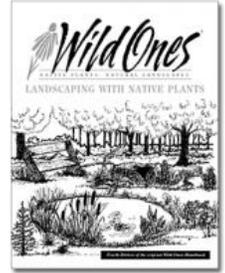


NATIVE PLANTS AND NATURAL LANDSCAPING

If we care about the Earth we could heal it by removing lawns, by finding alternatives to lawns. You can do wonderful things on your own property to protect the environment. Each little island, each corridor will help bring back the butterflies and birds. — Lorrie Otto



What are Native Plants?

Many people are talking about native plants these days. Are you wondering what a native plant is? Are you wondering why they're talking about native plants?

A NATIVE PLANT SPECIES IS ONE THAT OCCURS NATURALLY IN A PARTICULAR REGION, ECOSYSTEM AND/OR HABITAT AND WAS PRESENT PRIOR TO EUROPEAN SETTLEMENT.

Wild Ones advocates the selection of plants and seeds derived, insofar as possible, **from local or regional sources at sites having the same or similar environmental conditions as the site of planting.** Such plant material is often termed the local ecotype. Read more: [Guidelines for selecting native plants](#)

Plant material that originates in and is native to geographic regions are often referred to as ecoregions by scientists. **It is better to use a source from your geographic region but outside your state than to use a source from a different geographic region inside your state.** Such regions are often referred to as ecoregions by scientists. The ecoregions within the U.S. are best delineated by The USDA Forest Service's [US Ecoregions](#) map.

Other Resources:

- Wild Ones Landscaping with Native Plants, Edition 4 Newly revised to include a wider variety of native landscaping ecoregions, this comprehensive guide book continues the tradition of "how to" information, along with a newly developed list of book resources. You can order a copy for just \$10 (includes shipping and handling) at our [Wild Ones Store](#). *Wild Ones Landscaping with Native Plants* is also available on-line at [Environmental Protection Agency](#) web site.
- [Wild Ones Original Handbook](#) Wild Ones original handbook contains a variety of "how to" information on all aspects of native landscaping and is available for reading on the [Environmental Protection Agency Green Acres](#) web site.

Why Native Landscapes?

So now that you know about native plants, let's talk natural landscapes.

With the U.S. population nearing three hundred and six million, and growing by more than eight thousand every day, we have to get serious about habitat for our fellow creatures. See [Gardening for Life](#) (pdf) by Doug Tallamy. Here Doug Tallamy talks specifically about pollinators and other insects and how important they are to our bird populations [Welcoming Wildlife into the Garden with Native Plants](#) (pdf).



Are you a birder?

Doug Tallamy tells us his grad students are busy conducting a number of studies to quantify the percentage of caterpillars each bird species in the U.S feed their young. So far, the overall average is about 80% caterpillars. Some, particularly many of the warblers, feed 100% caterpillars, but ground foragers like catbirds have a higher percentage of detritivores and predators like crickets and spiders. 4% of our birds don't feed insects at all (finches, doves, crossbills). There is no such list for birds, but you can assume that if a plant makes lots of caterpillars, it is very important to birds. Check out [Native Caterpillars Moths and Butterflies and Host Native Woodies](#) (pdf) [Native Caterpillars Moths Butterflies & Host Native Woodies](#) (pdf) from the **March/April 2014 Journal** to help with your tree selection.

Other Resources:

- [What's On the Horizon? The Future of Natural Landscaping in America](#) (pdf) by [Neil Diboll](#)

- [Why Wild Ones?](#) (pdf) by Portia Brown.
- [Turf Wars Escalate](#) (pdf) by Craig Tuft



Reasons to Use Native Plants

Besides the fact that it's the right thing to do, there are a lot of other reasons to use native plants and natural landscapes.

- [Where have all the insects gone?](#) and **What are Neonicotinoid Insecticides?** by Maryann Whitman
- **Increase Yields** in Your [Vegetable and Berry Gardens](#) by Going Native (pdf)
- **It's FUN!** [Keeping a Journal](#) is not only fun, but educational.
- **It's Good for our Youth.** The [Next Generation](#) articles in the *Wild Ones Journal* are aimed at showing kids how to have fun with nature, these articles also appeal to adults.
- **It's sustainable.** It'll help offset the effects of [Climate Change](#)
- **It's needed to sustain habitat** for non-humans—native birds, insects, and other fauna [Beyond the Birdfeeder](#)
- **Birds evolved naturally with native plants** and they bring many of us much pleasure throughout the day [Creating a Bird Friendly Yard](#)
- **Pollinators** [Stopover Habitats and Hedgerows](#)
- **Connecting to the Future** [Corridors for a Healthier Environment](#)

So why not use non-native plants?

- They are often [Invasive Plants](#)
- There are [Things to Know About Invasive Species](#)
- They may not be from Mars, but [Alien Invaders](#) are deadly to native plant species

How to use Native Plants

So now that we've convinced you to try native plants and natural landscapes, let's talk about how to go about doing it.

- Check out this how-to guide from Wild Ones entitled [Wild Ones Landscaping with Native Plants](#)
- Consider your geography. Get to know the various eco-regions within the USA [Why Hardiness Zones, Native Ranges and Ecoregions?](#)
- Mysteries Explored—Plants need companions to thrive just like you and me. Find out more about this [intricate system of connections](#) between plant roots, soil, fungi and Glomalin.
- The Wild Ones [Local Ecotype Guidelines](#) will help you figure out how to choose the best plants for your ecoregion
- Don't be fooled into thinking that cultivars of native plants aka nativars provide just as much benefit to the environment. Read our [Nativars Statement](#).
- Do you have a shore land and wetland to develop? Read about water management bio-diversity in the wetter ecoregions [Wetland considerations](#)
- Water Management to help maintain healthy potable ground water can be done in urban settings by using [rain gardens and rain barrels](#)
- So you [don't want to mow](#) your lawn anymore
- Flowers? Grasses? [Getting to know the plant species better](#)
- Woodlands? Shade Plants? [Knowing how to get started](#)
- Maintenance: water, weeding and care [Designing your Garden Landscape](#)
- Controlling invasives [Tongs of Death](#)
- Propagation — so you want to start your own plants. [Gathering, Rescuing and Propagating](#)



[The Grapevine](#) — by *Wild Ones Journal* editor, Maryann Whitman, is one of the *Journal's* longest-running and most popular features. Read about what's happening relative to native plants and biodiversity around the country.