

What are Native Plants?

Why Should I Use Native Plants in My Yard?

Plants absorb carbon dioxide from the air and store it in their roots, leaves and limbs. They release oxygen which naturally cleans our air. Because native plants have deeper taproots, they capture and store more carbon dioxide than non-natives or lawn (see the drawing comparing native and non-native grass roots).

People have often commented that my yard filled with natives “smells better.” Deep taproots conserve soil with less runoff, they naturally aerate our soil, and they clean our water. Help slow global warming because deep taproots cause soil temperature to rise more slowly, thus creating cooler soil that stores more carbon (John Harte, 2008).

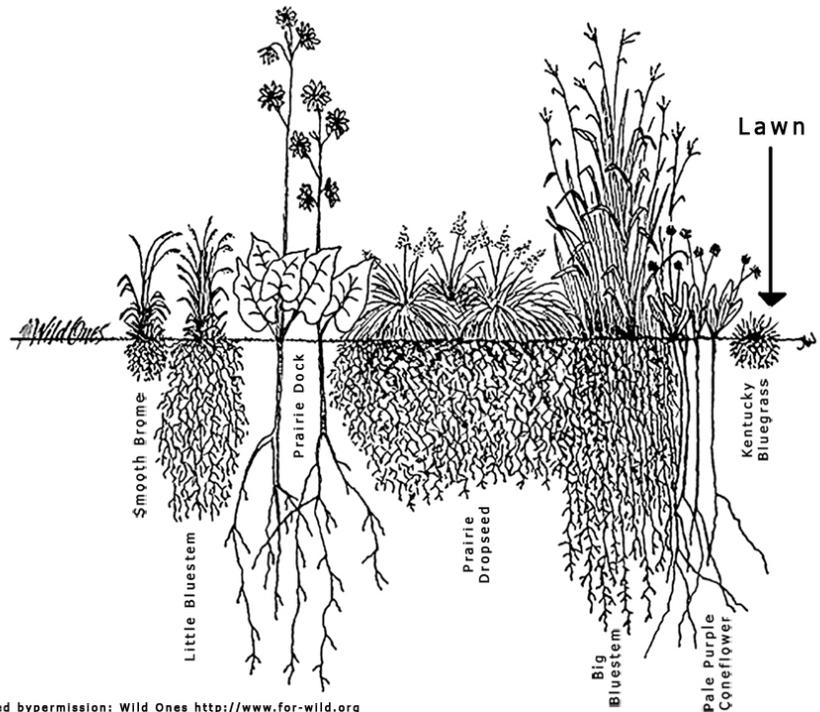
Conserve wildlife, which depends on natives for their lifecycles. Save water because natives survive with little or none. Reduce pollution because they don't need fertilizer or pesticides having adapted to Ohio's soil and changing weather over hundreds of years. Reduce fire hazards because natives burn more slowly than non-natives do.

What is a Native, Non-Native or Invasive Plant?

Basically native plants (natives) were present in Ohio when European settlers arrived around 1750. Non-native plants (non-natives) were introduced primarily from Europe or Asia. Invasive plants are a small percentage of non-native plants that spread out of control and cause environmental or economic harm, like European Honeysuckle that out-competes native understory plants

Where Do I Find Native Plants?

It is illegal to take natives from the wild. Thankfully, there are native plant nurseries that responsibly propagate Ohio plants. See my website for a starter list. Under the “How Do I Do This” tab,



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click on *Some Ohio Native Plant Sources* at www.backyardhabitat.info.

Which Native Plants Will Fit Best in My Yard?

Roughly draw your yard to see where you have heat, shade, wet or dry conditions. Indicate your house, windows, shade from existing trees and structures, low spots, areas with good drainage, power lines for height limitations, and directions (North, etc.). The Sun rises in the East (less hot) and moves to the West (hotter).

Save energy by placing evergreen trees on the North and West sides to protect your yard from wind. Place deciduous trees (they shed their leaves in winter) on the South side to shade your yard in summer and allow winter sun. Determine the type of soil you have (clay, loam, sand). Plan for mature height and width and place plants where you can enjoy them through a window.

Learn More

Email subscribe@backyardhabitat.info to receive our monthly ‘Nature Scoop’ email and please check out our Ohio website at www.backyardhabitat.info for more information. Let's work together to restore native plants, one yard at a time.

info@backyardhabitat.info

Website: www.backyardhabitat.info