

LANDSCAPING WITH NATIVE PLANTS

Nature needs the native plants that evolved in each locale to provide all the resources needed for its very survival. Pollen. Nectar. Fruit. Seeds. Leaves. Traditional gardening uses mostly all imported non-native plants that support these very functions in their countries of origin. Yet, to most all of our local wildlife these ornamental plants are as good as statues; they are not equipped to use them as food. If you like and want to see (and help out) more birds, butterflies and all the other creatures in Nature, please consider adding native plants to your landscape.

Native perennial flowers deliver what nature needs, especially for pollinators like bees, butterflies, and hummingbirds. Since most native flowers bloom for 4-6 weeks, they also provide an interesting, changing landscape through the growing season. Just be sure to plant more than a couple plants of each type. Little clumps will look better in your garden and support that many more visiting natural wonders.

Shade trees improve property values, generate oxygen, support birds and many other critters and provide valuable shade when mature. Unfortunately, it may take 20 or more years for them to reach that stage. There's a meme that says the second best time to plant a tree is now because the very best time was 20 years ago.

If you already have a bunch of shade trees, consider one or more small native flowering trees. They can shade a patio or bench. Accent the yard and house. Provide spring color and, often, fruit for birds.

Shrubs add interest to your yard, provide fragrance when in bloom and can be the best way to create a screen and mute sound. Native shrubs can also provide fruit for birds and feed insects their leaves and support the larger food web. Look for corners or borders to plant several or an entire hedgerow.

No matter the size of your yard or your skills with a shovel and trowel, you can add native plants and be inspired by the miracles of nature that will visit them.

[Kent Conservation District Native Plant Resources](#)

<https://www.kentconservation.org/native-plants/>

[Native plant selector](#) for west Michigan by Hidden Savanna Nursery in Kalamazoo

<https://www.hiddensavanna.com/plants.php>