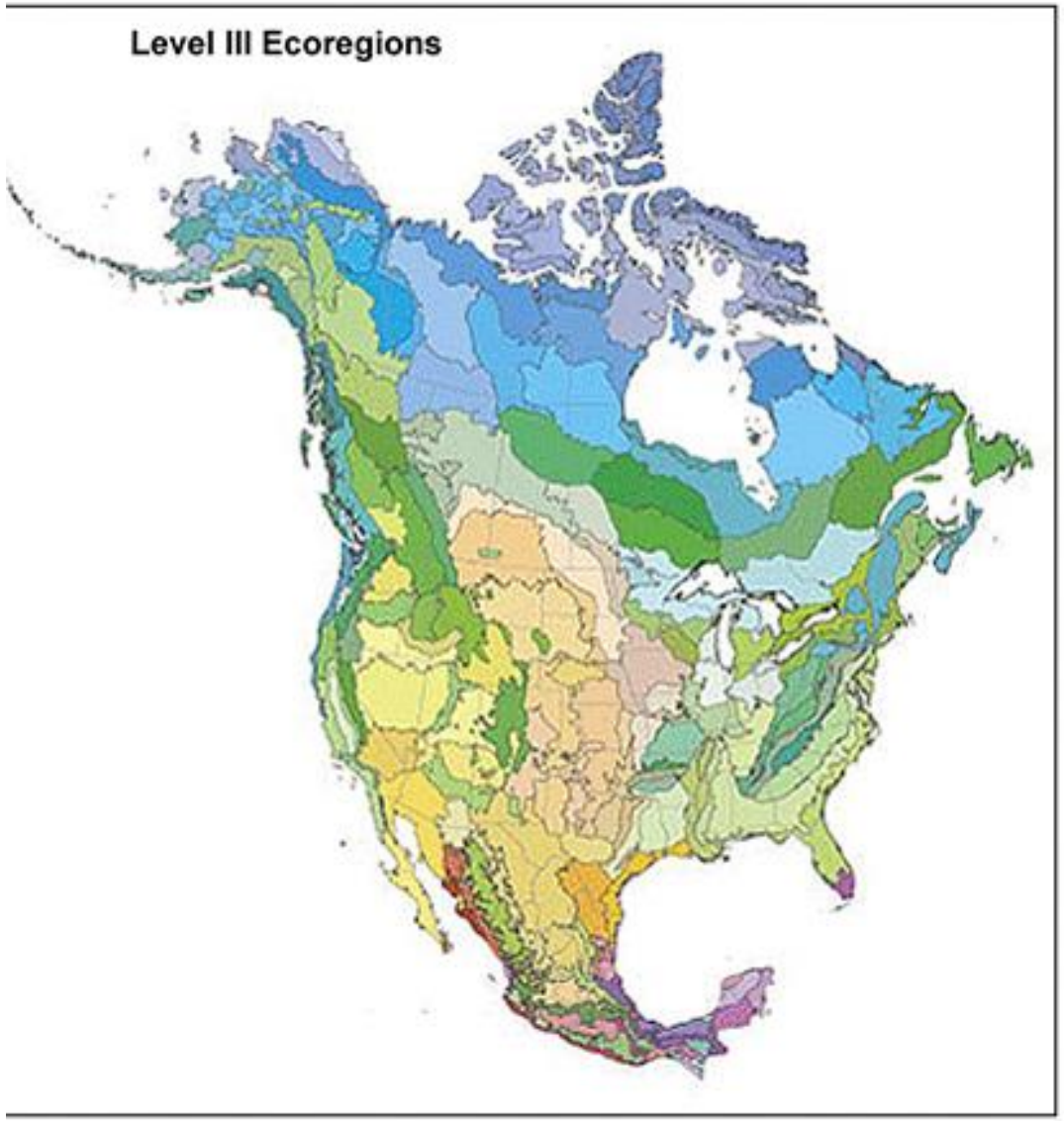
On a plant's journey from seed to sale it's easy to see how, unless produced entirely locally, very few people know how their plants were grown or where they came from. How could they?

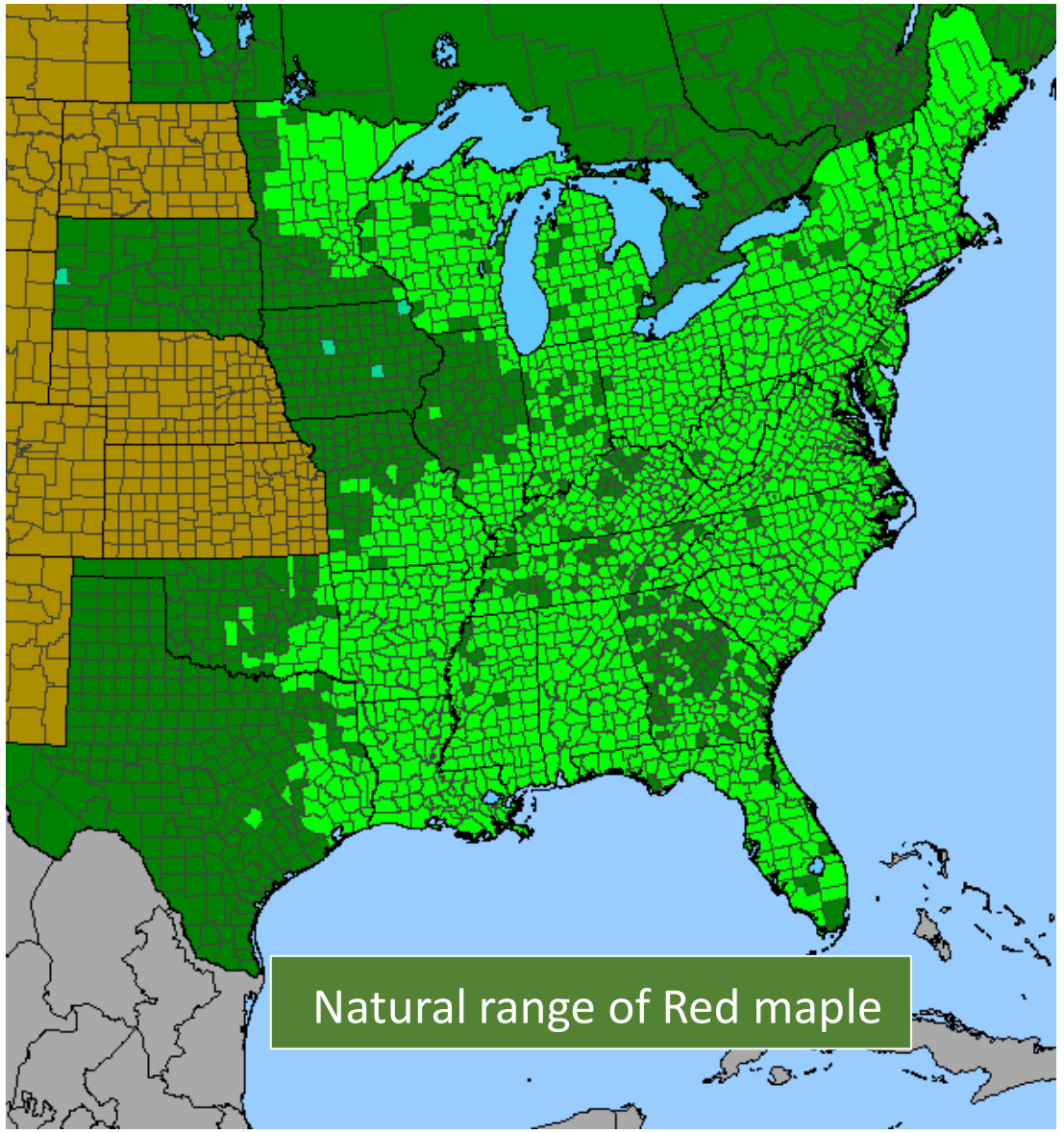
The information just doesn't follow through the many hands it passes through.

