

Planting Native Plants

As undeveloped land dwindles in Ohio, natural habitats will continue to disappear. Not only is this a problem for native plant diversity, but also for wildlife and birds. Many native plants rely on animals and insects for pollination and seed dispersal. These native plants have, in exchange, been providing food, cover, and forage for wildlife over many centuries. Berries, nuts, and other fruits provide color for the winter landscape by themselves and through the birds and wildlife that feed on them. The right mix of native plants can create a haven for butterflies, birds, and other wildlife of Ohio, while also enhancing the life and enjoyment of a landscape.

Naturalistic landscapes are low maintenance and attract wildlife by providing them with food and shelter. Planting native plants can help preserve native species and biodiversity and provide corridors for movement of animals through urban landscapes. Here are several definitions to help you understand the types of plants available for your garden:

Native plant: a plant that grows in the wild without human intervention

Exotic plant: a plant that was introduced by human intervention from another area or country (accidentally or purposefully)

Naturalized: an exotic plant that has escaped from cultivation and now grows in the wild

Wildflower: any flowering plant, usually herbaceous, that grows in the wild (native or naturalized)

Parks

Parks preserve green space in our rapidly developing county and provide environmental education. The mission of Preservation Parks of Delaware County is to protect and conserve Delaware County's natural scenic, historic and archaeological features for the benefit of present and future generations and provide for enjoyable, safe, easily accessible and aesthetically pleasing outdoor education and passive recreational experiences for the citizens of Delaware County.

McCoy Nature Center, Hogback Ridge Preserve

2656 Hogback Road, Sunbury OH 43074
9:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday.
Noon – 5:00 p.m. Saturday & Sunday

The Lodge, Deer Haven Preserve

4183 Liberty Road, Delaware OH 43015
Noon – 5:00 p.m. Daily

Invasive Species

Invasive species are non-native plants and animals that aggressively displace native wildlife species. Invasive plant species often out-compete native wildflowers and other plants for space, light, or water. Invasive species reduce biological diversity, change food webs, and displace wildlife. At least 42% of the federally endangered and threatened species in the United States are at risk because of invasive species.

Approximately 50,000 non-native plant and animal species have been introduced to the United States. At least half that number are plants, which can cause more than \$34 billion a year in damage to the environment, forestry, agriculture, industry, recreation, and human health. The introduction of many non-native plant species was well-intentioned. Some had medicinal qualities, others were valued in horticulture, for forage, and for erosion control. Other species arrived by accident - stowaways in cargo and ballast.

Of the approximately 3,000 plant species known to occur in the wild in Ohio, about 25% are non-native. For more info, check out:

The Ohio Invasive Plants Council: <http://www.oipc.info/mission.html>

Restoration Projects

River Restoration

www.olentangywatershed.org

"Soaking It In" Project: The Olentangy River receives high volumes of stormwater at high velocity due to the surfaces, such as parking lots and roofs that do not allow the water to soak into the ground. The water entering the Olentangy River is polluted after travelling over roads and parking lots. This project works to create rain gardens designed to collect rainwater and allow it to percolate slowly into the soil, reducing storm water run-off and preventing pollutants from being swept into the stream.

Roadside Conservation

www.scenicohio.com

Roadside vegetation plays an important role in the conservation of OH's flora and fauna. In heavily cleared landscapes, the vegetation in the road reserve acts as a wildlife highway, enabling animal movement between large patches of bush. It also provides essential habitat. Roadside vegetation also has benefits for local communities. It prevents soil erosion and provides aesthetic appeal. Research into natural ecosystems can assist revegetation efforts.

Wetland Restoration

www.preservationparks.com

Wetlands are very productive ecosystems that are home to a wide variety of plants and animals. Unfortunately, more than 90 percent of Ohio wetlands have been drained or filled for development and farming practices. Preserving our remaining wetlands consists of making sure these areas are protected from further development and removing invasive species as they occur.



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