

## Native Plants for Wildlife



### Wild Columbine

*Aquilegia canadensis*

Ht: 12-30" Flower: Scarlet Bloom: May-August  
Wildlife value: An excellent food source for hummingbirds and insects.

### Little Bluestem

*Schizachyrium scoparium*

Ht: 12-36" Bloom: August-September  
Wildlife Value: Attracts butterflies and a source of ground cover for birds and small mammals.



### Butterfly Milkweed

*Asclepias tuberosa*

Ht: 18-30" Flower: Orange Bloom: June-September  
Wildlife Value: A great food source for butterflies as well as caterpillars.

### Cardinal Flower

*Lobelia cardinalis*

Ht: 24-48" Flower: Red Bloom: July-October  
Wildlife Value: Excellent source of food for hummingbirds and insects.



### Rough Blazing Star

*Liatris aspera*

Ht: 24-48" Flower: Pink/purple Bloom: July-September  
Wildlife Value: Blazing stars are a favorite food source for many butterflies species and other insects.

### Indian Grass

*Sorghastrum nutans*

Ht: 36-84" Flower: Amber Bloom: July-September  
Wildlife Value: Provides year-round cover for birds and small mammals.



### Highbush Cranberry

*Viburnum trilobum*

Ht: 6-12' Flower: White Bloom: Spring  
Wildlife Value: Provides a great source of cover as well as food through late-winter.

### American Elderberry

*Sambucus canadensis*

Ht: 6-12' Flower: White Bloom: Summer  
Wildlife Value: An excellent source of food and cover for many species of birds.



### White Pine

*Pinus strobus*

Ht: 80-120' Wildlife Value: Provides year-round cover that is especially important in winter.

### Bur Oak

*Quercus macrocarpa*

Ht: 60-100'  
Wildlife Value: Provides excellent cover as well as a great source of food (acorns).



## Native Plant Communities

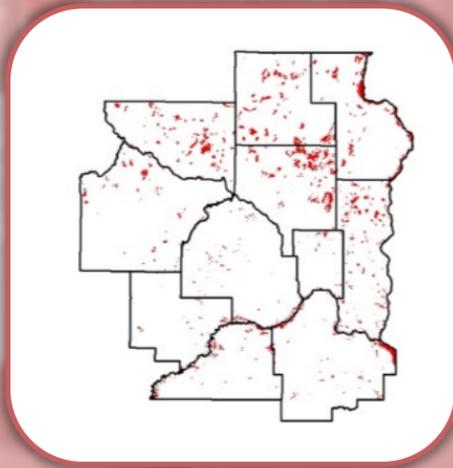
### Native plant communities (Early 1800's, pre-settlement)

The landscape around us once hosted a mosaic of plant communities: tallgrass prairie, oak savanna, maple-basswood forests, wetlands, and peatlands. The occurrence of a particular plant community depends on topography, geology and disturbances, such as fire. Extensive land development and introduced invasive species have led to the destruction of a majority of these native plant communities and a fragmentation of the few plant communities that remain.



### Native plant communities (Present day)

Of the 3,221,041 acres that comprise the eleven-county metro area, native plant communities now occupy approximately 3.8% (123,183 acres) of the total land area. Efforts should focus on restoring areas that reconnect and protect the remaining native plant communities.



# BACKYARD HABITAT

## Attracting Wildlife to Your Property



Conservation Starts at Home

Anoka Conservation District  
1318 McKay Dr. NE, Suite 300  
Ham Lake, MN 55304  
763-434-2030  
[www.AnokaSWCD.org](http://www.AnokaSWCD.org)

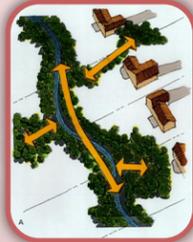
Prepared by the  
**ANOKA**  
CONSERVATION  
DISTRICT

## Landscaping for Wildlife

Urbanization has dramatically impacted wildlife by fragmenting and reducing the abundance of natural habitat. Adding native habitat to your yard relieves some of the pressure put on wildlife. Including multiple habitat components in your landscaping will help to attract a variety of animals such as butterflies, deer, birds, and frogs. Creating and improving habitat increases connectivity among other existing habitats and improves the ecological value of your yard.



Fragmented habitats are too small and have little value to wildlife.



Connecting groups of habitat creates an area much more beneficial to wildlife.

## Components of Habitat

There are four key habitat components when landscaping for wildlife.