Van Berkum's Nursery in Deerfield, NH is a step ahead;
they have a line of plants that are of local ecotype.

- This will be the next big trend in native plants as the market matures.

Ecotypes are populations of a species from a particular ecoregion.





Ecoregions


Support your local farmers, as has always been the case, *they have the best local products*. Maine has an impressive number of local native plant growers who know how and where their plants where produced.
Camden Native Plant Festival, Sept. 2022

Even though most nurseries don't know where their plants come from, *there are many that do.*

sweetfern
MAINE

native plants grown from seed
Cape Neddick, ME

sweetfernmaine.org

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basrougefarm.com

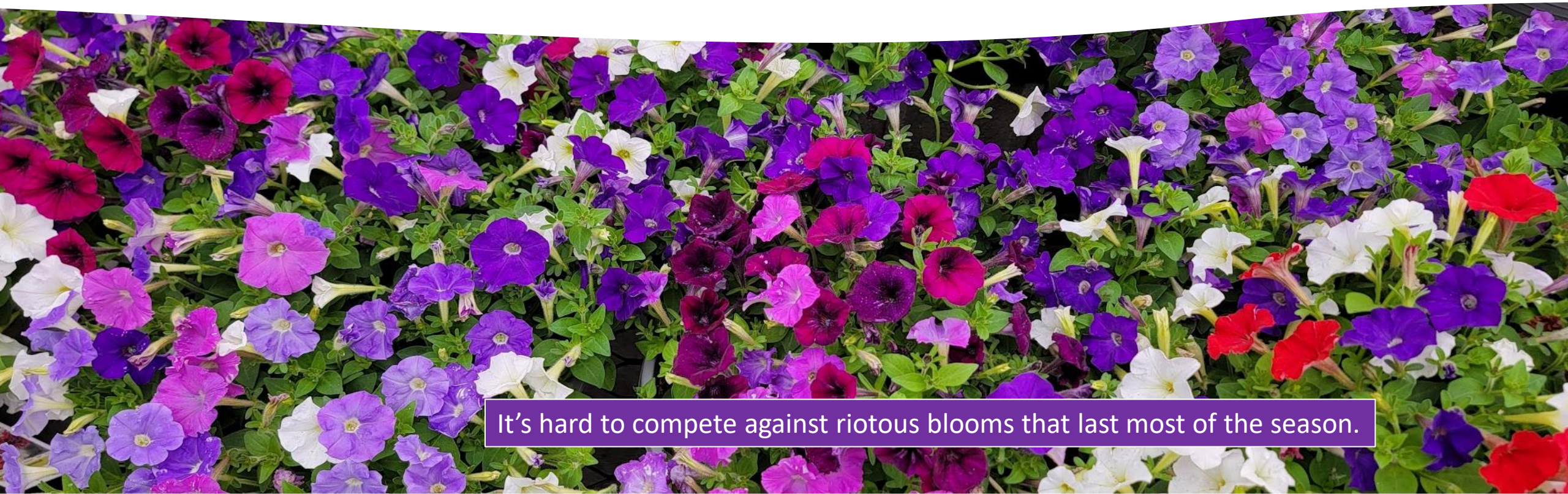
Rooted elements

Montville, ME
rootedelements.me

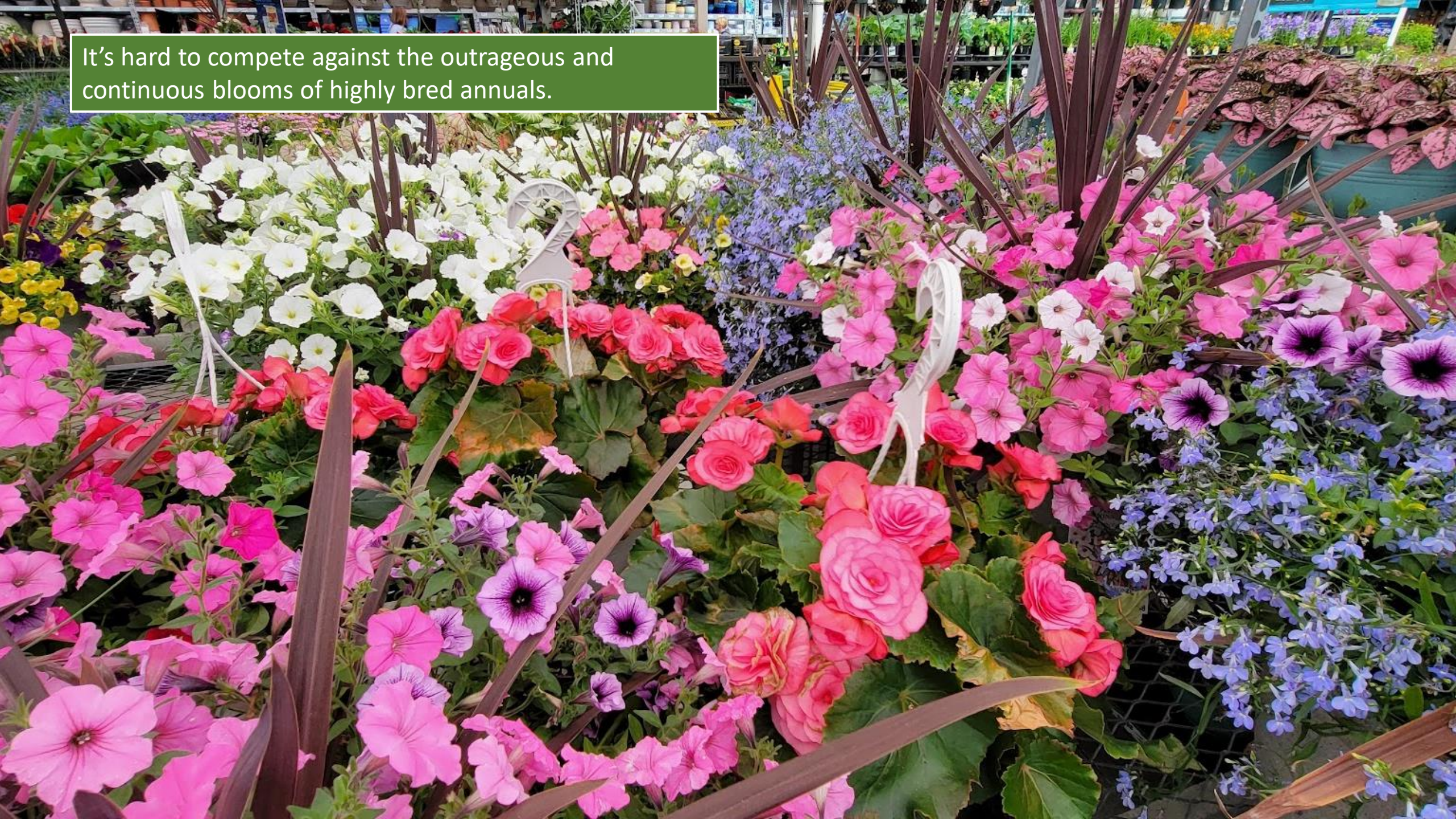
Why don’t more conventional nurseries carry native plants?

Why don’t more conventional nurseries carry native plants?

- There is the perceived notion that that plant buying consumer doesn’t want native plants.
- Lack of familiarity; despite the ironic fact that native plants are growing all around us, the plant buying public is largely unaware of our native plant flora, how important it is, and foundationally even what a native plant is.
- Retailers need to make money; they must fill their shelves with plants that have curb appeal and name recognition.
- Trying to sell plants that people don’t know about is a risky financial proposition (but it doesn’t have to be).

