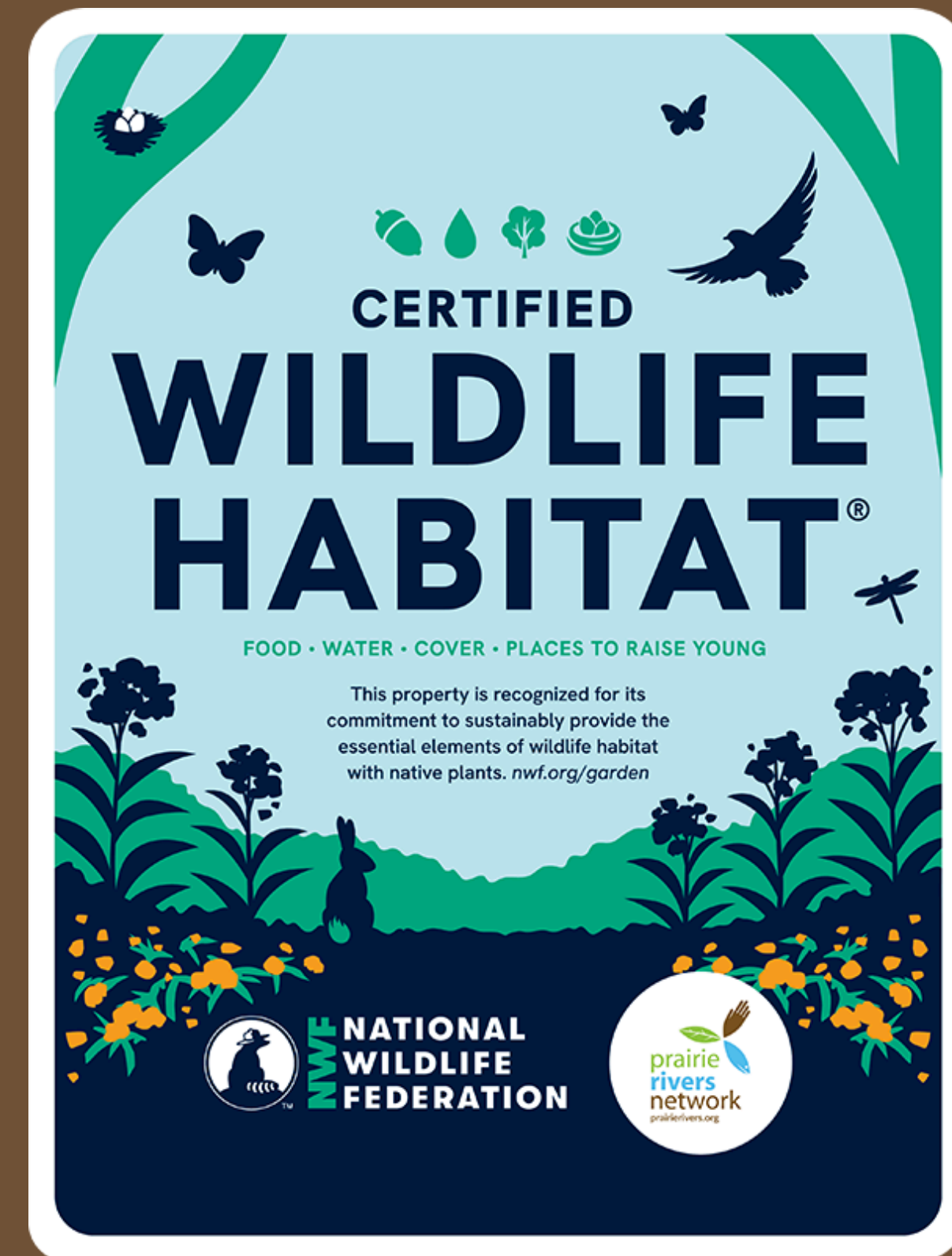


Certified Wildlife Habitat



Prairie Rivers Network

Protect Water
Heal Land
Inspire Change



Nina Struss
River Health &
Resiliency Organizer



Liz Mackenbach
Habitat & Biodiversity
Organizer

National Wildlife Federation

Certified Wildlife Habitat

1

Backyards

2

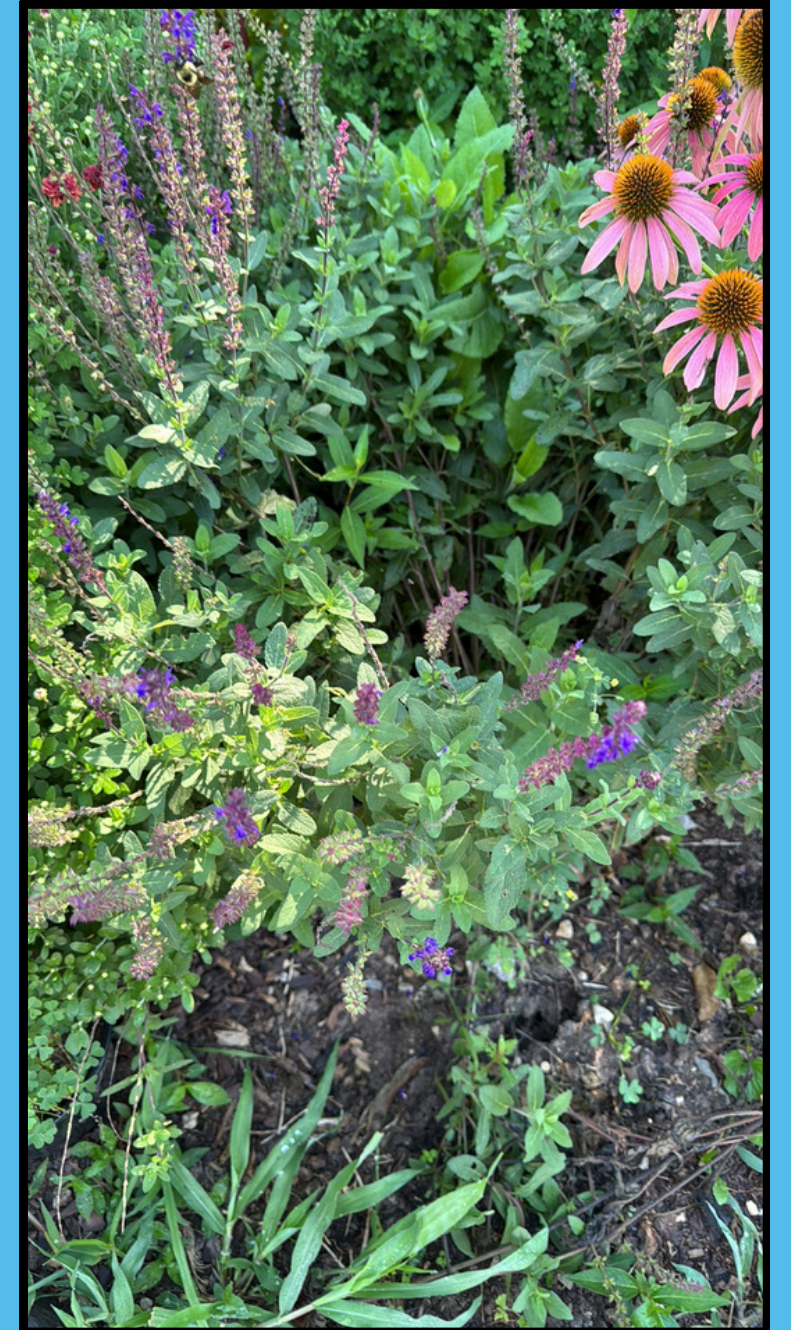
Schools

3

Places of Worship

4

Entire Communities



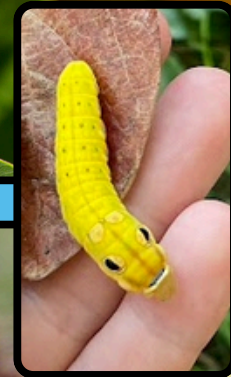
How many of you have looked into the CWH program?

Why Create a Wildlife Habitat?

Over 2 million acres of wildlife habitat is lost annually

Your space can make a difference.

- Big or small
- New or established



How to Certify



CERTIFIED WILDLIFE HABITAT® REQUIREMENTS:

Certification Checklist

Use this checklist to assess if you meet the requirements of a Certified Wildlife Habitat. If you are ready to certify, scan the QR code or go to www.nwf.org/certifyonline.

CERTIFY NOW!



Food - Minimum 3 Sources

Native plants provide the basic foods for wildlife (feeders can supplement).

