

AUDUBON WILDLIFE HABITAT PROGRAM
PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY (MD) AUDUBON SOCIETY
GUIDELINES for CREATING WILDLIFE HABITAT



1. **PLANT NATIVES**— Reduce lawn areas and introduced (non-native) plants. Remove invasive plants. Replace them with native trees, shrubs, and perennials, which are of much greater benefit to wildlife and the environment.

2. **PROVIDE STRUCTURE**—Planting in layers – overstory canopy, understory canopy, shrub layer, ground layer- assures that each creature has its optimum niche. Planting densely leaves little space and sun for weeds and invasive plants. Planting in clearly designated beds and strips with paths and borders makes the plan behind your garden obvious to visitors.

3. **PROVIDE FOOD**—Native plants provide birds, pollinators and other wildlife with the highest nutritional value in the four food groups they require: berries, nuts and seeds, insects, and nectar. Natives can be selected carefully to provide continuous bloom. Feeders can be used as a supplemental source of food.

4. **PROVIDE SHELTER AND HOUSING**—Every layer and form of plant material is home to some type of wildlife. Particularly valuable are organic debris, dead wood, groundcover, and dense shrubs, which offer nesting sites, hiding places and winter protection for birds, insects, reptiles, amphibians and small mammals. Human-made structures like bird and bee houses can provide additional housing.

5. **USE YOUR WATER**—Practice water conservation by keeping the rainwater on site using rain barrels, rain gardens, and pervious paving. Provide wildlife with clean and accessible sources of water for drinking and bathing.

6. **REPLACE HERBICIDES, INSECTICIDES, AND FERTILIZERS**—Not only do chemical treatments harm the natural world, native plants don't require them. The beneficial insects that natives attract are natural enemies to those we consider pests, so they substitute for insecticides. Applications of leaf litter and compost encourage naturally occurring microbes in the soil and eliminate the need for fertilizers.

7. **PROVIDE SAFETY AND SAFE HAVEN**—Our homes and gardens can be dangerous places for birds and other wildlife. Use window treatments to reduce reflectivity and avoid collisions. Keep house cats indoors. Remove cover plants near bird feeders. Limit outdoor lights to protect birds.

8. **SPREAD THE WORD**—Only together can we build a habitat network. Support the movement by posting a certification sign, by talking to your neighbors, and by promoting community wildlife habitat projects.