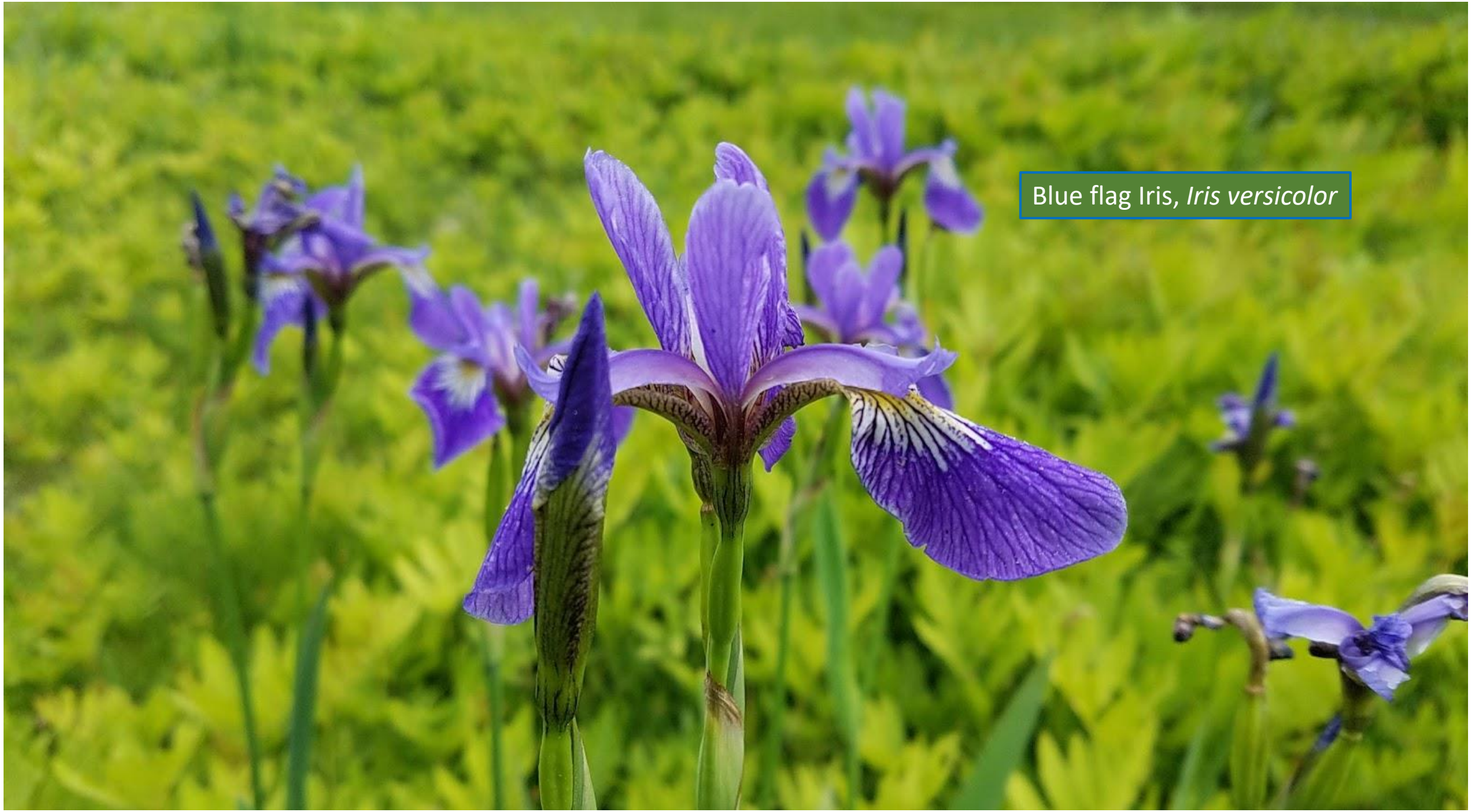


It’s hard to compete against riotous blooms that last most of the season.

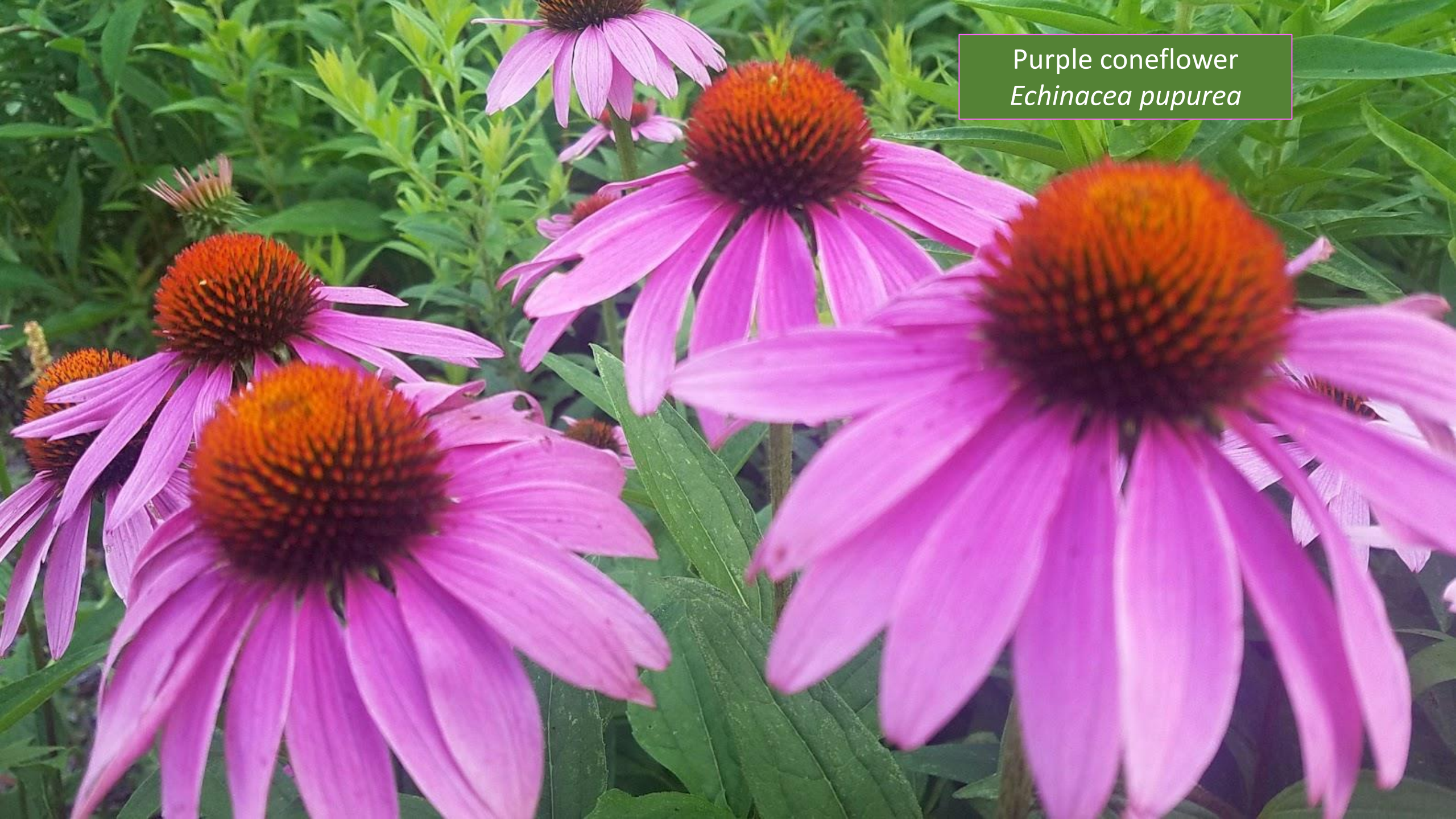

It’s hard to compete against the outrageous and continuous blooms of highly bred annuals.


Our native plants in an “unimproved” form are beautiful and ecologically functional.
Willowleaf bluestar,
Amsonia tabernaemontana


Cranesbill geranium,
Geranium maculatum


Blue flag Iris, *Iris versicolor*


Virgins Bower
Clematis virginiana


Purple coneflower
Echinacea pupurea


New England aster (*Symphyotrichum novae-angliae)*
and goldenrods (*Solidago canadensis)* in bloom.

“BIG hort.”

The “Big Hort” concept

(big horticulture=large scale industrialized plant production).

