

# LANDSCAPING FOR WILDLIFE

## 10 TIPS FOR CREATING A WILDLIFE-FRIENDLY LANDSCAPE



# INTRODUCTION

- Landscaping to attract wildlife:
  - brings nature close by welcoming it into our backyards
  - planting certain trees, shrubs, and flowers creates inviting atmosphere for wildlife
  - creates habitat for animals displaced by community growth and development





# INTRODUCTION

- Wildlife need:
  - Food
  - Water
  - Cover
  - Space



Photo Credit: Sean M. Parks



# 1 LIMIT THE AMOUNT OF LAWN YOU HAVE

- Turfgrass provides little food or cover for wildlife
- Speed replacement of lawn:
  - remove the grass
  - plant seeds of native wildflowers adapted to site conditions (sunny, shady, wet, dry, etc.)





# 1 LIMIT THE AMOUNT OF LAWN YOU HAVE



Photo: Theresa Watkins

- Wildflower gardens need borders & well-defined edges to look neat
- Choose plants with varied colors and bloom times for year-round appeal



# 1 LIMIT THE AMOUNT OF LAWN YOU HAVE

- Replace some lawn grass with **groundcovers**: more valuable to wildlife—provide food and shelter for small animals





# 1 LIMIT THE AMOUNT OF LAWN YOU HAVE

- **Add islands of vegetation:** native groundcovers, wildflowers, or other vegetation



- locate islands near each other to reduce open space animals have to cross



# 1 LIMIT THE AMOUNT OF LAWN YOU HAVE

- **Plant a butterfly garden:**
  - plants for both adults and larvae (caterpillars)
  - food plants for larvae will be munched on and may look tattered
  - create a small, bare area of moist sand







# 1 LIMIT THE AMOUNT OF LAWN YOU HAVE

- Native groundcover possibilities:
  - sunshine mimosa, *Mimosa strigillosa*
  - twinflower, *Dyschoriste oblongifolia*
  - blanketflower, *Gaillardia pulchella*
  - beach sunflower, *Helianthus debilis*
  - patridgeberry, *Mitchella repens*
  - turkey tangle fog fruit, *Phyla nodiflora*



## 2 INCREASE VERTICAL LAYERING

- increase plant structure between the ground and tree canopy





## 2 INCREASE VERTICAL LAYERING

- variety of vegetation, different sizes and heights=more cover and food
- islands of native vegetation with plants of different heights are best





### 3 PROVIDE SNAGS AND BRUSH PILES

- as trees become diseased or die, leave them as snags for wildlife
  - feeding and nesting



Mark Hostetler



Downy Woodpecker foraging for insects Photo: Thomas Wright, UF/IFAS



### 3 PROVIDE SNAGS AND BRUSH PILES

- a brush pile, especially near other vegetation, provides excellent cover and food for small mammals, birds, and butterflies





## 4 PROVIDE WATER

- essential to productive wildlife habitats
- wildlife will benefit from any water source you provide, birdbath, small pond





## 4 PROVIDE WATER

- ponds also attract amphibians and reptiles and add amphibian breeding habitat



Eastern box turtle, Photo: Peter May



Pig frog, Photo: UF/IFAS



## 5 PLANT NATIVE VEGETATION

- Use native plants whenever possible.
  - provide better food and cover for native wildlife



Immature wax myrtle fruits are green. Mature fruits are blue in color and are fleshy, attracting birds for dispersal. Photograph by Brent Sellers.



# 5 PLANT NATIVE VEGETATION

- Use native plants whenever possible.
  - require less care and resources to maintain
  - better adapted to local soil conditions
  - more resistant to natural pests/diseases





## 5 PLANT NATIVE VEGETATION

- Information on purchasing native plants, Association of Florida Native Nurseries:  
<http://www.afnn.org/>
- National Native Plant Nursery Directory:  
[http://www.plantnative.org/national\\_nursery\\_dir\\_main.htm](http://www.plantnative.org/national_nursery_dir_main.htm)



# 6 PROVIDE BIRD/BAT HOUSES AND BIRDFEEDERS

- **Birdfeeders:**

- different designs or different seeds may increase diversity of birds you attract
- clean all feeders thoroughly, at least weekly during warm weather- old or wet seeds can rot and make birds sick