- | | | |
|-------------------|------------------|---------------------------------|
| nectar & pollen | seeds & cones | bird feeders (e.g. seeds, suet) |
| host plant | nuts | nectar feeders |
| fallen leaf layer | fruits & berries | |



Water - Minimum 1 Source

Wildlife needs a clean water source for drinking, bathing, and/or breeding.

- | | | |
|-----------------|---------------|--------------------------|
| stream or river | seasonal pond | water fountain |
| lakes | ocean | (container) water garden |
| natural spring | puddler | rain garden |
| year-round pond | mud dish | bird baths |



Cover - Minimum 2 Sources

Wildlife needs shelter from bad weather. Both predators and prey need hiding places.

- | | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| mature tree | 12in+ overwintered | year-round pond |
| dead trees (snags) | hollow stems | (container) water garden |
| fallen/decomposing logs | meadow or prairie | rock pile/formation |
| dense shrubs/brambles | evergreen plants | rock wall |
| brush or log pile | groundcover plants | animal burrow |
| fallen leaf layer | grasses, sedges, rushes | roosting box |



Places to Raise Young - Minimum 2 Sources

Wildlife needs places for courtship behavior, mating and to bear and raise their young.

- | | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|
| mature tree | 12in+ overwintered | (container) water garden |
| dead trees (snags) | hollow stems | animal burrow |
| fallen/decomposing logs | meadow or prairie | nesting box |
| dense shrubs/brambles | host plants | native bee box |
| brush or log pile | groundcover plants | |
| fallen leaf layer | year-round pond | |



Sustainable Practices - Minimum 3 Actions

How you manage your space effects the health of the soil, air, water, and habitat for wildlife and people.

Soil Conservation

- use natural mulch (e.g. straw, wood)
- leave the leaves
- make & apply compost
- apply cover crops
- reduce erosions

Water Conservation

- use drought-tolerant native plants
- plant densely (if applicable)
- use natural mulch (e.g. straw, wood)
- harvest rainwater install rain garden
- use efficient irrigation (e.g. drip hose)
- use greywater reduce overall water usage

Pollution Reduction

- eliminate or greatly reduce chemical pesticides
- eliminate or greatly reduce chemical fertilizers
- eliminate use of plastic weed liners
- eliminate or replace gas mowers;
- use electric or hand-powered repair or borrow garden tools before repurchase
- turn off outdoor lights at night
- use amber-colored LED bulbs for outdoor lights
- clean and reuse garden pots
- compost kitchen and garden waste

Keep in Mind

From backyards to balconies, you can make an impact no matter the garden's size. Homes, schools, places of worship, parks, and even small businesses can create and certify their habitat.

Look for plants native to your region and strive for 70% native plants in your garden. These plants provide natural sources of habitat, which are ideal for wildlife. You can find species appropriate for your zip code at <https://nativeplantfinder.nwf.org>.

Every habitat looks different!

It's unique to your location, preferences, space, and even local restrictions. Many of the listed habitat features are things you can add to your garden, but some naturally-occurring elements may count towards certification too.

This abbreviated checklist

is not comprehensive for all environments. You are encouraged to adapt the specific habitat essentials to what makes sense for your location.

Need a deeper dive? Learn more here:



Controlling Non-Native Species

- remove non-native plants and animals
- practice integrated pest management
- reduce lawn space, replace with native plants



Native Plants

- Aim for 70% native
- Provide food
- Provide cover
- Places to raise young
- Easier care and maintenance



The Essentials

3

Sources of Food

1

Source of Water

2

Sources of Cover

2

Breeding Sites

S

ustainable Gardening
Practices

3

Sources of Food



Food - Minimum 3 Sources

Native plants provide the basic foods for wildlife (feeders can supplement).

- nectar & pollen
- host plant
- fallen leaf layer
- seeds & cones
- nuts
- fruits & berries
- bird feeders (e.g. seeds, suet)
- nectar feeders



Host Plant

Host Plants

- Host plants are vital as they support a wide variety of wildlife, including caterpillars, butterflies, other insects, and mammals.
- Think of them as the backbone of your garden's ecosystem, providing necessary sustenance for various species.

