

Spring into Watershed Health

Now that spring has arrived, many of us are anxious to go out in the yard and get our hands dirty. When deciding how to revitalize your yard this season, consider shrinking your lawn by adding native plants! Read on to discover the many benefits of planting native.

Less to Mow

While a crisp, green lawn can have some great curb appeal, it is often difficult, costly, and time-consuming to maintain. The frequent need for mowing, watering, and fertilizing can grow tiresome. And despite the most valiant of efforts, we have all encountered a patch where grass simply refuses to grow. This season, consider shrinking your lawn and maintenance load by planting some native grasses, shrubs, or perennials! Once established, native plants require less watering and weeding, and don't require pesticides or fertilizers.

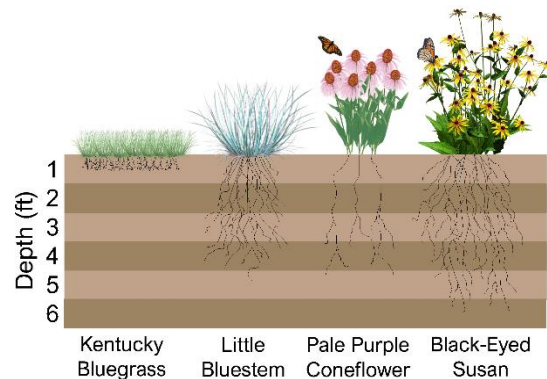


Attract More Wildlife

Despite being known as Kentucky Blue Grass, the standard sod we have come to know is originally from Eurasia and is not native to North America. As a non-native species, grass doesn't provide much in the way of a food source or habitat for our native wildlife. Consider planting native plants that will provide food and shelter for beneficial insects and pollinators such as butterflies, bees, and birds!

Decrease Erosion, Flooding, & Runoff

Grass is better than barren soil in terms of preventing erosion and flooding, but native plants are far superior at managing these common landscape concerns. In most cases, the shorter the plant, the shallower its roots. Due to their extensive roots, native plants are better at stabilizing the soil and soak up more water than the shallow roots of sod. By absorbing more water, native plants are more effective at absorbing contaminants and reducing polluted stormwater runoff. This helps keep our local waterways and drinking water clean!



Where Do I Start?

It is best to start small and select a location that complements your existing landscape, such as along borders or corners, or near an already existing flowerbed. Mow the site as low as possible, leave the cuttings, and cover it with plain cardboard (no paint or labels). Next, dampen the cardboard and cover it with a thick layer of mulch (4-6 inches) to ensure the grass beneath receives absolutely no sunlight. After 4-6 weeks, plant directly through the remaining cardboard and mulch. Water the plants generously over the next several weeks to help them establish and enjoy your new landscape!

Grass provides little benefit to people, wildlife, and the environment. Consider shrinking your lawn by planting natives this season and enjoy all the perks that your new landscape provides to your watershed, wildlife, and you! For more information on landscaping techniques that benefit the environment and improve water quality, visit www.crw.org/landscaping-solutions.

Note for National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Stormwater Phase II Communities:



CRWP can provide annual walk-throughs of municipal facilities and provide recommendations for implementing Minimum Control Measures (MCMs) to assist with meeting permit requirements. CRWP can assist with compliance with Storm Water Management Plan (SWMP) implementation and NPDES permit requirements. CRWP has developed a virtual staff training on Pollution Prevention and Good Housekeeping for our members' use which can be used to meet the member's annual MCM6 requirement. Additional information and the training video can be found here: www.crw.org/staff-training-video-mcm-6