

Botanical Name	Common Name	Native to Mass?	Type of plant	Preferred habitat	Rhode Island status (provided by Hope Leeson, Rhode Island Natural History Survey)	Comments
Acer negundo	Box Elder	Yes	small to medium tree	wetlands and other damp areas; floodplains		a species of Maple; sap may be tapped + boiled down for syrup
Acer rubrum	Maple, Red	Yes	medium to large tree	red maple swamps (of course)		can be tapped for sap like Sugar Maple
Acer saccharinum	Maple, Silver	Yes	medium to large tree	forested floodplains and other wet ground		can be tapped for sap like Sugar Maple
Acer saccharum	Maple, Sugar	Yes	medium to large tree	hardwood forests; roadsides		sap is source of maple syrup and sugar
Acorus americanus	Sweet Flag (Calamus)	Yes	herbaceous perennial	wet fields and meadows; sunny wetlands; along waterways		the similarly-appearing A. calamus is apparently non-native to MA
Allium tricoccum	Wild Leek (Ramps)	Yes	herbaceous perennial	rich woods		Over-collecting by commercial diggers is harming ramps + habitat; pick 1 leaf/plant only
Amelanchier spp.	Juneberry/Shadbush	Yes	Shrub/small tree	likes to grow near water, but often planted in parks and other landscaped areas		fruit ripe in late June; flavor is a cross between cherries and almonds
Amphicarpa bracteata	Hog Peanut	Yes	herbaceous perennial vine	damp spots in woods w/ some sun; often on old woods roads		small subterranean tubers are available from late summer onward; tiny peas are edible too
Angelica atropurpurea	Angelica	Yes	herbaceous perennial to 6 ft -large spherical flower cluster	wet ground along rivers and streams, in full or partial sun	RI state-listed as "endangered"	
Angelica lucida	Seacoast Angelica	Yes	herbaceous perennial	rocky areas near the ocean	RI state-listed as "threatened"	
Apios americana	Groundnut	Yes	herbaceous perennial vine	damp sandy, open areas, often near waterways		edible tubers (available year-round) + beans
Argentina (Potentilla) egedii	Silverweed, Saltmarsh	Yes	herbaceous perennial	salt marshes - a closely-related species (A. anserina) may grow elsewhere		starchy root is edible - leaves may be used for tea
Asarum canadense* (see NOTE)	Wild Ginger* (see NOTE)	Yes	herbaceous perennial	rich woods	non-native to RI	*NOTE: while the plant's roots give off a gingery aroma, the plant has carcinogens so DO NOT CONSUME
Asclepias syriaca	Milkweed, Common	Yes	herbaceous perennial	old fields; field edges; roadsides		plant has at least four parts that are edible after boiling 7 minutes

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Asimina triloba	Pawpaw	No*	small tree (to 20 ft.)	understory tree in rich woods	non-native to RI	non-native to MA - Native to Zone 7+ but will grow in sheltered microclimates to Zone 5
Atriplex spp.	Orache	Yes*	annual herb	Grows at/just above the "wrack" (high tide) line	A. glabriuscula is RI state-listed "special concern"	A. patula is non-native to MA; A. cristata and littoralis are native; young leaves are edible
Betula alleghaniensis	Yellow Birch	Yes	medium to large tree	hardwood forests		peeled twigs used for tea - sap can be drunk or boiled down to a molasses-like syrup
Betula lenta	Black Birch	Yes	medium to large tree	pioneer species for cleared areas and regenerating forest		peeled twigs used for tea - sap can be drunk or boiled down to a molasses-like syrup
Caltha palustris	Marsh Marigold (Cowslip)	Yes	herbaceous perennial - spring ephemeral wildflower	wooded swamps, usually near small streams		young leaves harvested sparingly before the plants bloom are edible after boiling
Cardamine (Dentaria) spp.	Toothwort	Yes	herbaceous perennial - spring ephemeral wildflower	understory plant in rich woods		root has horseradish flavor - be careful not to disturb listed (protected) species in the genus
Carya ovata	Hickory, Shagbark	Yes	medium to large tree	roadsides, field edges, hardwood forests		best trees for foraging are in the open and get lots of sun - nuts ripen in late September
Castanea dentata	Chestnut, American	Yes	small to medium tree (before blight hits them)	hardwood forests; field edges; roadsides		can occasionally get large enough to produce viable nuts before blight hits