3

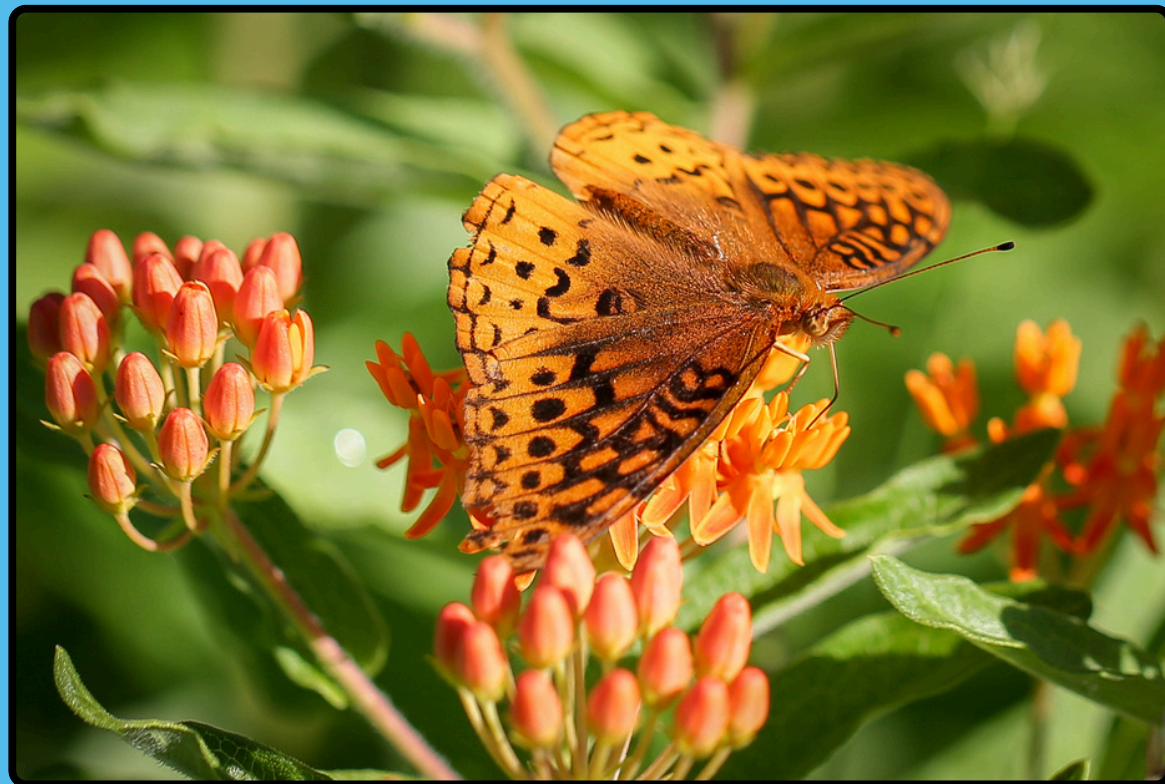
Sources of Food



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- seeds & cones
- nuts
- fruits & berries
- bird feeders (e.g. seeds, suet)
- nectar feeders



Nectar

Nectar

- Nectar serves as an essential energy source for pollinators like bees and hummingbirds. By incorporating a diverse array of nectar-rich plants, you can attract and support these vital creatures in your garden.

3

Sources of Food



Food - Minimum 3 Sources

Native plants provide the basic foods for wildlife (feeders can supplement).

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- host plant
- fallen leaf layer
- seeds & cones
- nuts
- fruits & berries
- bird feeders (e.g. seeds, suet)
- nectar feeders



Seeds

Seeds

- Not only a source of food for birds and small mammals but also help in the natural regeneration of your garden. By allowing plants to go to seed, you contribute to the cycle of life in your little patch of nature.

3

Sources of Food



Oak Tree Host



Acorns

Oak Trees

- The oak tree is a prime example of a plant that supports a multitude of species.
- Oak trees produce acorns, which are a vital food source for many animals, including birds, squirrels, and deer.
- What's fascinating is that more than 100 species rely on oak trees for survival, providing a tremendous benefit to the local ecosystem.
- Diversity in your plantings will allow a wide range of wildlife to flourish in your habitat and require minimal input from you.



More than 100 sp

1

Source of Water



Water - Minimum 1 Source

Wildlife needs a clean water source for drinking, bathing, and/or breeding.

