

Certified Wildlife Habitat

FAQ

1. **What will my neighbors think if my yard goes wild?**

A Certified Wildlife Habitat is not the same thing as just not mowing your grass. There's lots of room for creativity and uniqueness and it should include borders around beds with native plantings. When your neighbors see the changes you've made in your yard, some of them will more than likely want to try some native plantings as well. This will give you the opportunity to tell them about the many benefits of having a Certified Wildlife Habitat. You are cutting back on air pollution because you are not mowing as much and you are benefitting wildlife by planting natives. If enough people join in, your whole city can become certified and other communities will look to your city as a model.

2. **How am I benefitting wildlife by planting native plants in my yard?**

Most native insects cannot survive without native plants and insects are a vital part of the food web. Many animals depend on insects for survival. Much of our natural area has been destroyed and converted to space that is used by humans for housing, shopping, roads and other things. By planting native plants, you can help ensure that insect populations will stay healthy. This will help food chains stay healthy and in turn will help whole eco-systems stay healthy. The more people that join in the better it will be for wildlife!

3. **What if wild animals that I don't like come in my yard?**

Most often, when wild animals come in your yard they are just passing through. Many people consider themselves lucky if they get to see wildlife right in their own yard! However, it is important not to feed wild animals and don't try to touch them. Make sure your garbage can lids are secure and never leave pet food outside. A raccoon or opossum that is regularly helping himself to your pet food can easily become a nuisance. Follow these simple guidelines and if an animal comes into your yard, enjoy the moment!

4. **But what about spiders, ticks or snakes?**

First of all, just because you mow less area doesn't mean you will automatically have these animals in your yard. Although you may consider certain animals less desirable than others, remember they all serve a purpose and they are all important. Snakes keep the rodent population in check, spiders eat many insects and ticks make a fine meal for a bird or a toad. Children often learn these fears from the adults in their lives. It is especially important not to pass your fears on to them. Making a point to learn about animals that may make you uncomfortable will help you feel ok about a chance encounter.