Ceanothus americanus	New Jersey Tea	Yes	herb	fields and field and road edges		leaves used for tea
Celtis occidentalis	Hackberry	Yes	medium-sized tree	damp areas with some good sun exposure; will grow near water		both thin-fleshed fruit and starchy seed are edible
Cercis canadensis	Redbud	No	small tree (to 15 feet)	understory tree in limey or fertile soil	non-native to RI	not native to MA - Found only in SW N.E. + further south, but will grow to Zone 5
Chamaepericlymenum canadense	Bunchberry	Yes	ground cover about 5-6" high	northern and otherwise cooler woodlands; likes some sun		red berries are almost tasteless but edible
Chamerion (Epilobium) angustifolium	Fireweed	Yes	annual?	pioneer species following fires or clearcuts - like cool climate	RI status (native or non-native) uncertain	young shoots and pith in older stems are edible
Chenopodium capitatum	Strawberry-Blite	No	annual	rocky areas, esp. near the ocean		Only occurs in northern New England and further northward

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Claytonia virginica + caroliniana	Spring Beauty	Yes*	herbaceous perennial - spring ephemeral wildflower	rich woods and wooded floodplains - generally not found in acidic soils	historic only (no currently extant native populations)	*C. virginica listed as endangered in MA - edible tubers ("fairy spuds") and foliage
Clintonia borealis	Clintonia (Corn Lily or Blue Bead Lily)	Yes	herbaceous perennial ground cover	common in acidic woodlands in N. NE and cool woods further S		young (to 3") leaves are edible and taste like cucumber
Comptonia peregrina	Sweet Fern	Yes	Small shrub	open areas; sandy/gravelly soil		leaves used for tea – small seeds are edible too
Corylus americana	Hazelnut, Common	Yes	shrub	old fields, clearings, roadsides, often under power lines		nuts are ripe the second week of September
Corylus cornuta	Hazelnut, Beaked	Yes	shrub	old fields, clearings, roadsides, often under power lines		overlaps with but tends to range further north than C. americana
Crataegus spp.	Hawthorn	Yes*	medium to large shrub	old fields and field edges		fruits are red when ripe and vary in size and flavor
Diospyros virginiana	Persimmon	No*	mediium-sized tree	old fields	non-native to RI	non-native to MA - Native to Zone 7+ but will grow in lower-numbered zones in suitable microclimates
Epigaea repens`	Trailing Arbutus (Mayflower)	Yes	prostrate plant	openings in acidic woodlands; sloping sides of paths + woods roads - likes some sun		edible part are the spicy-scented flowers, which are the state flower of MA
Erythronium americanum	Trout Lily, Dogtooth Violet	Yes	herbaceous perennial - spring ephemeral wildflower	rich woods; wooded floodplains; woods with rich humus layer		plant is reputedly nausea-inducing if you eat too much
Fagus grandifolia	Beech	Yes	medium to large tree	often found in hardwood forests		nuts ripen in September; best trees for foraging grow in the open
Fragaria virginiana	Wild Strawberry	Yes	herb to 2" high	old fields; mowed areas; roadsides		the fruit are small but delectable; species likes cooler climate
Gaultheria hispidula	Creeping Snowberry	Yes	prostrate, diminutive vine -	cool, partial-to-full sun spots - often on old tree stumps	RI state listed as "endangered"	white berries are the same size, shape and flavor of wintergreen "Tic-Tacs"
Gaultheria procumbens	Wintergreen	Yes	perennial to 5" high	ground cover in acidic woodlands - can tolerate sun		leaves used for tea - berries are also edible (though not very sweet)

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Gaylussacia baccata	Huckleberry, Black	Yes	small shrub (to 3' tall)	acidic woodlands and clearings common understory plant in oak forests		black fruit ripens a bit later than blueberries
Gaylussacia frondosa	Dangleberry (Blue Huckleberry)	Yes	Shrub	understory plant in damp woods - occasionally grows in the open or partial shade		blue fruit ripens several weeks after the blueberries
Helianthus tuberosus	Jerusalem Artichoke	Yes	herbaceous perennial	field edges, floodplains; likes full sun	non-native to RI, but naturalized	a Sunflower cousin with edible tubers
