



Help nature by naturalizing  
your yard this spring

## Description

# Nature Conservancy of Canada suggests ways to benefit nature close to home

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As the mercury slowly rises, many Canadians are making springtime plans for their lawns, backyards, flowerbeds and gardens. While “**No Mow**” and “**Slow Mow**” may have been tried by many people over the past couple of springs, the **Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC)** is encouraging people to find new ways to naturalize their yards.

Planting native gardens invites nature in and offers refuge for local wildlife. It’s a good way to connect to nature, get the whole family involved and watch the fruits of your labour flourish.

[Samantha Knight, NCC national conservation science manager](#)

The not-for-profit land conservation organization says that growing native plants is a small act of conservation that helps urban wildlife and biodiversity in many ways. With about 80 percent of Canadians living in urban settings, what we choose to put into our yards and on our balconies can benefit the plants and animals that share our neighbourhoods.



Monarch butterfly on milkweed – Image: [Fritz Flohr Reynolds](#) via [StockPholio.net](#)

**Samantha Knight**, NCC’s national conservation science manager, says actions we take close to home can help some wildlife populations, improve the health of urban ecosystems and foster our connection with nature.

“We often think of the spaces where we live as separate from nature but they are an integral part of the ecosystem. The plants we choose to grow will have a significant influence on the diversity and abundance of native wildlife. Native trees, shrubs and wildflowers support a greater diversity of pollinators and other insects than traditional horticultural plants and offer an opportunity to learn about local biodiversity.”

By devoting even a small portion of their lawn, garden or balcony planters to native species, people in Canada can give biodiversity a big boost. That’s why NCC encourages people to challenge themselves by converting a portion of their growing space into a haven for native species, as a way to support the plants, insects and animals that are our natural neighbours.

Here are some tips and things to consider when planning a native species garden:

- Find out what kind of soils and plant communities naturally occur locally. This will inform what sorts of native plants will do best in your garden.
- Many regions have native species councils and invasive species councils that can offer information on what plants to sow and what plants to avoid when planning a native garden. Visit the [Canadian Council on Invasive Species “Be Plant Wise” program](#) for more information.
- Garden centres and local native plant suppliers can tell you where their plants come from and in what conditions they grow best. Sticking to plants adapted to grow locally is a good way to support regional biodiversity and ensure your garden flourishes.
- Native plants have evolved alongside wild bees, butterflies and other pollinators. As a result, they provide



better habitat than non-native ornamental varieties do.

- People can consult experts, read a book on local species or use an app like [iNaturalist](#) to identify plants already growing in their yards. For details on some commonly found invasive species, visit [NCC's website](#)

“Spending time in nature is good for our physical and mental health. Planting native gardens invites nature in and offers refuge for local wildlife. It’s a good way to connect to nature, get the whole family involved and watch the fruits of your labour flourish,” said Knight.

Feature image: Pixabay

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**The Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC)** is the country’s unifying force for nature. NCC seeks solutions to the twin crises of rapid biodiversity loss and climate change through large-scale, permanent land conservation. As a trusted partner, NCC works with people, communities, businesses and government to protect and care for our country’s most important natural areas. Since 1962, NCC has brought Canadians together to help conserve and restore more than 15 million hectares, including nearly 50,000 hectares in Quebec.

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