

Mow Less...Provide More!

Homeowner's Guide to Practicing Sustainability in the Landscape



**Florida
Native
Plant
Society**



Website: www.fnps.org

Be a Homeowner For Habitat

Plant a Native Tree

It is the single best thing you can do for the environment, wildlife and yourself. Trees are beautiful. They add height, color, shade, shape and texture to a home landscape. Trees provide privacy screening and enhance air quality by providing oxygen we breathe and cool summer air temperatures. For wildlife, trees provide food, nesting sites, cover from danger and shelter from bad weather. Helpful resources to select trees include PlantRealFlorida.org and FNPS.org.

TIP: Smaller, younger trees cost less and are quicker to establish.

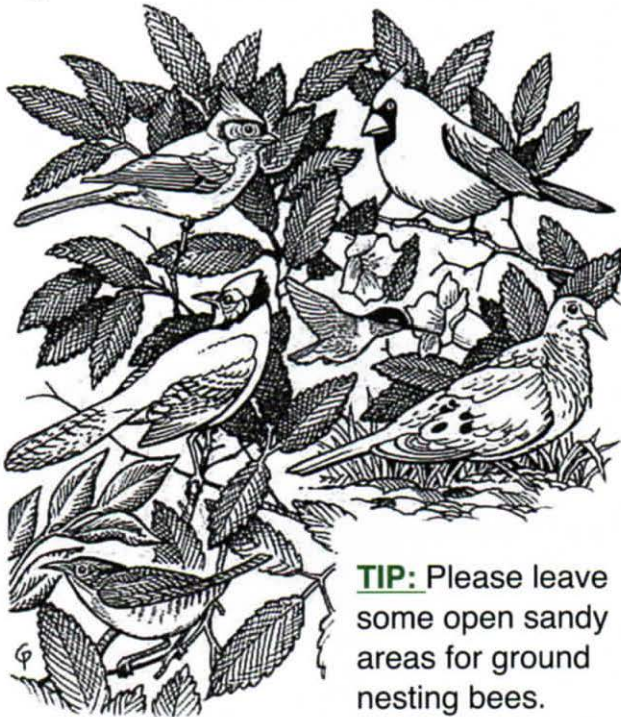
Create a Bird or Butterfly Garden

It is easy to do in your backyard and fun for children and adults. Start with visiting The Florida Native Plant Society's website, www.fnps.org to learn what native plants are recommended for your region. Plant native plants that are larval or host plants for caterpillars and food or nectar plants for adult butterflies. Combine flowers with shrubs to create a real plant community with a diversity of species and shapes.

Avoid pesticides that poison birds who are the best insect control.



Chemicals can also harm beneficial insects and native pollinators such as bees, beetles and butterflies. Keep a clean water source such as a small fountain, which can attract birds looking for a bath or a drink. Popular native plants for a garden include dotted horse-mint, salvia, square stems, partridge pea, blazing star, black-eyed Susan, goldenrod and ironweed.



TIP: Please leave some open sandy areas for ground nesting bees.

Popular shrubs and palms include Simpson stopper, elderberry, buttonbush, sumac and saw palmetto. Small trees such as wax myrtle and sparkleberry are very beneficial for wildlife. Adding vines with tubular flowers such as coral

honeysuckle, trumpet creeper and crossvine will invite hummingbirds to your garden paradise.

How You Can Create Hedgerows

- **Identify Possibilities.** Look for fence lines, woodland edges, corners of a field or garden, a pond edge or hard-to-mow hillside to create a natural wonderland.
- **Think Corridors.** How does wildlife move from one place to another? Hedgerows can be vital highways, as well as a place for wild critters to live and find food.
- **Mow Less.** This saves energy and your time, and helps to reduce air and noise pollution. Mow close to houses, but mow only every 4 to 6 weeks. Mow meadows annually or every two years to allow the native plants to reseed. Keep road edges cut so that unwary wildlife can see cars in time.
- **Talk to Your Neighbors.** Spread the word (and this pamphlet). Cooperate on common borders to allow a hedgerow to thrive. Look for adjoining corners that will create an oasis for wild plants and animals.

KEEP THE NIGHT SKY DARK

Do you enjoy country evenings and seeing the stars at night far from the glare of street lamps? You can help by shielding your outdoor bulbs to direct light to the ground and by not leaving outdoor lights on all night. Artificial lights confuse nocturnal wildlife and migrating birds.



Our Changing Landscape

Here in Florida, our beautiful landscape holds a rich diversity of native plants and wildlife. As natural communities are converted to other uses such as agriculture, mining or development, habitat is lost. We, as individual landowners, hold the keys to preserving and protecting the natural beauty and ecosystem functions of Florida for ourselves, our children and future generations.

Can I Make a Difference?

- Maintain “wild” areas - the more the better: woodlands, wetlands, corridors, hedgerows and pollinator strips.
- Blend homes into the landscape (unless in fire prone area) - consider the natural contours & native vegetation.
- Maintain less lawn - create native meadows, cluster trees & shrubs and plant pollinator gardens.
- Use natural mulch like oak leaves and pine needles and minimize disturbance.

Native plants are part of the natural cycles of life here in Florida; they make our landscape beautiful and provide habitat for wildlife.

Why Choose Native Plants?

Native plants survive and thrive!

- They're well-adapted to the soil and climate here.
- They have attractive natural shapes.
- They offer the best food, shelter and nest sites for wildlife.

TIP: Be sure to pickup a copy of *Native Landscaping: Restoring Beauty & Balance to Florida* from your local chapter.

Save a Place for Wildlife

- Where property boundaries meet, plant a cluster of native trees and shrubs that create privacy and welcome wildlife.
- Plan your landscape to provide nectar sources & food throughout the year.
- Small brush piles in a quiet corner with leaves, branches and yard waste will become a haven for wildlife.
- Cardinals, summer tanagers and warblers nest in leafy branches.

TIP: Keep pets and pet food away from wildlife.



Protect Our Water

90% of the water used for residences, businesses and agriculture comes from the Floridan Aquifer beneath us. Please help protect water resources for people and nature.

- Avoid overusing chemicals that seep into wetlands, streams, sandy soils & lakes.
- Encourage natural growth or a buffer along the lakeshore 10-50 feet to control erosion and absorb chemicals.
- Save existing wet areas no matter how small. Wetlands, springs, lakes and streams are all part of our watershed.
- Don't fill in wet prairies, depressional wetlands or ponds - these are vital habitat for turtles, frogs, toads & salamanders.
- Consider planting blooming native aquatic plants along your shoreline to encourage butterflies, bees and hummingbirds.



Helpful Resources:

Florida Native Plant Society

Website: www.fnps.org
Email: info@fnps.org
Phone #: 321.271.6702



The Mission of the FNPS is to promote the preservation, conservation, and restoration of the native plants and native plant communities of Florida.

- **fnps.org/plants**: Create a plant list for your location, site-specific conditions, pollinator-support and more.
- **Florida.PlantAtlas.USF.edu**: Plant status (native/nonnative), conservation status, photos, range by county and more.
- **Floridainvasives.org**: Florida Invasive Species Partnership facilitates partnerships that prevent and control the threat of invasive species on public & private lands & waters in Florida.
- **PlantRealFlorida.org**: The Florida Association of Native Nurseries retail website. Find your local native nurseries and native landscapers.
- **Xerces.org**: A science-based non-profit organization that protects wildlife through the conservation of invertebrates and their habitats.