Hibiscus moscheutos	Rose Mallow	Yes	shrub	in wet open meadows or in wet ground along waterways		species is related to the Marsh Mallow (Althaea officinalis), for which the confection was named
Honckenya peploides	Beach Greens (Seabeach Sandwort)	Yes	annual?	Grows in sandy areas near high tide line	RI state-listed "special concern"	
Hydrophyllum virginianum	Waterleaf, Virginia	Yes	herb	rich woods	not present in RI	Is sporadic in N.E.; more common S.+ W. - the related H. canadense is listed as Endangered in MA
Impatiens biflora or pallida	Jewelweed	Yes	annual	damp meadows and woodlands; doesn't like full sun		edible seeds taste like walnuts
Juglans cinerea	Butternut	Yes	medium -sized tree (to 40 ft.)	old fields; field edges; roadsides		nut inside egg-shaped husks/shells are milder than Black Walnuts
Juglans nigra	Black Walnut	No*	medium to large tree	old fields; field edges/roadsides	non-native to RI, but naturalized	*Not considered native to MA (native further S.) but now grows wild there - nuts ripen in October of the several wild species of Lactuca, this is the most palatable
Lactuca canadensis	Wild Lettuce	Yes	annual	field edges; old fields; woods road edges; roadsides		of the several wild species of Lactuca, this is the most palatable
Lathyrus japonicus var. maritimus	Beach Pea	Yes	annual	dunes and other seaside areas above high tide line		the tender green peas inside the pods are edible in moderation
Ledum groenlandicum	Labrador Tea	No	small shrub	acidic, open rocky or boggy habitats		occurs only in northern New England and further north
Ligusticum scoticum	Scotch Lovage	Yes	herbaceous perennial	rocky areas near the ocean	RI state-listed as "special concern"	young leaves, stems taste like cultivated lovage (a relative of celery)

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Lindera benzoin	Spicebush	Yes	shrub (to 12 ft. tall)	understory tree in acidic hardwoods, esp, near small streams		twigs used for tea; berries may be dried ground up for a Szechuan pepper-like seasoning
Lonicera villosa	Northern/Mountain Fly Honeysuckle (Waterberry)	Yes	small shrub	rich woods	RI state-listed as "special concern"	Occurs more frequently in northern than southern New England
Lycopus uniflorus	Bugleweed	Yes	herbaceous perennial	damp meadows and pond shores	L. rubellus is RI state-listed as "special concern"	a tuber-bearing wild mint
Maianthemum canadense	Canada Mayflower (False Lily of the Valley)	Yes	herbacous diminutive perennial ground cover	acidic woodlands - tolerates shade well		small red berries are edible but cathartic in large amounts
Maianthemum or Smilacina racemosum	False Solomon's Seal	Yes	herbaceous perennial	hardwood forests with rich humus layer		edible shoots and berries (cathartic in large amounts)
Mattuecia struthiopteris	Ostrich Fern	Yes	herbaceous perennial fern	alluvial (silty) floodplain soil esp. in less acidic areas	RI state-listed as "special concern"	edible fiddleheads available in April
Medeola virginiana	Indian Cucumber	Yes	herbaceous perennial	acidic, damp woods with rich humus layer		harvesting the edible root kills the plant, so use sparingly - also don't pick rare orchid lookalike
Mertensia maritima	Oysterleaf	Yes*	herb	rocky/shelly areas just above the high tide line	not present in RI	*listed as Endangered in MA; more common in Northern/downeast Maine and further northward
Michella repens	Partridgeberry	Yes	herbaceous perennial	ground cover in acidic woods, typically under pines/hemlocks		pretty red berries are edible (but have almost no flavor)
Monarda didyma	Bee Balm/Oswego Tea	Yes	herbaceous perennial	field edges and roadsides - likes sun	not considered native to RI, but naturalized	leaves used for tea and/or seasoning
Morus alba	Mulberry, White	No	Small to medium tree	field edges; roadsides; tolerates urban conditions	not considered native to RI, but naturalized	fruit ripens in June
Morus rubra	Mulberry, Red	Yes*	Small to medium tree	field edges; roadsides; tolerant of urban conditions	not considered native to RI, but naturalized	*native species (M. rubra) listed as Endangered in Mass. non-native M. alba is common - hybrids also