- They tell us *what* we want for plants.
- They tell us *how* it needs to be grown.
- *Their* way is *the way* plants are grown.
- (You don’t need to ask questions.)

Why is it so hard to find native plants grown from seed?

Seed grown native plants have been called the gold standard; genetic diversity is ensured, seed grown plants are often more robust.

- Why are seed grown native plants difficult to find?
- How do you know if they are seed grown?

Common milkweed seed.

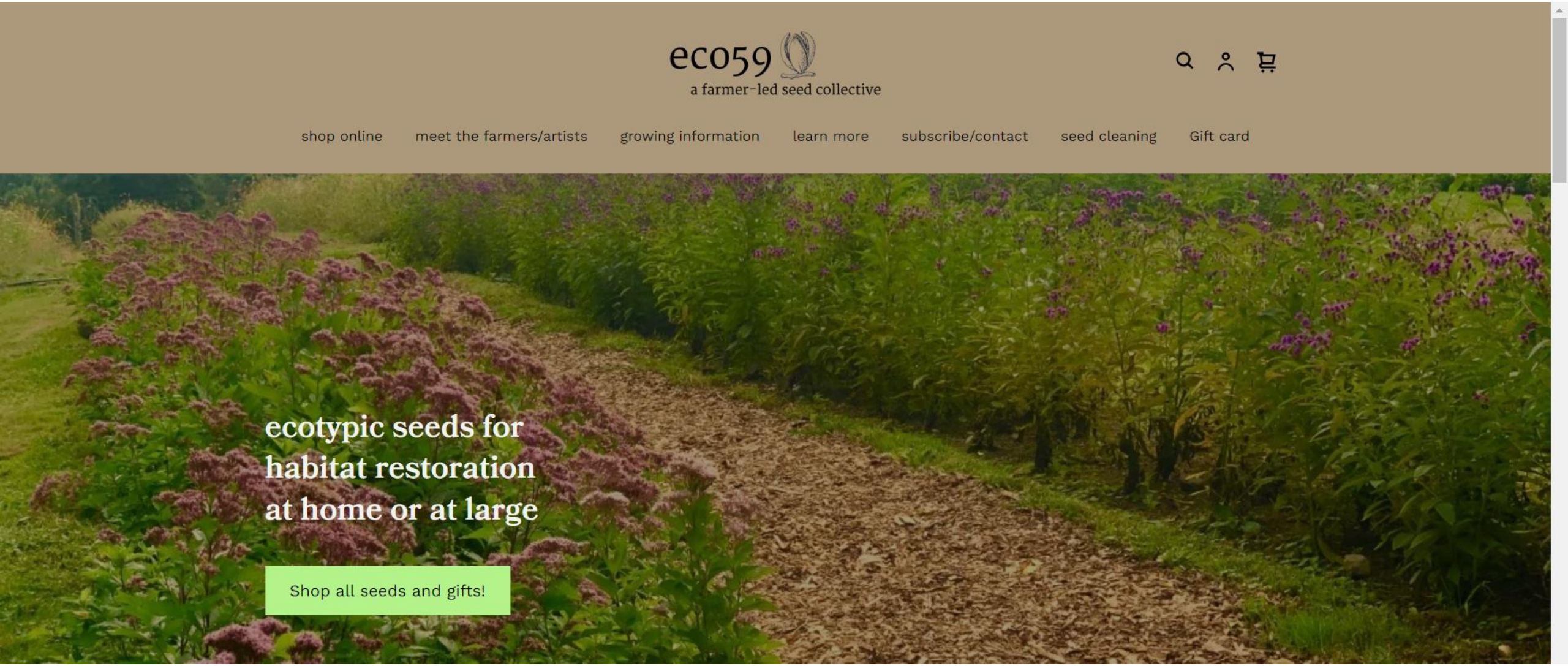

The need for seed; the native plant seed bottleneck.
If only it where this easy.
Seed markets for non-native plants have been well established for over a century. Getting native plant seeds, especially in commercial quantities is challenging.
FERRY~MORSE
FITS OVER 10"x 20" TRAY
Light
FERRY~MORSE
it's time for Gardening

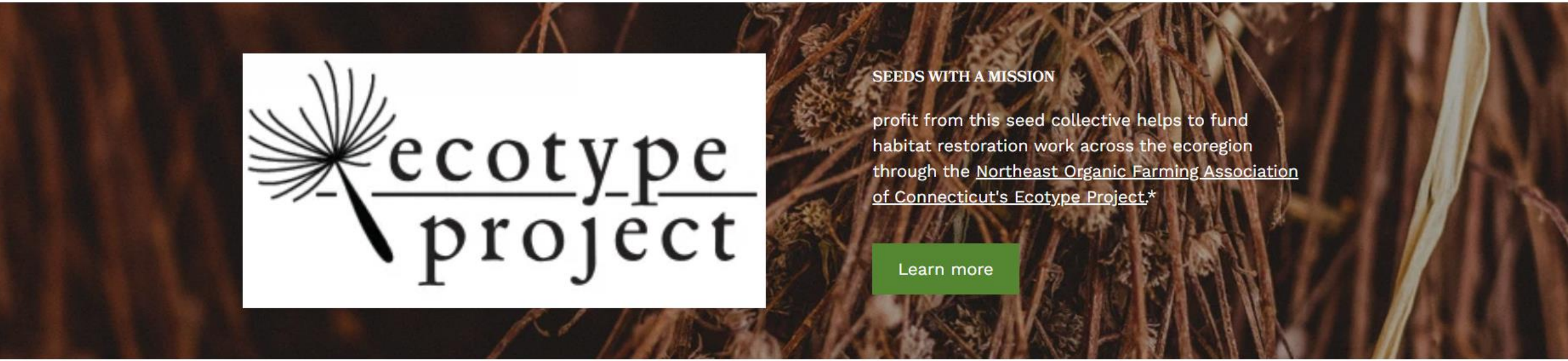
- Native plants have a dubious reputation as being hard to grow from seed.
- Seed germination is erratic and often low.
- Many species require special dormancy breaking requirements.
- Certain species like cranesbill geranium, viburnums, witch hazel, and winterberry take *years to grow from seed.*
- Some species have particular needs with regards to handling and storage; think hydrophilic seeds like acorns and Dutchman's breeches.
- Native plant seeds are hard to get in quantity. Even if a large scale operation were to be contemplated, getting adequate seed is a serious issue ("the seed bottleneck").

