

Ferndale Encourages Natural Landscaping

Thanks to a community-led effort, Ferndale is embracing native landscaping. Residents, recognizing the beauty and function of yards that incorporate a natural-looking mix of flowers and greenery, called upon the City to make native landscaping a priority in Ferndale – and the City answered that call.

Working closely with Ferndale Council member Melanie Piana and the Ferndale Sustainability Commission, residents spent over a year creating a plan for native landscaping, resulting in an amendment to the City's noxious vegetation ordinance. Yards featuring planned natural landscaping will now be supported and encouraged. The benefits are numerous. Natural landscaping is unique, distinctive, and easier to maintain – turf grass lawns, introduced by European settlers, require more care than the native prairie, woodland, and wetland plants that once flourished here.

While traditional lawns tend to look alike, natural landscaping creates a distinctive sense of place – an image that increases property values.

Residents interested in creating a natural or native landscaped yard are asked to register with the City. There is no cost, and doing so will allow staff to educate people concerned about ordinance violations.

Register your naturally-landscaped yard with the City of Ferndale at www.ferndalemi.gov/Services/Sustainability

Although natural landscapes can have a lush look, they do require a few years to fill in.



Photo courtesy of Betty Hall Photography



Photo courtesy of Betty Hall Photography



Photo by John Meyland

Where can I buy native plants?

Michigan Native Plant Producers Association (www.mnppa.org) lists landscapers and nurseries that can help Ferndale homeowners design natural landscaping and obtain native plants. To prevent the local extinction of native flora, never dig plants from natural areas. Native plants should always be purchased from reputable nurseries.



Photo by Trish Hennig
American Roots Wildflowers

Some local native plant designers & suppliers:

- American Roots • (248) 627-8525
www.AmericanRootsWildflowers.com
- ecoChic landscape design, inc.
(248) 978-2300
Laurazigmanth@ecoChiclandscape.com
- Natural Community Services • (248) 672-7611
www.naturalcommunityservices.webs.com

Online resources

- Wild Ones: www.wildones.org
- www.Nativeplants.msu.edu
- www.butterfliesinthegarden.com
- Wildflower Association of Michigan: www.wildflowersmich.org
- Monarch Watch: www.monarchwatch.org
- North American Butterfly Association: www.naba.org
- www.naturalmidwestgarden.com

Read all about it

- Bringing Nature Home, How You Can Sustain Wildlife With Native Plants*, by Douglas Tallamy
- Design Your Natural Midwest Garden*, by Patricia Hill



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For more information, contact:

City of Ferndale, Community and Economic Development,
248-546-2366

Landscaping with Native Plants in



FERNDALE



Wild Ones Photo Contest, by John Magee



Photo courtesy of Betty Hall Photography



Photo by John Magee

Adult Monarch butterflies drink nectar from flowers and lay their eggs on the stems of Milkweed. Because Milkweed is disappearing, Monarchs are in trouble. Planting this lovely native plant will attract butterflies and enable them to thrive.



Photo courtesy of Betty Hall Photography

Native Plants

Reduce costs & maintenance

Once established, native plant landscapes need little watering and are resistant to insects. They can save up to 90% of the costs of conventional landscaping maintenance by requiring less labor, water, fertilizer, pesticides and mowing. Commonly-used, non-native turf grasses require extra attention to survive in Michigan. Their root systems are much shallower than native plants and increase storm water run off. Native plants' roots make deeper passages in the soil so rainwater can soak in further, reducing runoff and flooding.

Support wildlife

If the only thing that moves in your yard is a lawnmower, consider creating a natural landscape to provide a habitat for birds, butterflies, dragonflies and other wildlife. By planning your native plant garden so something is blooming throughout the growing season, you support bird and insect pollinators.

Improve our City

In summary, native plants are good for homeowners and our city. Natural landscaping reduces the costs of storm water management and erosion control; improves water quality; reduces air, noise, and water pollution; conserves water; and benefits our climate and wildlife.



Wild Ones Photo Contest, by Liz Stanley

What are native plants?

A native plant is a species that occurs naturally in a particular habitat and was present before European settlement. Any garden design can incorporate native plants. Native plants can include trees, shrubs, grasses, sedges, and flowering plants. Because native plants spend their first year or so establishing a root system, they may take a little longer than a "traditional" garden to fill in, but long-term rewards are greater.

Native plants common to southeast Michigan:

- Bee Balm
- Black-eyed Susan
- Blue lobelia
- Canada anemone
- Cardinal flower
- Columbine
- Common boneset
- Coneflower
- Cup plant
- Golden Alexanders
- Little blue stem grass
- Meadowsweet
- New England aster
- Pale-leaved sunflower
- Goldenrod
- Sand coreopsis/tickseed
- Shrubby cinquefoil

Myths about native plants

Myth 1: Native plants are "weeds". A "weed" is any plant in the wrong place, such as grass in a flower bed. Dandelions, crab grass, and other common garden weeds are actually invasive plants that were brought to this country intentionally or accidentally.

Myth 2: Native plants cause allergies. Plants with pretty flowers rarely cause hayfever. Hayfever is often blamed on native yellow goldenrod, but is actually caused by ragweed, a non-native plant which blooms at the same time.

Myth 3: Natural landscapes attract rodents. Rats prefer man-made structures and eat garbage, not plants.



Photos courtesy of Betty Hall Photography



A naturally-landscaped garden opens a world of wonder in your own back yard.



Photo by Pat Hill, Natural Midwest Gardens