Myrica gale	Sweet Gale	Yes	small shrub	in acidic swamps and along waterways		aromatic leaves used for tea
Myrica pensylvanica	Bayberry	Yes	Shrub	open areas; sandy soil		fresh leaves can be used as a substitute for commercial bay leaves

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Nelumbo lutea	Lotus, American	No	herbaceous perennial aquatic emergent	shallow ponds and open marshy/swampy areas		*not native in MA; Native to Zone 7 or higher but will grow in Zone 5
Nuphar variegata	Spatterdock, Cow Lily	Yes	herbaceous perennial aquatic plant	shallow portions of lakes, ponds and slow-moving rivers		ripe seeds can reportedly be roasted in a skillet like popcorn
Nymphaea spp.,.	White Water Lily	Yes	aquatic plant	shallow areas of lakes and ponds		
Oenothera biennis	Evening Primrose	Yes	biennial	old + cultivated fields, roadsides, above high tide line		a native weed with an edible root
Opuntia humifusa	Eastern Prickly Pear	Yes*	small cactus	dunes, barrier beaches and other sandy areas near ocean	RI State-listed as "endangered"	*listed as endangered in MA and very uncommon in the wild in N.E.; more common further south
Osmorrhiza longystylis	Sweet Cicely	Yes	herbaceous perennial	rich woods; river floodplains; tolerates shade well	RI State-listed as "threatened"	whole plant smells and tastes like licorice; closely related species ( <i>O. claytonii</i> ) does not
Oxalis montana	Wood Sorrel, Mountain or White	Yes	herb to 3" high	ground cover in acidic damp conifer woodlands	<i>O. montana</i> not present in RI; <i>O. violacea</i> is RI state-listed as "endangered"	common in White Mountains; less common further south
Oxyria digyna	Mountain Sorrel	No	small herb	mountain tops and cool damp rocky areas		Only occurs in cold microhabitats in northern New England and further northward
Panax trifolium	Dwarf Ginseng	Yes	herbaceous perennial	damp woods w/ good humus layer; often near streams		small, spherical tuber is edible - harvest only when abundant
Passiflora incarnata	Passionfruit (Maypops)	No*	herbaceous vine	railroad ballast and waste places - likes full sun	non-native to RI	non-native to MA - Native to Zone 7 and higher - can grow in lower zones in warmer microclimates
Physalis spp. (*P. heterophylla is native to MA)	Ground Cherry, Husk Tomato	Yes*	annual	edges of cultivated fields; likes sun		ripe, tomato-like berries enclosed in papery husk (calyx) - ripens late summer onward
Phytolacca americana	Pokeweed	Yes	herbaceous perennial	field edges; roadsides; dirt piles and other disturbed areas; likes sun		only edible part are cooked shoots 4 -10" high (be sure to avoid the highly cathartic root)
Plantago maritima var. juncoides	Seaside Plantain (Goosetongue)	Yes	herbaceous perennial up to 10 " tall	rocky areas near the ocean		be careful not to mix up with Arrowgrass, <i>Triglochin maritima</i> , which can be poisonous
Podophyllum peltatum	May Apple	Yes*	herbaceous perennial	understory plant in hardwood forests with rich soil	native status is uncertain; naturalized in RI	*native status in MA is uncertain; ripe fruit is only edible part of plant

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Polygonatum spp.	Solomon's Seal	Yes	herbaceous perennial	understory species in hardwood forests with rich humus layer		young shoots are edible
Polygonum viviparum	Alpine Bistort	No	herbaceous perennial	mountain summits and open rocky cold areas		Only occurs in colder microclimates in northern New England and further northward
Pontedaria cordata	Pickerelweed	Yes	herbaceous perennial aquatic emergent	shallow margins of lakes, ponds and meandering rivers		young leaves and seeds are edible (but might not be tasty)
Prunus maritima	Beach Plum	Yes	small shrubby tree (to 8 feet tall)	dunes and other sandy areas near coastline		Can be found in sandy areas inland
Prunus pensylvanica	Fire or Pin Cherry	Yes	small tree (up to 25 feet)	pioneer species colonizing clearings and old fields		bright red fruit is very small but pleasant-tasting - ripens in July