## 6 PROVIDE BIRD/BAT HOUSES AND BIRDFEEDERS

- Locate near cover (bushes, trees) for songbirds to escape predators
- But...keep the feeders at least fifteen feet away from vegetation so that squirrels cannot jump onto it







## 6 PROVIDE BIRD/BAT HOUSES AND BIRDFEEDERS

- thicket plants for cover
  - saw palmetto, *Serenoa repens*
  - Florida privet, *Forestiera segregata*
  - Walter's viburnum, *Viburnum obovatum*
- native “birdfeeder plants”
  - firebush, *Hamelia patens* (hummingbirds!)
  - mulberry, *Morus rubra*
  - holly, *Ilex* spp.
  - beautyberry, *Callicarpa Americana*
  - coral honeysuckle, *Lonicera sempervirens* (hummingbirds!)
  - wax myrtle, *Myrica cerifera*



# 6 PROVIDE BIRD/BAT HOUSES AND BIRDFEEDERS

- Factors determining which animals will use these:
  - size of the bird/bat house (overall size, depth)
  - size of the entry hole
  - height mounted
  - amount of surrounding vegetation
  - habitat adjacent to your yard/your neighborhood





## 6 PROVIDE BIRD/BAT HOUSES AND BIRDFEEDERS


- For more information on bats and bat houses: <http://www.batcon.org/>
- Install a bat house: <http://www.batcon.org/index.php/get-involved/install-a-bat-house.html>







## 6 PROVIDE BIRD/BAT HOUSES AND BIRDFEEDERS

- Birds and birdhouse info: Cornell University's Lab of Ornithology:  
<http://www.birds.cornell.edu/Page.aspx?pid=1478>
  - Birdhouse Basics:  
<http://www.allaboutbirds.org/page.aspx?pid=1139>
    - Construction plans with specs for each cavity-nesting species
    - Useful when buying a pre-built birdhouse
- 



# 7 REMOVE NON-NATIVE INVASIVE PLANTS

- Aggressively take over natural habitats
- What we do at home affects areas far beyond our yards.
- Once established, these non-native plants:
  - destroy wildlife habitat
  - create areas with fewer plant species, less food and shelter opportunities





# 7 REMOVE NON-NATIVE INVASIVE PLANTS

- Before buying plants check for invasive status :
  - IFAS Assessment of Florida Non-native Plants:  
<http://assessment.ifas.ufl.edu/>
  - Florida Exotic Pest Plant Council:  
<http://www.fleppc.org/index.cfm>





## 8 MANAGE PETS

- cats and dogs can drastically impact wildlife
- cats are extremely good hunters
  - kill millions of birds and small mammals each year
  - hunt for fun, not necessarily for food; a problem if you are attracting wildlife to your yard





