

Earth Kind:

Environmental Stewardship Program

Native Habitat:

Creating 'backyard habitat' through the use of native and well adapted plant species not only provides habitat, but also assists in reducing water use as well as the need for potentially harmful chemical fertilizers and pesticides. Texas Wildscapes, coordinated by Texas Parks and Wildlife, is one of the most popular and successful native habitat projects for commercial and residential landscapes.



Texas Wildscapes:

Texas Wildscapes is a habitat restoration and conservation plan for rural and urban areas. It enables Texans to contribute to wildlife conservation by developing wildlife habitats where they live, work and play.

Texas Wildscapes provide the essential ingredients for a variety of wildlife – food, water, shelter, and space. This is done by planting and maintaining native vegetation, installing birdbaths and ponds and creating structure. Feeders can supplement native vegetation, but can never replace it. The goal is to provide places for birds, small mammals, and other wildlife to feed and drink, escape from predators and raise their young.



Creating a "backyard habitat" by with native and well adapted plants not only benefits wildlife, but it's less expensive and easier to maintain. These plants are typically more drought-tolerant, so they need less water and care. Since these plants are also more tolerant of native insects and diseases, they do not rely on potentially harmful chemical fertilizers and pesticides,

thus reducing potential risks to the environment.

Texas Wildscapes does not provide license to ignore local or county laws, homeowners' agreements or other covenants. Please respect local guidelines.

Using native and well adapted plants attracts a variety of wildlife. Hummingbirds, for example, are attracted to tubular flowers like salvia, coral honeysuckle and cardinal flower. You can also attract songbirds to feast on

Earth Kind uses research-proven techniques to provide maximum gardening and landscape enjoyment while preserving and protecting our environment.

The objective of Earth Kind is to combine the best of organic and traditional gardening and landscaping principles to create a new horticultural system based on real-world effectiveness and environmental responsibility.

The principal goals of Earth Kind include:

- Water conservation
- The safe use and handling of fertilizers & pesticides
- Reduction of yard wastes entering urban landfills

As your interest and knowledge in these areas grows you will have an increased awareness of the many programs, practices and activities that are Earth Kind. Working together we can make a difference in conserving and protecting our valuable natural resources.

*For more information
see our Web site:*

EarthKind.tamu.edu





agarita, beautyberry or black cherry trees you have planted. Imagine sharing territory with wildlife and experiencing the thrill of seeing a creature in the wild without having to travel any further than your own backyard.

By inviting wildlife to seek refuge on your property, you can enjoy and understand the role wildlife plays in your community. Attract wildlife by planting trees, shrubs, wildflowers, and grasses at your home, at school, or at work. It helps our wildlife, and it's fun

Texas Wildscapes is more than a backyard program. It applies to rural properties as well; even community parks, business offices, churches, schools and apartments can be involved. You can do more than just attract birds. Every species has its own specific habitat requirements. If you know those requirements, chances are good that whatever you desire – butterflies, frogs or even lizards – will be visiting your site!

Wildscape Design Tips:

Inventory your yard. Drought tolerant plants attractive to a variety of wildlife may already exist in your yard. Don't remove plants that require little maintenance or watering unless they detract from the design.

Use native and well adapted plants to create an Earth Kind environment.

Before installing plants, know their height at maturity. A four-inch potted plant may turn into a ten-foot shrub! This will avoid planting in the wrong locations.

Plant to create a multilayered effect. Offering tall, medium and short plants grouped together in a tiered arrangement is very appealing to wildlife. Include evergreen plants in your design. They keep their leaves year-round offering cover for wildlife throughout the year.



Choose a selection of plants that bloom or fruit at various times of the year, so there is always food for wildlife. Supplement with clean bird feeders if natural food sources are lacking or becoming established.

Add a water source to your landscape. It's important to offer clean water to wildlife year-round. Water can be provided easily in the form of a simple pan, birdbath, or shallow pool.

Snags, which are dead or dying trees, can be left standing to provide cavity nesting sites. Supplement with nest boxes when natural tree cavities are lacking.

Install berms or mounds, and use curved lines to add interest. Rock walls and logs can be attractive features while providing homes for butterflies, lizards, and other small wildlife. Planting in the cool season (late fall or early spring) will allow trees, shrubs, and hardy perennials to establish before the hot and dry summer. Nurseries often offer plant sales during the fall.

Use organic gardening techniques, including compost and organic sources of fertilizer, to supply nutrients to plants. Try spraying insect infestations with a forceful spray of water before resorting to pesticides. Use 2-4 inches of mulch to reduce weeds and the need to water. Recycle leaves and grass clippings by composting or using as mulch.

For more information see the Texas Wildscapes Web site: <http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/huntwild/wild/wildscapes/>