Prunus serotina	Black Cherry	Yes	medium to large tree	pioneer species in cleared areas; field edges/roadsides		cherries ripen in the latter half of summer
Prunus virginiana	Choke Cherry	Yes	shrubby small tree (to 12 ft.)	old fields; field edges; roadsides; clearings - tolerates cool climate		a bit more common in northern New England than southern NE
Pteridium aquilinum	Bracken Fern	Yes	herbaceous perennial fern	old fields; clearings; tolerates drier conditions than most other ferns		edible fiddleheads are tasty but carcinogenic in large amounts; eat sparingly (if at all)
Pycnanthemum spp.	Mountain Mint	Yes	small herb	edges of woods roads		can be uncommon so use sparingly
Quercus alba	White Oak	Yes	medium to large tree	hardwood forests; field edges; roadsides		acorns from this species tend to have lower levels of tannic acid, thereby requiring less leaching
Quercus bicolor	Oak, Swamp White	Yes	medium to large tree	wooded swamps; floodplains		acorns have reputedly less tannic acid content than most other Oak species
Quercus prinus	Chestnut Oak	Yes	medium to large tree	can tolerate dry, rocky and/or sloping conditions		acorns are edible after processing (leaching out the tannic acid)
Rhexia virginica	Meadow Beauty	Yes	small herb	wet open meadows and lake/pond shorelines		whole plant has tangy flavor; uncommon so use sparingly
Rhodiola rosea	Roseroot	No	herbaceous perennial	rocky exposed areas - usually close to the ocean	not present in RI	Mostly found in cold rocky coastal habitats in Maine and further northward - roots smell like roses
Rhus glabra	Sumac, Smooth	Yes	shrub	old fields; field edges; roadsides		red fruit used to make a pink lemonade-like drink

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Rhus typhina	Sumac, Staghorn	Yes	Shrub to 15 feet tall	old fields; field edges; clearings		red fruit used to make a pink lemonade-like drink
Ribes triste and other spp.	Currants/Gooseberries	Yes*	small perennials (up to 4' tall) w/ spindly branches	understory plant in damp woodlands; can also grow near water	R. triste is not present in RI; R. americanum is present and native; R. hirtellum is a state-listed "special concern" species	mixture of native/introduced species - all produce edible fruit
Rosa spp.	Wild Rose	Yes*	shrub	old fields, swamps		*The non-native Rosa rugosa is a better species for eating due to its large petals and hips
Rubus chamaemorus	Bakeapple Berry (Cloudberry)	No	herbaceous perennial (less than one foot tall)	boggy areas; seeps in open rocky areas	not present in RI	Mostly found in Northern New England Mountains and bogs and further north
Rubus hispidus	Dewberry	Yes	Prostrate blackberry cousin	old fields; clearings		fruit has the same size, appearance and flavor as upright blackberry species
Rubus idaeus	Raspberry, Red	Yes	herbaceous perennial	old fields; field edges; woods clearings		tea made from the fresh or thoroughly dried leaves is edible + medicinal for women
Rubus occidentalis	Raspberry, Black	Yes	herbaceous perennial	likes field edges		purplish-colored canes make the plants easy to spot in the "off-season"
Rubus odoratus	Flowering Raspberry	Yes	herbaceous perennial	roadsides; wooded clearings; likes cool damp conditions		showy pink flower and large maple-like leaves; not thorny
Rubus spp.	Blackberry	Yes	herbaceous perennial	old fields; field edges/roadsides; clearings		R. allegheniensis, pensylvanicus + several other sp. are native to MA
Sagittaria latifolia	Arrowhead (Wapato or Duck Potato)	Yes	herbaceous perennial emergent aquatic	shallow areas of lakes + ponds; sunny swamps		edible tubers are available Oct.-Mar
Salicornia spp.	Glasswort	Yes	herb	Grows in salty areas in coastal marshes		tender portions of plants can be eaten raw or pickled
Sambucus canadensis	Elderberry, Common	Yes	shrub (to 10 ft' tall)	wet open meadows		flowers used for beverages and fritters; ripe fruit edible after drying or cooking
Sassafras albidum	Sassafras	Yes	small tree (to 30 ft., but usually much smaller)	understory tree in hardwood forests; field edges; roadsides		aromatic root bark used for tea, candy, etc. - young leaves are dried for file powder