## 8 MANAGE PETS

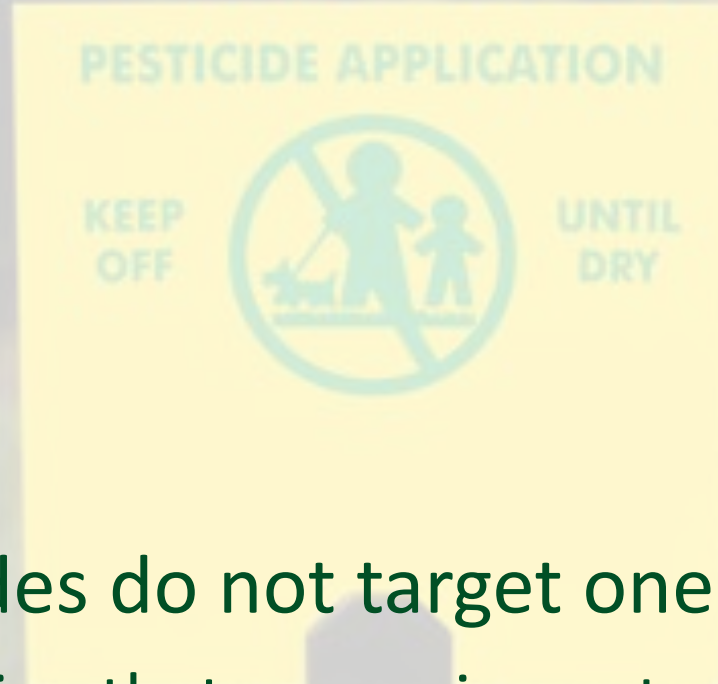


Cat eating a bird by Gaëtan Priour

- **Keeping cats indoors will also keep them safe from coyotes, strays, diseases, and traffic.**
- For more information, visit the American Bird Conservancy's campaign “Keep Cats Indoors!”:  
<https://abcbirds.org/program/cats-indoors/>
- Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission official policy on cats:  
<http://myfwc.com/wildlifehabitats/nonnatives/mammals/feral-cats/domestic-cat-policy/>



## 9 REDUCE PESTICIDE USE



- Most pesticides do not target one species
  - affect anything that comes in contact
- Blanket-spraying your lawn kills beneficial insect species.



# 9 REDUCE PESTICIDE USE

- Almost all wildlife species are connected to insects- even if they do not eat insects, their prey do!
- Natural Pest Management Products:
  - <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/pdf/files/IN/IN19700.pdf>



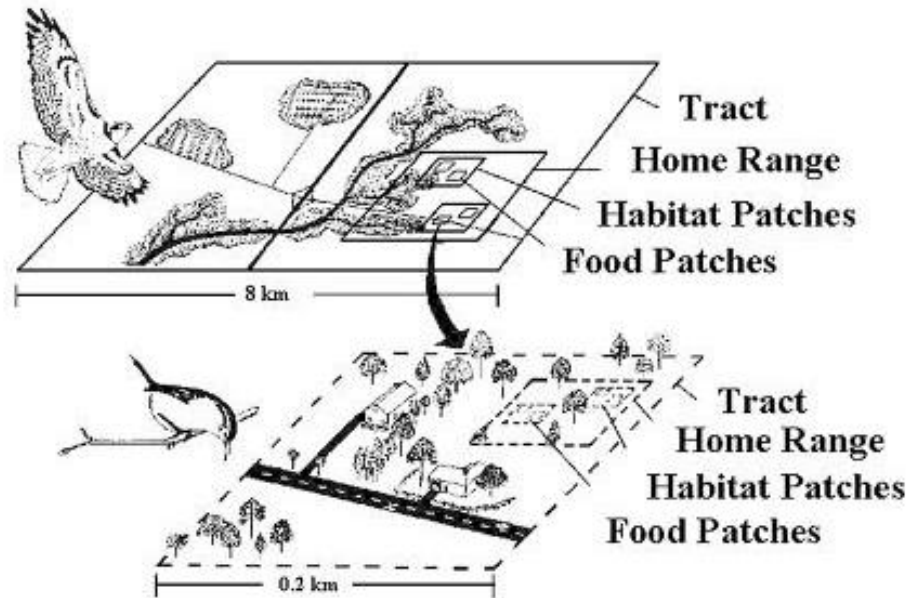
Red-cockaded woodpecker



# 10 EXPAND THE SCALE OF HABITAT

- The required habitat for many species is much larger than you can provide in your yard.


## Scale-dependent Decisions of a Wren and a Hawk







## 10 EXPAND THE SCALE OF HABITAT

- Combining several different yards will attract more species to the neighborhood.
  - Work with neighbors to design wild areas at property lines or shared corners.
- 



# BONUS TIP

- Reduce use of noisy landscape equipment
  - Scares/injures wild
  - Creates pollution
  - Annoys neighbors



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# RESOURCES

- Landscaping for Wildlife:
  - [http://livinggreen.ifas.ufl.edu/landscaping/landscaping\\_for\\_wildlife.html#intro](http://livinggreen.ifas.ufl.edu/landscaping/landscaping_for_wildlife.html#intro)
- Landscaping Backyards for Wildlife: Top Ten Tips for Success:
  - <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/pdf/UW/UW17500.pdf>
- Landscaping for Wildlife Video:
  - [http://livinggreen.ifas.ufl.edu/tv\\_episodes/landscaping\\_for\\_wildlife.html](http://livinggreen.ifas.ufl.edu/tv_episodes/landscaping_for_wildlife.html)
- FNPS Plant List Generator:
  - <http://www.fnps.org/plants>