- stream or river
- lakes
- natural spring
- year-round pond
- seasonal pond
- ocean
- puddler
- mud dish
- water fountain
- (container) water garden
- rain garden
- bird baths



2

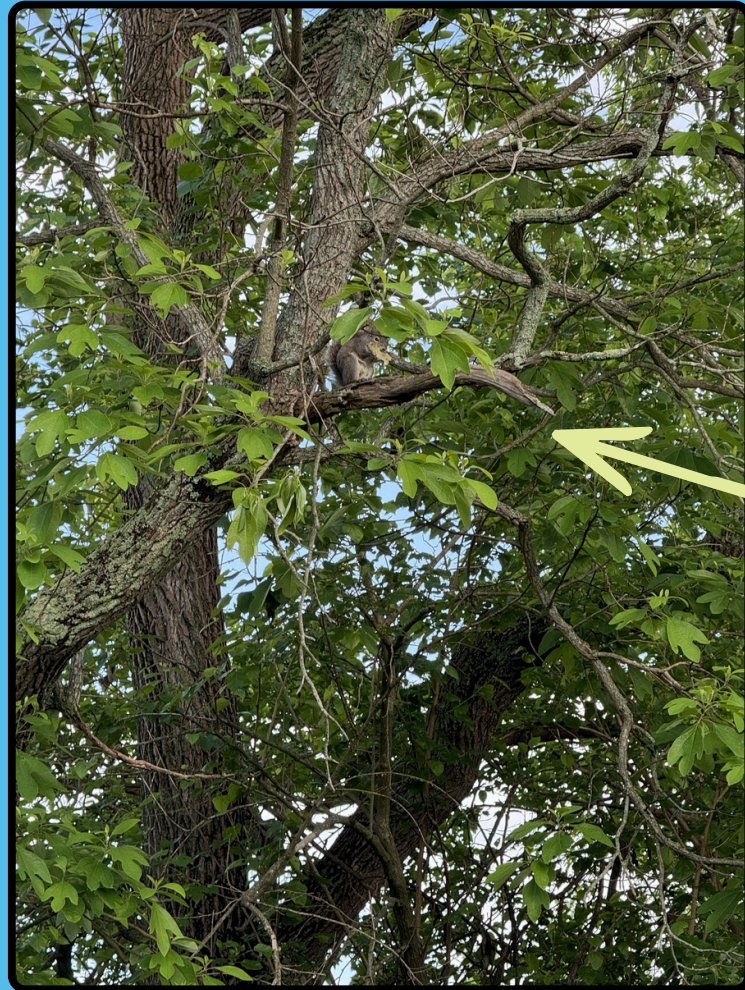
Sources of Cover



Cover - Minimum 2 Sources

Wildlife needs shelter from bad weather. Both predators and prey need hiding places.

- mature tree
- dead trees (snags)
- fallen/decomposing logs
- dense shrubs/brambles
- brush or log pile
- fallen leaf layer
- 12in+ overwintered hollow stems
- meadow or prairie
- evergreen plants
- groundcover plants
- grasses, sedges, rushes
- year-round pond
- (container) water garden
- rock pile/formation
- rock wall
- animal burrow
- roosting box



2

Breeding Sites



Places to Raise Young - Minimum 2 Sources

Wildlife needs places for courtship behavior, mating and to bear and raise their young.

- mature tree
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- animal burrow
- nesting box
- native bee box





Sustainable Gardening Practices



Sustainable Practices - Minimum 3 Actions

How you manage your space effects the health of the soil, air, water, and habitat for wildlife and people.

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Pollution Reduction

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Sustainability

Do you employ at least two (2) practices from the sustainable gardening categories?

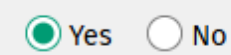
Soil and Water Conservation

Examples: Use compost, use mulch, reduce water use, reduce lawn and pavement, use soaker hose, or install a rain garden



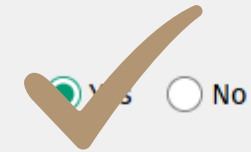
Controlling Invasive Non-Native Species

Examples: Use native plants, remove invasive plants, reduce lawn space, or keep cats indoors



Organic Practices

Examples: Eliminate chemical pesticides, eliminate chemical fertilizers, or attract beneficial insects





Sustainable Gardening Practices

Planting Natives

- Aim for 70% Natives

Reduce lawn space

Remove non native plants and animals

- Identifying invasive insects and removing
- Some should be tracked online
 - Spotted Lantern Flies should be reported to the ILDNR

Keep domestic cats inside

- It's estimated they kill 1.4 - 3.7 billion birds a year



Sustainability

Do you employ at least two (2) practices from the sustainable gardening categories?

