



Native-Scaping

Information Source: USDA Forest Service and Natural Resource Conservation Service

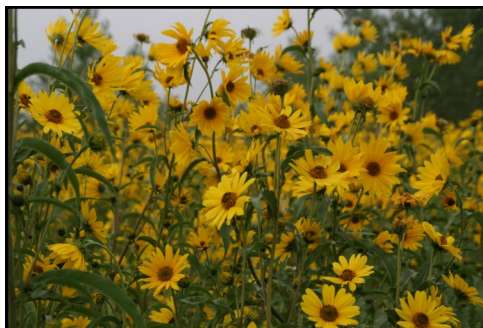
Benefits of native-scaping:

- Attract native animals such as butterflies and birds by providing food sources and valuable habitat.
- Enhances the beauty of yards and neighborhoods.
- Helps fight invasive plants.
- Reduces the need for pesticides.
- Reduces energy consumption and pollution (limited need for mowing).
- Improves and protects biodiversity.
- Protects and preserves the stewardship of our natural heritage.
- Shows your commitment to the environment.

What is native-scaping?

Native-scaping involves planting native species in your landscape. It has taken thousands of years since the end of the last ice age for our native plant communities to develop. For this reason alone, native plants are as much a part of what makes Steuben County unique as our lakes. Native plants have several advantages over introduced plants. They tend to grow better than introduced species because they have evolved under local growing conditions. Native species are tolerant of Indiana's climate and are less prone to pests and disease and, once established, require less watering and fertilizer than non-native species. They can also reduce the amount of lawn you need to mow.

Natural Resource
Conservation Service
photo by Dennis Larson



Considerations

- Before beginning any project, check homeowner association covenants, as well as local and county ordinances. Do not work a drainage, utility, or other easement without the proper permits. Contact Indiana's "Call Before You Dig" phone center (811 or 1-800-382-5544) to identify any buried utilities. Do not place your native garden directly over a septic system.
- Get to know your site. Factors such as existing plants, sun exposure, soil type, drainage and soil moisture will determine what kinds of site preparation will be needed and which species should be used.
- When enhancing an established yard, you should inventory your yard and work with the features you have. Perhaps a stump, fallen log, or large rock could be a focal point for your native garden.
- If you want a formal looking yard, group similar plants and colors together, with spacing wide enough to allow plant distinction. If you prefer a more natural look, scatter a variety of plants at random. Then allow the plants to grow into each other, providing a free flowing form.
- Whatever your design, the soft pastels of delicate wildflowers are a welcome sign of spring. In winter, tall grasses add a texture to the landscape that a mowed lawn will never offer.
- Native species should be obtained from reputable nurseries and garden centers that offer a selection of plants indigenous to the area. Indiana has a native

- plant society that can serve as an excellent resource. They can be found on the internet at www.inpaws.org.
- Consider your budget. A native planting is a long-term investment. It is important to plan according to how much money and time you have now and in the future.
- The first few growing seasons will require maintenance including weed control.
- It takes time for native plants to get established. It's important to know from the outset that it may take a few years for native plantings to look attractive. In time, plants will spread and propagate, creating patterns that work well in each space.

Contact the Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District for more information, assistance in designing your rain garden, supplier info, and info on possible cost share assistance:

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