

# NATIVE PLANTS & WHY THEY ARE IMPORTANT



A recent study shows that lawn and turf grass are now the largest “crop” in the Chesapeake Bay watershed. In order to reduce runoff, prevent erosion, and retain nutrients, it’s important to reduce the size of our lawns by adding native trees, shrubs, and herbaceous plants. Practicing efficient landscaping, like mowing and watering your yard only when necessary, can also help reduce runoff.

## WHAT ARE NATIVE PLANTS?

Plants that are part of the balance of nature and have thrived for many years in a particular region or ecosystem are considered native plants. While all plants remove carbon from the air, provide food and shelter for wildlife, native plants do these things with less water and care. Plus their deep roots help to reduce runoff. Planting native plants in your yard decreases the amount of your lawn, in turn requiring no mowing and little maintenance.

## NATIVE PLANTS

There are over 2,100 native plants in Pennsylvania. Some of our favorites are:



**Garden Phlox**  
(*Phlox paniculata*)



**Bleeding Heart**  
(*Dicentra eximia*)



**Beebalm**  
(*Monarda didyma*)



**New England Aster**  
(*Symphyotrichum novae-angliae*)



**Butterfly Weed**  
(*Asclepias tuberosa*)



**Flowering Dogwood**  
(*Cornus florida*)

### NATIVE PLANTS HELP YOU USE LESS

The infographic features three icons connected by vertical lines. The top icon is a fertilizer bag labeled 'FERTILIZERS'. The middle icon is a spray bottle labeled 'PESTICIDES'. The bottom icon is a water tap with a single drop of water labeled 'WATER'. The background is a light green color with a faint sunflower illustration.

# YARD EFFICIENT LANDSCAPING



## HEALTHY LAWN CARE PRACTICES



Convert unused lawn to native plant gardens.



Mow at your mower's highest setting. Ideally 3 inches or higher.



Leave at least a 35 foot buffer between your yard and stream.



Maintain a dense cover of turf grass.



Use a mulching mower or keep lawn clippings on lawn.

## BEST IRRIGATION PRACTICES



Use a rain barrel.



Do not overwater. Use irrigation practices such as drip irrigation, soaker hoses or micro-spray systems.



Adjust sprinklers to stop overspray and runoff.



Only water during coolest times of day (before 10 am and after 6pm).

## GARDEN AND LAWN MAINTENANCE BEST PRACTICES



Dispose of leaves, clippings, or pruning by composting or recycling.



Consider using green waste as fertilizer in your lawn or garden.



Do not over-apply pesticides or fertilizers. Read labels, use as directed and only apply to spots as needed.



Use non-toxic alternatives to traditional pesticides, and use pesticides specifically designed to control the targeted pest.

# WAY

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