Soil and Water Conservation

Examples: Use compost, use mulch, reduce water use, reduce lawn and pavement, use soaker hose, or install a rain garden

Yes No

Controlling Invasive Non-Native Species

Examples: Use native plants, remove invasive plants, reduce lawn space, or keep cats indoors

Yes No

Organic Practices

Examples: Eliminate chemical pesticides, eliminate chemical fertilizers, or attract beneficial insects

Yes No



Sustainable Gardening Practices



Leave the Leaves



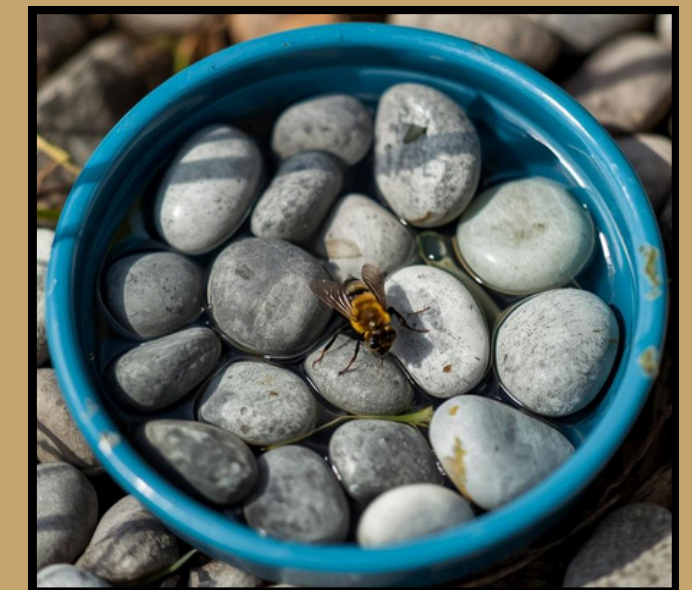
Eliminate Pesticides



Plant Natives

Small Spaces

- Containers
 - Large and Deep
 - Choose material based on your climate.
- Plants
 - Milkweed, Asters, Ferns
- Shallow water dish with stones
- Including a bird feeder
- Leaving your pots with stems intact for the wintering insects.



Larger Spaces

- Plan your space
 - What is your sun pattern?
 - Are there wet or dry areas?
- Think about height and spread
 - Natives can get up to 12ft tall
 - They can spread easily
- Work within your HOA and local ordinances.



Schools

- Pre-K through 12th grade
- Same checklist!
 - Free certification
- Educational and planning guides available.
- Eco Schools Certification
 - Focuses on sustainability
 - Increasing eco-education



