

Quick Outline – Some of the Values of adding Ohio Native Plants to your Yard

by Toni Stahl, 6/26/07 www.backyardhabitat.info

Reduce Chemical Pollution:

- 2001 per EPA – 101 million pounds of pesticide applied in non-commercial application at home annually (insecticides, herbicides, rodenticides, fungicides)
- National Academy of Sciences said that although the farmer uses pesticides more widely, the homeowner uses 10 times more per acre than do farmers.

Improve Child Development and Health:

- Nature Deficit Disorder - Kaiser Family Foundation study: Average American child spends **44 hours per week** (more than 6 hours a day!) staring at some kind of electronic screen. Studies have linked excessive television viewing to obesity, violence, and even lower intelligence.
- Recent research indicates that children who spend unstructured time outdoors in nature an hour a day are healthier, overall, than their indoor counterparts. They:
 - Play more creatively
 - Have lower stress levels
 - Have more active imaginations
 - Become fitter and leaner
 - Develop stronger immune systems
 - Experience fewer symptoms of ADD and ADHD
 - Have greater respect for themselves, for others, and for the environment
- Sharing your yard with nature provides a lifetime learning experience that is different every day. See greenhour.org.

Save money:

- Save on heating & cooling costs – evergreen trees on north & west block winter wind, and deciduous trees on south and east shade in summer and drop leaves to let sun in for heat in winter
- Soil stabilization – deep tap roots on native plants
- Low “ditch” transformed into a beautiful rain garden
- Natives accustomed to Ohio weather and thrive under tough soil conditions, clay, rock, wet, dry, Exotics may require extra fertilizer and water or may become Invasive
- Non-native Invasive Plants escaped from home yards are costly to remove from parks and natural areas

Clean air

- Lawn Mowing - EPA estimates that the amount of pollution emitted by a lawnmower operating for one hour is equivalent to the amount of pollution emitted by a car driven for approximately 20 miles.
- Carbon dioxide and oxygen exchange are needed from plants

Clean Water

- Chemicals on gardens and turf grass runoff into our rivers and streams
- Turf grass largest is the largest irrigated crop in US per the EPA and 30-60% of urban fresh water is used to water lawns
- Pesticide run off contaminates water
- Drought – natives have deep tap roots
- ¾ of humans live in growing Metropolitan areas with non-porous surfaces and turf grass
- A Rain Garden costs around \$2 per square foot, without the dry streambed costs. It is low-cost and easy for a homeowner to install on their own

Maintain Healthy Food Production:

- Pollinators we depend on our 3,000 kinds of native pollinators for maintaining 1/3 of our food production. Native bees rarely sting and nest singly in woods or in the ground. 99.5% are killed by cross-pollinating pesticide-sprayed flowers.
www.pollinator.org/pollinator_week.htm and
<http://entomology.ucdavis.edu/aapa/aapapubs.cfm>.

Improve Health:

- Mosquito controlled naturally by ecosystem
- Native bugs attracted by native plants are less aggressive than non-native bugs. Non-native bugs are more likely to sting or bite.
- Allergies – larger pollen size less easily inhaled into nasal passages
- Black Widow spiders are eaten by skunks

Lifetime Learning & National Recognition:

- National Wildlife Federation provides easy ‘Green’ outdoor tips based on scientific research at www.nwf.org/backyard
- Posting National Wildlife Federation’s Certified sign displays national recognition and encourages others to follow suit