Native Plant Trust

Conserving and promoting New England's native plants

We are making progress on seed supply…….





"An important part of the Eco59 mission is to heal a broken landscape. The systematic displacement of people, the destruction of the environment, and the consequent loss of abundance is a direct result of not honoring our relationship with the land around us. I view our work, growing ecotypic seed to restore native plants in the northeast, as a reminder of all that has been lost and all that we must work to restore." - Dina Brewster, eco59 farmer

Wild Seed Project

RETURNING NATIVE PLANTS TO THE MAINE LANDSCAPE

Northeast Native Seeds

ABOUT OUR SEEDS

Wild Seed Project seeds are ethically sourced, hand-collected, cleaned and packaged by staff and trained volunteers in Maine. Seeds are collected from native gardens and private lands with owner permission throughout the state, and are organically grown without the use of harmful pesticides. We carry over 90 species of wild-type and open-pollinated wildflowers, ferns, grasses, and shrubs for a variety of growing conditions. Unless otherwise noted, each seed packet contains 50 - 100 seeds.

We're still out in the field collecting and processing seeds. Out-of-stock species will be replenished as seeds are harvested, cleaned and packaged from September through

New to Native Seed Sowing?

- Start with asters, beardtongues, bee-balms, boneset, coneflowers, lobelias, milkweeds, mountain-mints, and wild strawberries.
- Watch: Seed Sowing 101
- Read: Autumn and Winter Seed

Wildflowers

Alexanders – Golden Alexander (Zizia aurea) Seeds

Alexanders – Heart-leaved Alexander (Zizia aptera) Seeds

Asters — Blue-wood aster (Symphyotrichum cordifolium) Seeds

Asters — Flax-leaved stiff aster (Ionactis linariifolia) Seeds

Asters — Large-leaved wood aster (Eurybia macrophylla)

Asters — New England aster (Symphyotrichum novae-

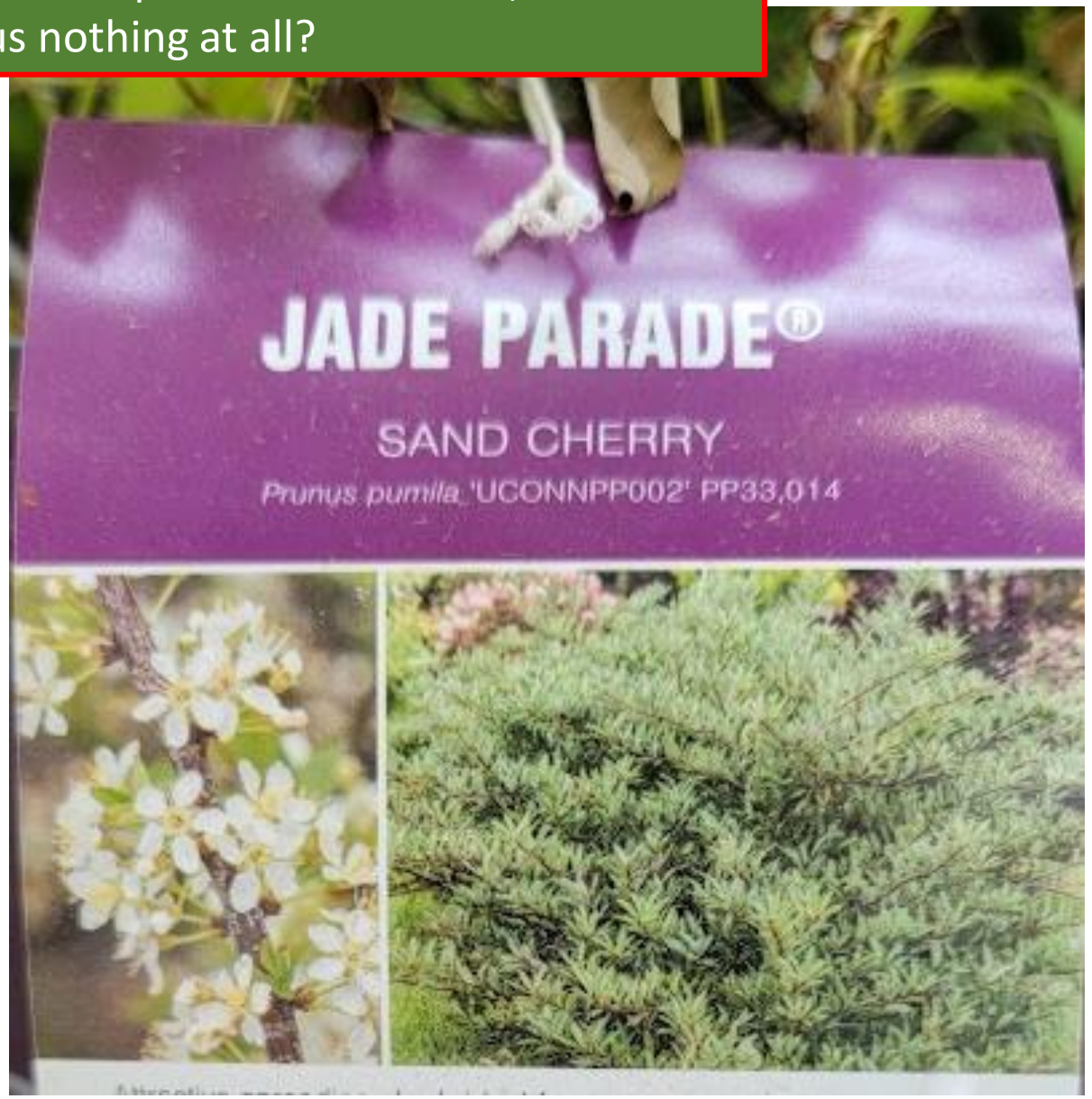
Asters — Smooth blue aster (Symphyotrichum laeve)

Asters — Tall white aster (Doellingeria umbellata) Seeds

Are native plant varieties bad?
Are “cloned” native plants bad?