Public Spaces

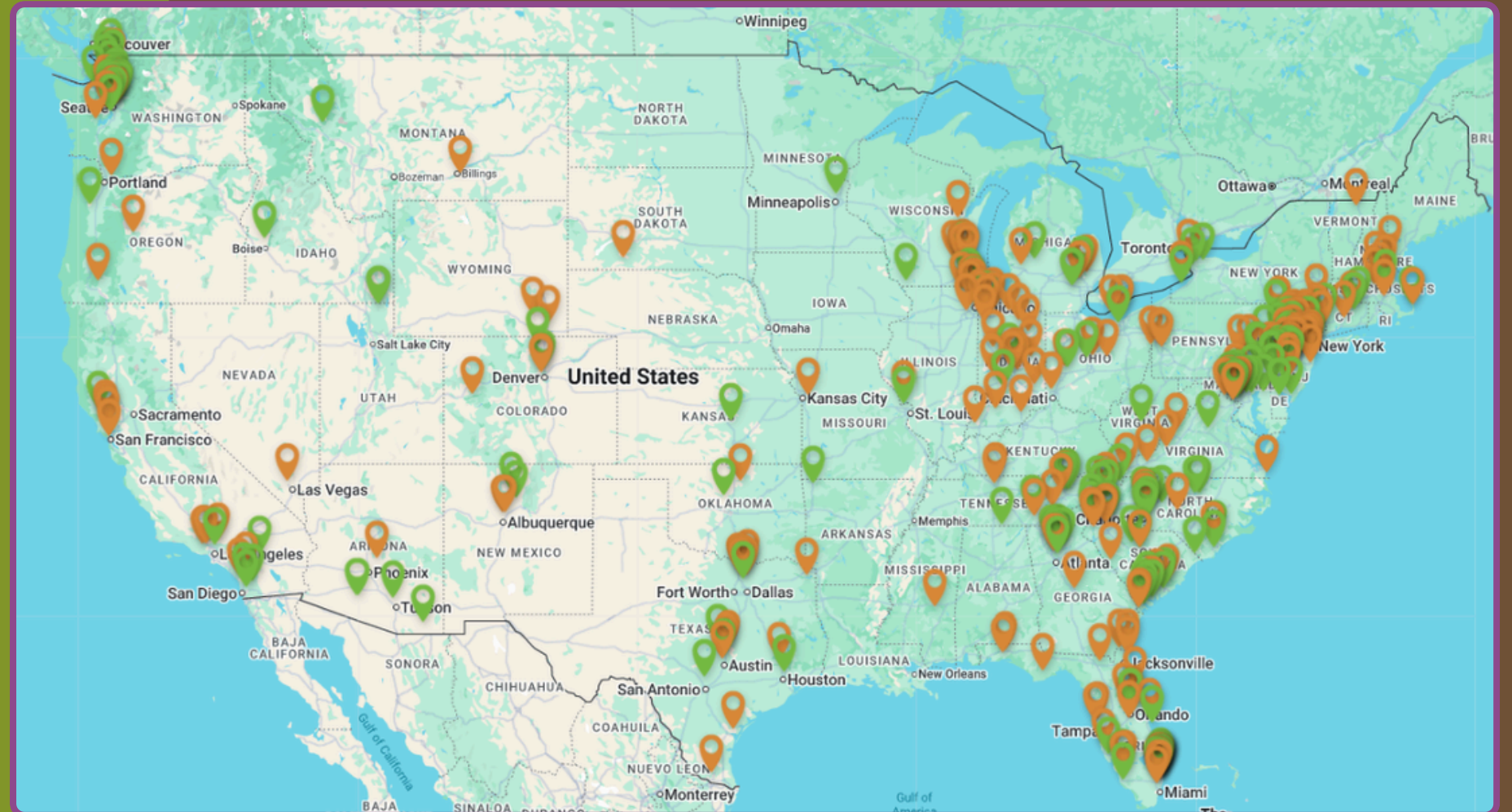
- Larger scale
 - Diversity in plant species
 - Layering vegetation
- Plan for community use
 - Paths and benches
- Water management
 - Rain garden or collection system
- Engage with the community!
 - Volunteers and groups



Communities

- Community Wildlife Habitat Certification
- Nationwide acknowledgment
- Builds upon Certified Wildlife Habitats
- Each personal CWH earns points towards the community goal!
- Requires annual renewals

communitywildlifehabitat.nwf.org



Maintenance

- Weeding and cutting back
- Removing plants
- Mulching
- Collecting seed heads
- Controlled Burns
 - aim for $\frac{1}{3}$ of the area per year

Check with your local ordinances and fire department before burning



Plant Selection

- Sunlight patterns
- Soil moisture
- Planning for
 - Height
 - Bloomtime
 - Spread





Bloom Periods	APRIL	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUG	SEPT	OCT	Height
(1) Golden Alexander	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow					3 ft
(2) Wild Bergamont	Purple	Purple	Purple	Purple	Purple	Purple		4 ft
(3) Stiff Tickseed	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow		3 ft
(4) Spiderwort		Purple	Purple	Purple				12 in
(5) Foxglove Beardstongue								5 ft
(6) Black-eyed Susan		Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	2 ft
(7) Lance Leaf		Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow			
(8) Lead Plant			Purple	Purple				3 ft
(9) Purple Coneflower			Purple	Purple	Purple			4 ft
(10) Ox eye Sunflower			Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow		5 ft
(11) White Prairie Clover			White	White	White	White		2 ft
(12) Purple Prairie Clover			Purple	Purple	Purple	Purple		2 ft
(13) Prairie Cinquefoil			Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow		2 ft
(14) Pale Purple Coneflower			Pink	Pink				
(15) Grey Headed Coneflower				Yellow	Yellow	Yellow		5 ft
(16) Compass Plant				Yellow	Yellow	Yellow		8 ft
(17) Rattlesnake Master				White	White			4 ft
(18) Partridge Pea				Yellow	Yellow	Yellow		2 ft
(19) New England Aster				Purple	Purple	Purple	Purple	5 ft
(20) Prairie Dock				Yellow	Yellow	Yellow		
(21) Cup Plant				Yellow	Yellow	Yellow		
(22) Obedient Plant					Pink	Pink		4 ft
(23) Spike Blazing Star				Purple	Purple	Purple	Purple	5 ft
(24) Smooth Aster				Purple	Purple	Purple		4 ft

