

Wildlife Values

For many people, the move to a rural home means a closer relationship with local wildlife. Watching a pair of deer out your kitchen window while enjoying your first cup of coffee is a magical experience. As wildlife habitat becomes lost and fragmented, interactions between wildlife and people become more frequent as wildlife are forced to live closer to people. In some cases you may welcome this interaction and want to encourage it, and in others, wildlife can become a problem to be managed.

Attracting wildlife to your property can be as simple as building a bluebird nest box or as complicated as designing your entire yard and garden to attract wildlife.

If you wish to attract wildlife to your property you should begin by finding out what wildlife species are native to your area and identifying which species you are interested in attracting to your yard or garden. Learn as much as you can about the requirements of the species you want to attract.

Some things to consider when attracting wildlife:

- ✓ what are the food, shelter and water requirements of the species?
- ✓ do you have diverse kinds of vegetation



on your property?

- ✓ is water accessible and available in different forms eg. Pond, bird bath, etc?
- ✓ are there rock piles, dead trees, or other shelter available?
- ✓ consider building bird or bat houses to control mosquitos

Remember, free-roaming pets such as cats and dogs can work against your efforts to attract wildlife. Free-roaming pets may harass wildlife (which is illegal) or be at greater risk of being killed or injured by cars, disease or wild animals. Consider confining your pets in outdoor kennels or supervising your pet's forays into the wild.

Having wildlife on your property is one of the joys of living on a small farm or acreage. Managing your property in a way that promotes co-existence with wildlife will allow you to enjoy your property even more.

Naturescaping

An increasingly popular way to attract wildlife to yards and gardens is using native plants or naturescaping. Native plants are ideal for landscaping as they are adapted to the local environment and usually require less water than non-native species.

Naturescaping may involve using single plants as part of a larger plan or recreating an entire natural landscape. Many large plant nurseries offer a variety of native plant species that can be used for landscaping. Be sure to do your homework first to determine which species are native to your area. Be wary of so-called wildflower seed mixes which are usually not native to our area and may contain noxious weed seeds.

You may also wish to try collecting and germinating seed from wild plants that you find attractive. Be sure to collect a wide sample. For best results, sow the seeds outside in the fall. Never transplant native plants from the wild, as many will not survive.