Native Planting Guide

Five Reasons Native Plants Help You Save Money and the Environment

Native plants are healthier and stronger. They establish faster and will be naturally more hardy and healthy.

Native plants help the environment by requiring less watering, fertilizer and pesticides.

Native plants are low maintenance and the long term upkeep is dramatically less costly than for turf grass.

Native plants create wildlife habitat. Birds, bees and butterflies pollinate our crops and flowers.

Native plants provide a variety of colors, textures, heights, and bloom times resulting in a stunning display over multiple seasons.

FLOWERING PLANTS:
- Black-eyed Susan
- Great Lobelia
- Butterfly Milkweed
- Ohio Spiderwort
- Culver’s Root
- Ohio Goldenrod
- Purple Coneflower
- Marsh Milkweed

Cardinal Flower
- Jacob’s Ladder
- Joe Pye Weed
- New England Aster
- Bee Balm
- Obedient Plant
- Cup Plant
- Blue Vervain

SHRUBS & TREES:
- Red Maple
- Chokecherry
- River Birch
- Summer Sweet
- Silky Dogwood
- Winterberry
- Pin Oak
- Elderberry
- Highbush Blueberry
- Arrowwood Viburnum

GRASSES & FERNS:
- Big Bluestem
- Wet-tolerant Sedges
- Virginia Wild Rye
- Fowl Manna Grass
- Torrey’s Rush
- Switch Grass
- Ostrich Fern
- Sensitive Fern
- Cinnamon Fern

Visit www.cuyahogaswcd.org for our full list of recommended native plants.
When most people think of the ideal lawn, they think of well-maintained, bright green turf grass. There are around 40 million acres of lawn in the United States, occupying about 2% of the surface area of our country. We perceive a well-maintained lawn as aesthetically pleasing to the human eye, but they’re not pleasing toward our environment. Due to modern development practices that scrape off or compact the topsoil layer, the area covered by most turf grass is a largely impervious (not penetrable) surface, so most rain water flows directly off your lawn. Run-off pollution occurs with each rainfall and snowmelt when water flows over land picking up soil and pollutants and depositing them into streams, ponds, wetlands, rivers, and eventually Lake Erie. Run-off pollution can result in excess algal growth, fish kills, reduced tourism, impaired drinking water, and more. It is environmentally and economically costly. While we want to make our yards friendlier to wildlife and the surrounding environment, regulations from some homeowner associations or municipalities don’t always make it easy. However, you can incorporate landscaping features using native plants to shrink your lawn.

Cutting corners is good for your wallet and your yard! Less mowing, fertilizer and water. More habitat and long roots to soak up pollutants.

THE RUNOFF DILEMMA

GO WILD
Reduce yard work, water and fertilizer use, create a more interesting landscape, and increase wildlife habitat by installing a self-sustaining natural ecosystem like a small prairie.

HEDGE THE EDGE
The hedge area or edges of your yard are usually the least used area. Enhancing your edges with native plants adds beauty and privacy to your yard. Combine an assortment of native plant species to make a tapestry hedge, a row of mixed shrub varieties.
• For greatest interest throughout the seasons, include both evergreen and deciduous shrubs and select plants that produce flowers, berries, or splendid fall foliage.
• If you do prune, keep the desired form of the plant in mind as you work, and understand in advance what effect each cut will have on its future growth.
• If you go the informal route, try to choose shrubs of similar mature size and pay attention to their growth rates.
• Tapestry hedges can be excellent habitats for many creatures. They provide dense cover and food, like insects and berries. A variety of birds nest in thickets, as do some mammals, and a hedge that provides adequate food will attract even more wildlife to visit.

HEDGING THE EDGE

CUT CORNERS
Pick a corner of your lawn to install a native wildflower garden, creating a bed that will complement, not compete with your lawn.

Step 1: Lay a garden hose or rope on the ground to represent your new planting bed’s edge.

Step 2: Install edging either all the way around the corner or just along the edge that it shares with the lawn.

Step 3: Smother the lawn in your new corner garden with layers of newspaper and then mulch.

Step 4: While you wait for the grass to die over a season, use the time to design your new corner garden. Consider native shrubs and perennials to plant.

Step 5: When the grass is sufficiently smothered, plant through the newspapers and mulch.

Step 6: Water plants well when planting and for the next several weeks to ensure that they establish with minimum disturbance.

Native plants often have roots up to 15 feet deep!