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Saxifraga spp.	Saxifrage	Yes	herb	woodland seeps, esp. non-acidic	S. pensylvanica and S. virginiana are RI state-listed "special concern" species	young leaves of several species are edible
Schoenoplectus tabernaemontani	Bulrush, Common (Soft-stemmed)	Yes	herbaceous perennial emergent aquatic	shallow ponds and open swamps		the plant is reputed to be edible in a similar fashion as cattail
Smilax herbacea	Carrion Flower	Yes	herbaceous perennial thorn-less vine	damp meadows + field/roadside edges; stinky flowers pollinated by carrion flies		harvest, cook and eat shoots like Asparagus (a relative)
Solidago odora	Sweet Goldenrod	Yes	herb	old fields; rocky areas; under power lines; sandy areas near the ocean		native to all counties in MA - leaves and flowers have a licorice-like flavor
Stachys hyssopifolia	Woundwort	Yes*	herb	damp meadows	RI state-listed as "threatened"	*S. hyssopifolia is a "watch species" in MA - pick the non-native (to MA) S. palustris instead
Streptopus lanceolatus	Twisted Stalk	Yes*	herb	rich woods; woodlands with rich humus layer	RI state-listed as "threatened"	*species is "watch-listed" in MA, so shouldn't be harvested
Tilia americana	Basswood	Yes	medium to large tree	field edges, roadsides, river banks - can tolerate damp conditions		young leaves are edible raw; blossoms are used for an edible/medicinal tea
Typha angustifolia	Cattail, Narrow-leaved	Yes	herbaceous perennial emergent aquatic	shallow areas of waterways; marshy areas; likes full sun		has at least five edible parts
Typha latifolia	Cattail, Common	Yes	herbaceous perennial aquatic emergent	shallow areas of waterways; marshy areas - likes full sun		has at least five different edible parts
Ulmus rubra	Elm, Slippery	Yes	medium-sized tree	damp fields; floodplains		
Uvularia sessifolia	Bellwort, Sessile	Yes	herbaceous perennial	woods with good humus layer - likes shade		young shoots are edible like asparagus
Vaccinium angustifolium	Blueberry, Lowbush	Yes	small shrub (up to 2 ft tall)	acidic woodlands, old fields, rocky and boggy areas		
Vaccinium corymbosum	Blueberry, Highbush	Yes	shrub (up to 8 ft tall)	acidic woodlands, old fields, lake/pond shorelines		
Vaccinium macrocarpon	Cranberry, Bog	Yes	prostrate vine - rarely more than a foot tall	acid bogs and seeps - likes sun		same species (and flavor) as the cultivated cranberry

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Vaccinium stamineum	Deerberry	Yes	Small shrub	likes acidic rocky areas	undetermined status in RI	
Vaccinium vitis-idaea	Cranberry, Mountain	Yes*	low-growing perennial (up to 1' tall)	mountain peaks and cool habitats in N. NE	not present in RI	same species as Lingonberry - *listed as endangered in MA
Viburnum lantanoides (alnifolium)	Hobblebush (Moosewood)	Yes	shrub	common understory plant in cool forests	RI state-listed as "special concern"	fruit ripens in September and tastes like a prune with a hint of clove
Viburnum lentago	Nannyberry	Yes	shrub	wet meadows; near waterways		fruit ripens in September and is prune-like in flavor and texture
Viburnum nudum or cassinoides	Wild Raisin	Yes	shrub	understory plant in open hardwood forests	V. nudum var. nudum is RI state-listed as "threatened"	small fruit are ripe when purply-black in color
Viburnum prunifolium	Black Haw	Yes	shrub	damp meadows - likes partial to full sun		ripe fruit is edible, with prune-like texture and flavor
Viburnum trilobum	Highbush Cranberry	Yes	shrub	sunny swampy areas - more common in northern New England		Don't plant V. opulus, a European species that tastes horrible
Viola sororia	Violet, Common Blue or Dooryard	Yes	herb	fields; meadows		there are many other violets, some rare + some w/ laxative effect - stick to eating this species
Vitis labrusca	Fox Grape	Yes	perennial vine	roadsides; field edges; river banks		large grapes are ripe the second week of Sept. - young leaves may be stuffed
Vitis riparia	Riverside Grape	Yes	perennial vine	roadsides, fences, field edges; river banks	undetermined status in RI	fruit is smaller, ripens later and not as tasty as V. labrusca - young leaves are good for stuffing