



# Backyard Wetlands

## **What is a backyard (constructed) wetland?**



Constructed wetlands are marshes built intentionally to capture and hold water. They provide numerous benefits, from stormwater filtration to wildlife habitat. They can be as large or small as the homeowner desires, and can serve as a source of diversity and beauty in the landscape.

## **Characteristics of backyard wetlands**

Wetlands will be shallow - between 6 and 30 inches deep. Side slopes should be no steeper than 8:1; for greatest benefit to local wildlife. The wetland will be vegetated with several different species of native trees, shrubs, grasses, and/or wildflowers. When complete, the wetland will create a valuable native ecosystem that may attract songbirds, small mammals, reptiles, amphibians, and insects.

### **Benefits:**

- Filters stormwater
- Prevents flooding
- Provides wildlife habitat
- Diversifies and beautifies the landscape
- Reduces maintenance of naturally wet areas

## **Establishing a Wetland in Your Yard:**

Wetland creation can be a simple process or it may require a great deal of work. The soil types, topography, land use, and many other site characteristics will determine how easy it is to create your wetland. Contact the Hamilton County Soil and Water Conservation District, the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, or the Indiana Department of Natural Resources if you are interested in wetland creation. They can give you installation instructions specific to your site.



Before beginning any project, check homeowner association covenants, as well as local and county ordinances. Do not work in a drainage, utility, or other easement without the proper permits. Also call the Indiana Underground Plant Protection Service (1-800-382-5544) to identify any buried utilities.

Contact the Hamilton County Soil and Water Conservation District for more information:

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