Even when native plants are available in garden centers, they are almost always varietals, or “native-vars”.

Better than nothing? When only varietal native plants are available, is it better to plant them versus nothing at all?




Clones-all the same plant.
Cloning ensures consistency of product; every one is exactly the same.
FIRESIDE®
FIRST EDITIONS
SELECTED FOR SUCCESS

These pussy willows (*Salix discolor)* are almost certainly rooted cuttings (“clones”).

- Propagation of willows by cuttings is a time-tested, successful, reliable method.
- Growing from seed is just the opposite, “painfully difficult” in so many respects.
- If we had to confine ourselves to only seed grown willows, we would probably have an even worse (near zilch) selection of this *keystone species* available for purchase.

Elderberry is another species that is easy to grow from cuttings and moderately difficult to grow from seeds.

"No genetic diversity" you say? Take cuttings from a variety of plants!

Seed germination on elderberry is erratic and unpredictable.

Growing from cuttings saves the fruit for the animals who are depending on a meal.

Low bush blueberry would almost certainly not be available in the market-place if we did not grow it from root cuttings.

- People frequently mention to me that they are digging plants from the wild.
- Utilizing all appropriate propagation methods helps limit this damaging practice.

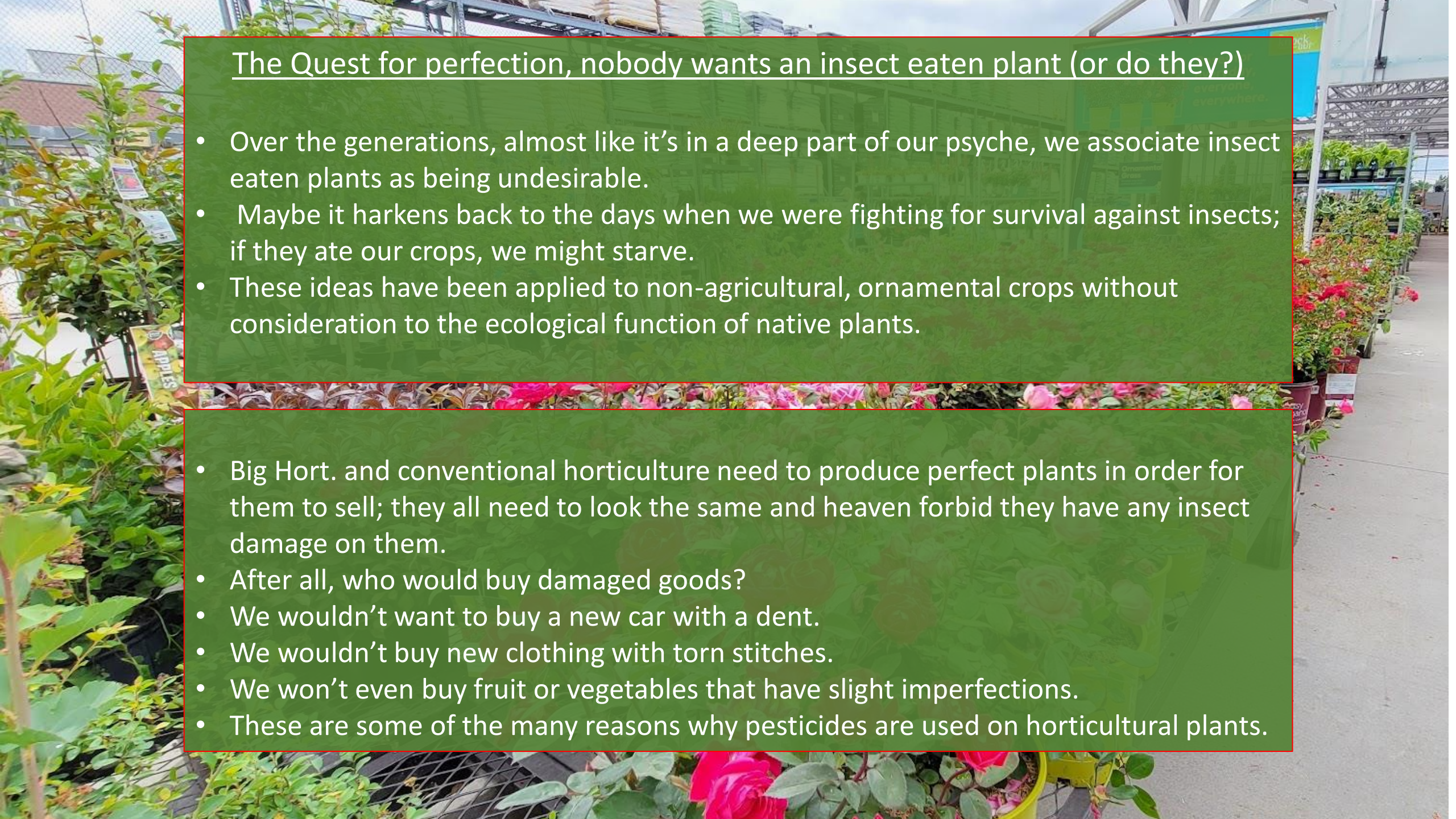
There are *lots* of species that rely on vegetative reproduction in nature (a form of "cloning").

- Sweet fern
- Poplar trees
- Beech trees
- Bracken fern
- Sensitive fern
- Hay scented fern
- Raspberries (*Rubus spp)*
- Strawberries
- Lowbush blueberry
- Viburnum
- Staghorn sumac
- Thicket shadbush
- Common milkweed
- Bunch berry (*Cornus canadensis)*
- Summer sweet (*Clethra alnifolia)*
- Speckled alder

And many more…..

