

CARING FOR CREATION: GOOD EARTHKEEPING IDEA #5

Providing Wildlife Habitat



WHAT? *Use your church lot, back yard, farm or wood lot to provide more of what wildlife needs:*

"Creation is a masterpiece,
deserving our devout
stewardship."

Water (an essential for survival)
Food (particularly from native plants)
Cover (shelter from weather and from predators)
Space (a place to find food and raise young)

WHY? *It's good for all of us:*

- A water feature attracts wildlife and also makes your landscaping more interesting
- Native plants provide cover and food and are much more adapted to our soils and climates, so they need less care, fertilizer and watering
- Tree cover provides habitat as well as shade and visual appeal for your property
- A space for wildlife is a quiet place to be enjoyed by everyone and everything

"...ask the beasts and they will teach you; the birds of the air, and they will tell you; or the plants of the earth and they will teach you...." *Job 12:7 f.*

Benefits of Naturescaping

Wildlife Benefits	Human Benefits
Promotes native species	Saves money
Provides habitat for animals	Conserves water
Maintains diversity	Minimizes use of chemicals
Fights invasive species	Reduces maintenance time

HOW? *Here are some things you can do on your church, home, farm or forest property:*

- Provide water in the form of birdbaths, fountains, ponds or miniature streams
- Construct driveways, parking areas and roof drains so precipitation percolates into the ground
- Plant native vegetation – provide variety in both species and sizes
- Provide cover and shelter in the form of dense vegetation, brush and rock piles, nest and roost boxes
 - Convert some lawn, bare ground and mulched areas to native ground covers
 - Create zones that will have relatively little disturbance from humans or pets
 - Limit use of inorganic insecticides, herbicides and fertilizers
 - Control or eliminate noxious weeds and exotic invasives
- Control or discourage stray cats and non-native wildlife
- Leave some plant litter on the ground – logs, stumps, branches and leaves provide cover and food
- Make compost from yard debris and food scraps and use it to enrich and nourish your soil



"The best place to seek God is in a garden.
You can dig for Him there."
George Bernard Shaw

"[We are], in fact, only a
member of a biotic team...."
*Aldo Leopold, Sand County
Almanac*

Contact/Help: Jenny Holmes, Presbytery of the Cascades EcoJustice Educator,
503-281-8175 (jehrestore@aol.com)
Warren Aney, Senior Wildlife Ecologist, 503-246-8613 (aney@usa.net)

**Provided by the EcoJustice Team of the
Congregational Support Network, Presbytery of the Cascades**

Presbytery of the Cascades Providing Wildlife Habitat

Some sources of information and advice:

County Soil and Water Conservation Districts. Information, bulletins and advice. Some Districts offer periodic classes. <http://www.oacd.org/>

Central Oregon Environmental Center. Offers classes on organic gardening and landscaping with native plants. info@envirocenter.org 541-385-6908 <http://www.envirocenter.org>

Sunriver Nature Center. Offers a Naturescaped demonstration garden and information resources. 541-593-4394. <http://www.sunrivernaturecenter.org>

Eugene's Stream Team. Offers classes in the spring. Provides volunteer opportunities in a native plant nursery and with salvage projects and seed collection. Sponsored by the city of Eugene's Parks and Open Space Division. 541-682-4850

Naturescaping for Clean Rivers. Offers classes in the spring and fall. A joint partnership between Portland's Environmental Services and Multnomah County's Soil and Water Conservation District. 503-797-1842 watershedcenter@attglobal.net <http://www.portlandonline.com/bes/index.cfm?c=dcbec>

Metro Natural Gardening Program. Offers classes in the spring and fall on composting, organic soil preparation and attracting beneficial insects. Participants must be Multnomah, Clackamas or Washington County residents. 503-234-3000. <http://www.metro-region.org/pssp.cfm?ProgServID=4>

4-H Wildlife Stewards. Offers four training sessions per year: October, November, February and April. Teaches parent volunteers how to install education habitat sites on school grounds. 503-916-2676 <http://wildlifestewards.4h.oregonstate.edu/>

National Wildlife Federation. Provides information, publications and other material promoting backyard wildlife habitat. Watch their TV program *Backyard Wildlife Habitat* every weekday morning on the Animal Planet. They also have a backyard wildlife habitat certification program. <http://www.nwf.org/backyardwildlifehabitat/>

Environmental Protection Agency. Offers information through EPA's "Beneficial Landscaping" project. The project provides a wide range of information about landscaping practices that yield environmental, economic and aesthetic benefits. <http://yosemite.epa.gov/R10/ECOCOMM.NSF/BLstartpage?OpenPage>

Recommended Publications

Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife. *Naturescaping*. <http://www.dfw.state.or.us/NS>

Corkran, Charlotte C. 2004. *Birds in nest boxes*. Naturegraph Publishers, Happy Camp, CA.

Bradley, Fern M. (editor). 2004. *Projects for the birder's garden*. Yankee Publishing.

A case study from Presbytery of the Cascades:

St. Andrews Presbyterian Church, Portland. This church had a parking area that was pretty much covered with either impervious asphalt or exotic invasive plants – all draining directly into the headwaters of a Fanno Creek tributary (now named Restoration Creek). Starting in 1996, this congregation converted the site to a watershed and wildlife habitat asset. Here is how they did this:

Removed 14,000 sq. ft. of impervious asphalt (20% of the parking lot) while only reducing parking by 11%

Removed several acres of exotic invasives (Japanese knotweed, English ivy, Himalayan blackberry and morning glory)

Replanted with 31 native species including sedges, rushes, Oregon grape, snowberry, serviceberry, thimbleberry, kinnickinick, Indian plum, red currant, western redcedar, salal, elderberry and vine maple

Maintained existing native red alder and bigleaf maple trees

Managed water runoff and absorption with waterway improvements, percolation bioswales and seepage trenches

This was accomplished with \$45,000 in grants from the City of Portland, Tri-Met and Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board plus lots of volunteer labor. For the St. Andrews congregation, these actions demonstrated the spiritual basis for watershed stewardship (and also reduced costs charged for stormwater management).