



Bringing Wildlife Home

Lawn Reduction

Traditional American landscaping focuses on maintaining a manicured green lawn. However, native trees, shrubs, ground cover, prairie or meadow patches, flower beds, and attractively mulched areas are better environmental choices, for people and wildlife.



A gas-powered push mower emits as much hourly pollution as 11 cars and a riding mower as much as 34 cars.

Did You Know

- Approximately 20 million U.S. acres are planted as residential lawn.
- 30-60% of urban fresh water is used for watering lawns, depending on the city.
- 67 million pounds of synthetic pesticides are used on U.S. lawns annually.
- Areas of lawn that include only one type of plant, such as grass, offer little habitat value for wildlife.
- Yard waste, mostly grass clippings, makes up 20% of municipal solid waste collected, and most of it ends up in landfills.

Reasons to Reduce Your Lawn

- Save time and money that you would normally spend on mowing and fertilizing grass.
- Provide habitat and food for wildlife.
- Conserve water.
- Reduce lawn mower pollution and decrease run-off from fertilizers and pesticides.

Ways to Reduce Your Lawn and Help Wildlife

- Use native plant species as ground cover instead of grass
- Install native trees and shrubs
- Create a water garden or pond
- Create a rock garden
- Use mulched paths

Unlike many native plants, turf grasses do not provide a good source of food or habitat for most types of wildlife.

Inspiring Americans to protect wildlife for our children's future.

National Wildlife Federation · 11100 Wildlife Center Drive · Reston, VA 20190

www.nwf.org/gardenforwildlife



- Provide meadow or prairie patches
- Install a hedgerow
- Plant an organic vegetable garden
- Create a butterfly or hummingbird garden

Taking Action

Make a plan of how you want your yard to look. Check with your local municipality, neighborhood, or homeowners' association for regulations. Once you have decided on a small area of your yard to convert, follow these simple steps:

1. Cover turf grass with 6-10 layers of newspaper (black & white only) or brown cardboard. There is no need to remove the grass first.
2. Make sure the sections overlap one another so that grass and weeds will not come up between the cracks.
3. Wet down the newspaper or cardboard.
4. Cover the newspaper or cardboard with a thick layer of mulch or dirt (4-6 inches).
5. Allow turf grass and weeds to die back for 4-6 weeks.
6. Plant directly through the mulch and newspaper/cardboard. If you know you're going to be planting trees or shrubs, dig the holes before putting down the layers of newspaper/cardboard and then layer the newspaper/cardboard around the holes.

Other Things to Consider

- Determine what native plants are thriving in your site. Encourage the native plants already present and replace exotic invasive species with native ones. The Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center has lists of recommended native plants by region and state at www.wildflower.org/collections.
- Mulch can reduce weeds and prevent erosion. Use organic mulch to improve the soil with nutrients and increase water holding capacity.
- Borders of rock or wood can bring a sense of order to a "wild garden" in an urban or suburban neighborhood. This may make your natural landscape more acceptable to neighbors.
- If possible, use a push mower.
- Don't forget to make a place for people as well. A bench or path will accommodate this nicely and add to your enjoyment.



Visit www.nwf.org/gardenforwildlife for more information.

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