Native Illinois Plant Guide

Mason State Tree Nursery produces a variety native Illinois eco-type plants, specializing in bareroot tree seedlings, pollinator seed mix and native potted plants. Using native Illinois plants to build a pollinator garden in your backyard is a great way to help out your local pollinators. Use this as a guide to help you take the first steps in beginning your native plant garden.

Soil

Loose, well drained loam soil is preferred for this garden, but native plants will grow in almost any soil and moisture levels. A flat or slightly sloped location that is protected from wind and that is suitable for native plant growth is best.

Moisture

Great news! Native plants have deep roots systems, meaning that once they are established, no additional watering should be needed. Native plants are well adapted to Illinois local climate, and can withstand flooding and drought, coming back year after year.

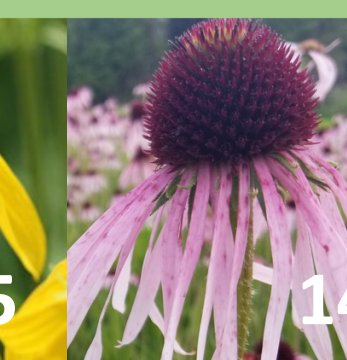
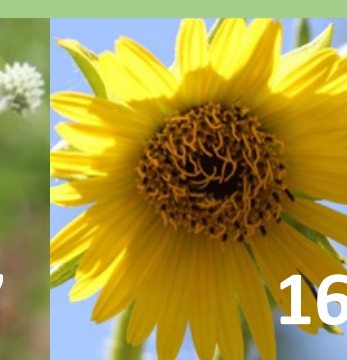
Sunlight

Six or more hours per day of full sun should be provided, although some butterflies will visit certain shade or partial shade plants.

Bloom Time

Native plants bloom at different times in the season. Choosing plants with different bloom periods provides a bright and colorful garden that will provide shelter and nutrients to pollinators all summer long! See the chart to the left to find out when your favorite native plants bloom.

17855 N. County Road 2400E, Topeka, Illinois, 61567
 +309-535-2185
 DNR.MasonStateNursery@illinois.gov
 8:00 AM -4:00 PM, M-F





Lets Certify!

Information you need

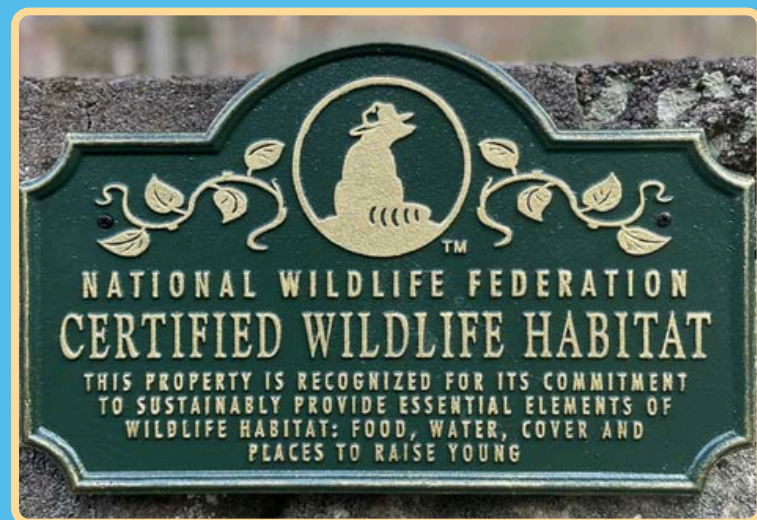
- Your Information
- Habitat Type
- Habitat Address
- Habitat Essential Elements Pledge
- Payment information
 - \$25 to certify

CERTIFY NOW!



Congratulations!

By certifying your habitat, you join a growing network of individuals committed to preserving nature and fostering biodiversity. This certification not only recognizes your efforts but also inspires others in your community to take similar steps towards creating a sustainable environment.



CERTIFY NOW!



