

“Green” Yards - “Homegrown National Parks”

Spend less time and money, attract more pollinators and birds, and help the environment

By: Beth (North Royalton resident-learning about, trying, & spreading “green yards”)

Homegrown National Parks is a bottom-up call-to-action to restore habitat where we live and work...extending ‘national parks’ to our yards and communities.” - [Homegrown National Park](#)

Green Yards /Green Landscaping/Eco-landscaping “is a method to design, create, and maintain your landscape to save time, money, and energy. Green landscapes nurture wildlife; reduce air, soil, and water pollution; and make healthy recreation spaces. Your yard can make a difference!” - [BHG](#)

Lawn Reduction & Native Plants are two of the biggest (and easiest) ways to improve your yard and make an impact! [Shrinking your lawn](#) can help “combat stormwater pollution! Planting native plants [and [native trees](#)] can improve the curb appeal of a home, boost its resale value, all while protecting our environment with their long root systems which hold in soil, slow stormwater runoff and provide vital food and habitat for [birds](#), insect pollinators and many other species.” - [CWSD](#)



“Native plants are perennial plants adapted to your area so, once established, they require little care and maintenance. Since native plants thrive in your yard’s soil, the need for fertilizer is reduced. They crowd out weedy species so no need for herbicide. They attract *beneficial* insects, which will help keep *pesky* insects away and limit the need for pesticides. They require less water, provide food and shelter for wildlife, add interest and curb appeal.” - [SSWCD](#)

Leaves: “Instead of raking and bagging your leaves...Use your lawn mower to create nutrient packed mulch for your lawn. As the mulched leaves break down over winter, nitrogen and other useful compounds will fertilizer your grass, saving time and money in the spring.” - [SSWCD](#)

Rain Gardens: “[Rain gardens](#) are an attractive feature that can be planted in your yard to help reduce the amount of rainwater runoff leaving your yard. By capturing runoff...they reduce the amount of pollutants entering the storm system and ultimately our streams, lakes, and other waterways.” - [SSWCD](#)

Rain Barrels: Containers used to collect and store rainwater that would otherwise be lost to runoff and likely diverted to a storm drain. -[CWSD](#) [Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District - Offers Credits](#)

How to Get Started Evaluate your yard (or [ask an expert](#)): Are there areas you can: Add natives to *existing* beds? Shrink your lawn? Add a pollinator/bird/native plant area? Start small - Have fun experimenting with a few native plants! OR Go big! - Have fun making some bigger changes!

More Resources (Beyond the sources linked above)

[List of Ohio Native Plant Growers](#) [Nodding Onion Gardens](#) [CWSD: Native Tree, Plant, and Seed Sales](#)

[Native Alternatives](#) [Native Plant Database](#) [25 Native Ohio Perennials: Vibrant, Deer-resistant!](#)

Books: [Bringing Nature Home & Nature's Best Hope](#)-[Tallamy](#) [Midwest Native Plant Primer](#)-[Branhagen](#)

<http://bit.ly/GreenYards>



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Link

**The first page is meant to be an overview “flyer” to share.
Below, we will add more info as we learn and try more!**

1. Leaves:

- Fall - **Leave the leaves!:** Instead of raking and bagging your leaves, leave your leaves on the lawn. Use your lawn mower to create nutrient packed mulch for your lawn. As the mulched leaves break down over the winter, nitrogen and other useful compounds will fertilize your grass, saving you time and money in the spring. [Summit Soil & Water](#)
- Spring - Hold off on your spring garden and leaf clean up until daytime temperatures consistently reach the 50s, if possible. Scores of beneficial insects - adults, eggs, and pupae - use leaves for the winter. [SavvyGardening](#)

2. Yard Signs! The following are signs for your yard, business, school to “advertise” the good you are doing!

- [National Wildlife Federation - “Certified Wildlife Habitat” Sign](#)
- [“Homegrown National Parks” - Printable Signs and Flyers](#)
- ["Midwest Native Plant Society" Yard Sign](#)

3. How do I make my yard more “green” in a “traditional” neighborhood?

Below is what one family did to reduce lawn and increase natives:

- Front yard (sunny) - kept “traditional” looking to match the neighborhood. Enlarged existing beds, created one new bed. Gave away a few non-native plants. In the extra space created, planted native flowers - chose a variety that bloom at different times. (Columbine, Monarda, Blue Aster, Blazing Star).
 - [Nodding Onion Garden](#) - This is our favorite place to get native flowers. Beth Coyne, the owner, is passionate about what she does, and her healthy plants are \$6 for a trade gallon!
- Backyard (shady) landscaped area - Gave away a few non-native plants, replaced with natives (Christmas fern - evergreen, Hepatica, Trout Lily, Trillium, ...)
- Backyard (shady) naturalized area - Added more native plants, shrubs, and trees.
 - Riverside Natives (Columbus) - Sycamore trees, and Serviceberry trees - \$21 and they delivered to the area!
 - Avalon Gardens (Chardon) - Viburnum shrub, Winterberry Shrub - they have tons of trees, shrubs, plants!

4. More Sources:

- [EPA: Green Lawns and Gardens](#)