

# CULTIVATING CRITTERS

## Site gives guidance on planting local flora to attract local fauna

**N**ow that spring is here, it's time to come out of hibernation and enjoy outdoor pursuits again.

Gardening is one such pursuit that spreads the enjoyment beyond the practitioner to anyone who sees the fruits of the effort. And it's not only people who can reap the rewards of a garden. With a little planning and effort, your flora can turn into a miniature paradise for local fauna.

The National Wildlife Federation has a website, [nwf.org/Garden-for-Wildlife](http://nwf.org/Garden-for-Wildlife), that guides readers to create a garden using native plants that will attract and support a wide variety of native wildlife. In addition to benefitting the local critters, cultivating an indigenous plot benefits the gardener. It requires less pampering and maintenance since the plants naturally thrive in local conditions. The many symbiotic relationships between the plants and animals that have evolved in the same environment will help foster a self-sustaining cycle of growth.



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The website teaches readers about the birds and the bees — as well as the buds and the trees, the bugs and the seeds, and the toads in the weeds. It offers guidance in the selection of plants and accessories that attract specific animals. You can enter your zip code to see the plants, and the animals they support, that are native to your location.

The menu bar across the top of the page has eight sections related to creating and maintaining a garden for wildlife. Each section has several sub-sections nested beneath it.

For instance, the Create section has sub-sections on creating gardens at home, at schools, in your community and more. The Water section covers bird-baths, water gardens, backyard ponds and other areas. The Wildlife section covers attracting amphibians, birds, butterflies and small mammals.

Gardens are more than just the plants growing in them. The site has instructions on building water features, bird houses, bat houses and other amenities. There's also lots of information on environmentally sustainable practices, such as water conservation, organic pest control and composting.

The home page is nicely designed with engaging art and good typography. The intuitive navigation has a menu bar at the top and some feature links tied to the main art on the page.

The inside pages could use some sprucing up. Many pages lack art, and the type columns are too wide. The writing is informal, which is OK, but the editing is a little lax. Despite some minor issues, the site is a good source for those who want to make their little piece of the world better for man and beast.

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