A large patch of sweet fern (*Comptonia peregrina).*

Why can’t we have pesticide free native plants?
And, *how do we know* if pesticides have been used?



The Quest for perfection, nobody wants an insect eaten plant (or do they?)

- Over the generations, almost like it's in a deep part of our psyche, we associate insect eaten plants as being undesirable.
- Maybe it harkens back to the days when we were fighting for survival against insects; if they ate our crops, we might starve.
- These ideas have been applied to non-agricultural, ornamental crops without consideration to the ecological function of native plants.

- Big Hort. and conventional horticulture need to produce perfect plants in order for them to sell; they all need to look the same and heaven forbid they have any insect damage on them.
- After all, who would buy damaged goods?
- We wouldn't want to buy a new car with a dent.
- We wouldn't buy new clothing with torn stitches.
- We won't even buy fruit or vegetables that have slight imperfections.
- These are some of the many reasons why pesticides are used on horticultural plants.

Pesticide free native plants are an absolute priority.

Particular classes of pesticides, especially systemics (like neonicotinoids), can appear in almost every part of the plant (which is why they are used). These chemicals end up harming or killing the very wildlife we are seeking to attract and nourish.

How do we know if the plants we are buying are pesticide treated?

Why are pesticides used, especially on native plants?

Fritillary butterflies feeding on purple coneflower.

For millennia we have waged war against plant eating insects; sometimes for survival and other times out of vanity and ignorance.

Its time we come to the table and acknowledge the right to co-exist.

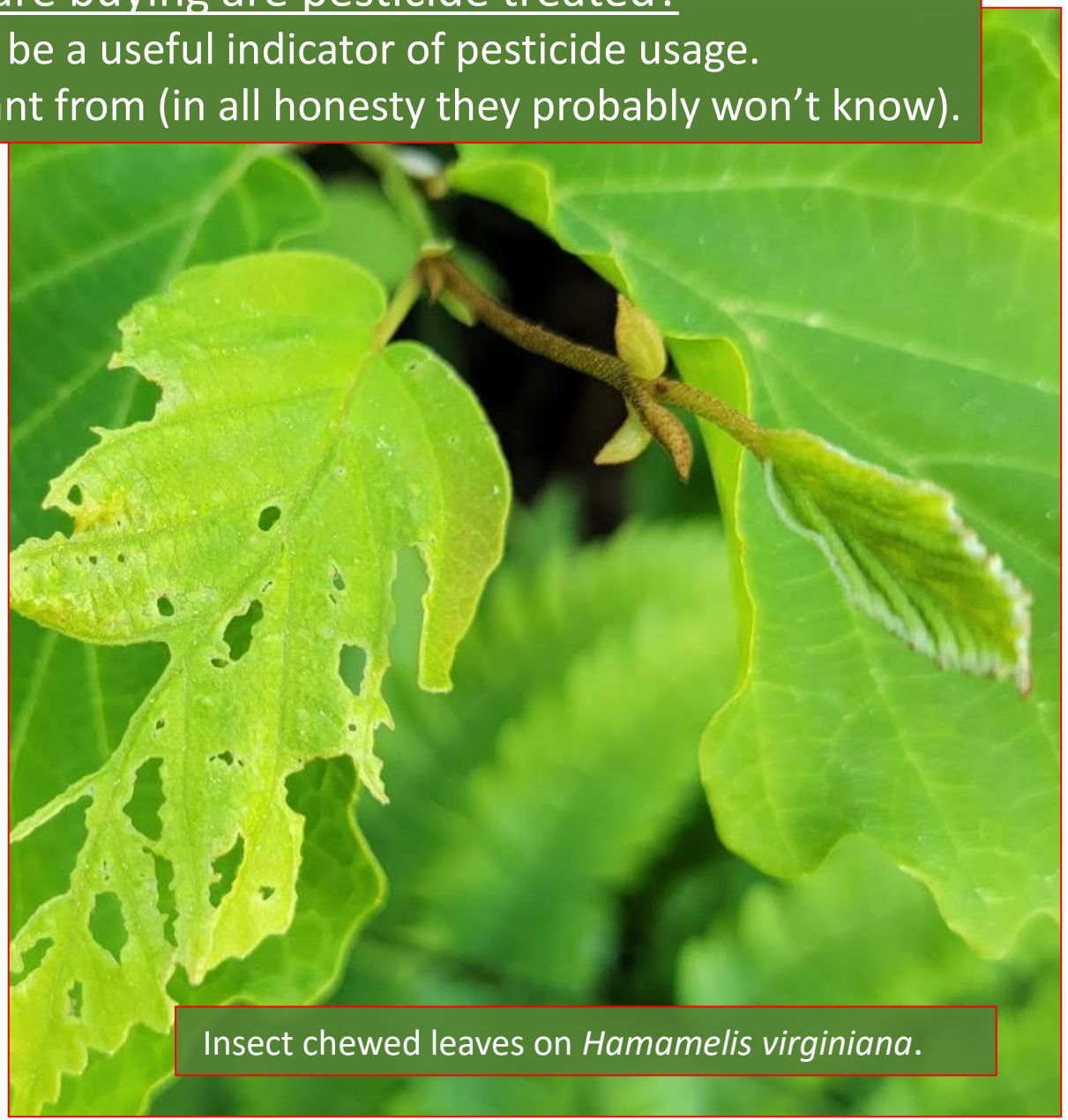
It’s a hard sell for some folks, that we are now *planting in hopes of feeding bugs!*
Big hort, especially, has been slow to recognize this.

How do we know if the plants we are buying are pesticide treated?

- Look for signs of insect activity, this can be a useful indicator of pesticide usage.
- Try asking folks at the place you are buying the plant from (in all honesty they probably won't know).

Insect feeding damage on *Viburnum cassinoides*.

Insect chewed leaves on *Carya ovata*.



Insect chewed leaves on *Hamamelis virginiana*.

Questions or comments about today's presentation?

Contact Shawn Jalbert;
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nativehaunts@gmail.com
www.nativehaunts.com

Clearwing moth feeding on common milkweed.