What are native plants?
A native plant is a plant that occurs naturally in a particular region or ecosystem without direct or indirect human intervention. Typically plant species found in North America prior to European settlement are considered native plants.

Why are native plants important?
Since native plants have evolved in a particular region over thousands of years, they have adapted to the local soils and climate, and are more likely to thrive with minimal care than exotic species. This means that they require less water, and very limited pest control or fertilizers. Native plants are also essential to a healthy ecosystem and support local biodiversity.

What is the state of native plants at Freshkills?
Freshkills Park, formerly the world’s largest landfill, is being transformed into a natural area that supports a wide array of ecosystems, including wetlands, woodlands, and grasslands. The design and restoration of the site focuses on building natural assets to cultivate a diverse and resilient landscape. The former landfill mounds have been seeded with native plants and grasses that support an enormous variety of wildlife including migrating birds, butterflies, and small mammals.

Invasive Plants
Invasive plants are a major threat to native plant biodiversity. An invasive plant is a species that grows aggressively, spreads, and displaces other plants. Many invasive species are exotic or non-native plants that were either intentionally or accidentally introduced from outside of North America. An invasive species that colonizes a new area may gain an ecological edge since the insects, diseases, and foraging animals that naturally keep its growth in check in its native range are not present in its new habitat.