### Food

Every species has different food requirements. Animal food preferences often change with age and with the seasons. Including flowers, grasses, shrubs, and trees that provide fruits, seeds, nectar, nuts, and foliage will help to provide a year-round food source for a variety of wildlife.



### Water

All animals depend on water for survival. That's why lakes, ponds, streams, and wetlands are so important to our environment. Anything from a simple bird bath, to creating a large pond, or a small aquatic garden can have an immense value to the frogs and insects that depend heavily on available water sources. The sound of flowing water is particularly effective at attracting wildlife.



### Shelter

Harsh weather and predators are a constant danger to animals. Shelter is especially important when animals are raising their young and when they sleep. Bird houses are an obvious source of shelter, but there are other ways to include shelter in your landscape. Trees, shrubs, tall grasses, and logs all provide cover during a storm or a place to hide. Structures like rock piles, standing dead trees and hollow logs also provide excellent cover and add another landscaping element to your yard.



### Space

All animals have different space requirements and territorial needs. Some animals defend a large area when nesting while others don't. Learn about the territorial requirements of the wildlife in your area to determine how much wildlife you can expect in your yard.

## Planning

Planning is an important step in any landscaping project. Landscaping for wildlife takes some additional consideration if you want your yard to have beneficial habitat for wildlife. Below are some good steps to take when planning your project:

- Create a list of project objectives. If there are certain animals you would like to attract, plan your project to incorporate habitat components they need. For example, use water features if you want to attract frogs or dragonflies or include different types of flowers to entice butterflies and hummingbirds. Many small mammals require rock or wood piles for making dens. Learn about the native plant communities in your area and how you can use them in your landscape.
- Map out your property. Note topography, buildings, existing vegetation, sunny and shady areas, soil types, and other important features. Decide which elements you want to keep and what areas you could enhance. Make sure you consider family use in the yard so you still have room for a vegetable garden or for the kids to play. Look at your neighbors yard as well and consider adding to any natural features that border your yard. You can also use landscaping as a natural fence or to screen views.



- Group similar plants together. It is more appealing to the eye and provides larger areas of similar habitat.

- Plant deciduous trees on the south side of the house. Along with providing habitat, they will create shade for your house in the summer and allow sun to reach the house in the winter, reducing energy expenses. Evergreens are great year-round windbreaks and should be positioned to the north and west of the house.



- If you are using a water feature, consider installing a water pump that will move the water. You could create a small waterfall or just have it trickle over some rocks. This keeps the water clean longer, prevents mosquitoes from breeding and is much more attractive to wildlife. Disappearing streams are a great way to avoid standing water.

## Landscape Features

### Butterfly Garden

Butterfly gardens are made up of flowers that are especially attractive to butterflies and caterpillars. There are over 200 species of butterflies in the Midwest, and a huge selection of beautiful plants they enjoy.

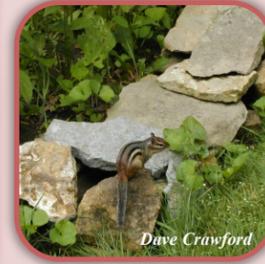


### Frog Pond

A great way to add a water source to your landscape is with a frog pond. Small and easy to maintain, frog ponds will attract more than just frogs. Introduce some aquatic plants and a small waterfall or rock fountain and you will have a feature that's appealing to the eye, and to wildlife.

### Native Prairie Garden

These gardens are designed to replicate the natural prairies in our area. They are adapted to our climate and require minimal maintenance once they are established. They provide ground nesting cover for birds and small mammals. Strong prairie grass holds up even under heavy snow providing valuable shelter in the winter.



### Rock or Brush Piles

These landscape features are a great element to incorporate into your gardens or in a corner of your property. While adding another interesting landscape component into your yard, they also provide great escape cover and den sites for rabbits, chipmunks, toads and many other animals.

### Birdbaths

Another way to introduce water to your landscape is with a simple bird bath. The key to making them attractive to birds is making sure they stay full and clean. A reliable water source will have birds coming back again and again.



### Feeders

Providing food in addition to what is produced by your trees, shrubs, and flowers ensures you will have a variety of wildlife visiting your yard. Seed and suet feeders are great for songbirds and can provide an important food source in the winter. Nectar feeders will attract hummingbirds and orioles. You can also spread seeds or corn on the ground for squirrels. If you choose to use feeders, be consistent and keep them full.

### Hummingbird Garden

Ruby-throated hummingbirds are a garden favorite. Hummingbirds prefer red-tubular flowers, and it's a good idea to choose some flowers that bloom in spring and others in the fall. This way you will have hummingbirds visiting your garden all summer.

