



Improving public perception of native plantings



<http://www.localrootslandscapers.com/native-plantings.html>

Native plants are uniquely adapted to the climate, soil, and predators of their natural environment. They require less maintenance as, when established, they do not need fertilizer, herbicides, pesticides, or watering. They are also the best food and shelter source for other native wildlife, including birds and butterflies.

Despite the benefits and beauty of native plants, many community members who are used to the uniform and manicured look of landscaped areas, can struggle to distinguish between native plants and weeds. Fortunately, there are some steps you can take to help change public perception!

- Create a tidy buffer of mulch or mown grass to frame your planting and show intention and care.
- Consider installing temporary or permanent signage identifying the planting as a natural, native planting. Signs that help ID species and share info about their history and benefits can be useful. The SWCD has signage available. Also look at GrowIndianaNatives.com.



<http://www.for-wild.org/>



<http://www.indianawildlife.org/>

- Registering your area as a “Certified Backyard/Wildlife Habitat” through the National Wildlife Federation (indianawildlife.org) can provide validity to your efforts. Signage can be purchased through this program for a small fee.
- Plant ornamental native flowers in clumps instead of individually. Groupings of the same plant are common in landscape plantings and will help your native flowers appear intentional and organized to your neighbors. Planting in clumps also allows you, and your neighbors, to distinguish between native flowers and weeds.
- Start small and gradually expand your plantings.
- Add benches, paths, garden sculpture, or viewing areas to ‘humanize’ your planting.

Always check local weed ordinances before starting your project and remember that changing public perception takes time and effort.

For more information contact the Hamilton County Soil and Water Conservation District.

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