

## **Notes from a Naturalist**

by Ken Morrison

Except for the nurseries that specialize in native plants, most of them tend to display the exotics that have the largest and most showy blooms. Most of these should have labels similar to the health warnings on cigarettes. They might read something like this: "Native to equatorial Africa, this plant has a big thirst so prepare to water it daily in hot weather (unless you live in a rain-forest)." Or: "The bugs just love this plant because its leaves are so tasty, so get out your spray can (only don't inhale the fumes)." Or: "Your chances are about as good as winning the lottery that this plant is adapted to the soil on your premises, so prepare to give it liberal doses of fertilizers if you expect it to keep looking as it does now. Good luck!"

Most nurseries carry some native plants, even if the selection is limited. Ask to see the ones that are native to the type of habitat in your immediate area. A plant that thrives in one part of the state may be a bummer in another sector.