



# Rewilding

# Your Yard

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## Current Situation

- Lost habitat
- Insects in decline
- Birds in decline

### | ENVIRONMENT |

## Huge decline in songbirds linked to common insecticide

Neonics—pesticides introduced to plants at the seed stage—act like an appetite suppressant for birds, making them lose weight within hours.



### | ANIMALS |

## Why insect populations are plummeting—and why it matters

A new study suggests that 40 percent of insect species are in decline, a sobering finding that has jarred researchers worldwide.



# Why is this important to YOU?

- Habitat loss the largest threat to wildlife
- Cannot restore habitat
- Can recreate habitat (Re-Wilding) and help
- Where/how?

Photo: Eoin O'Leary, Master Gardener, UF/IFAS



Nature





# Habitat Re-creation Nature



- Your yard is nature



**It's time to say  
goodbye to the  
old style of  
landscaping  
and heal our  
yards.**





# Nature

## How?

- Many different native plant species
- Vegetation of different heights
- Varied structural elements
- Don't be boxed in with formality







## Nature isn't "neat"

- Think about spaces you can allow to be less formal
  - Side and back yards
  - Behind formal hedges
  - Within walls, fences, borders, walks, etc.





# What can your yard provide?

- Walk around and take inventory (structures, trees, utilities, sun, soil, water, etc.)
- Native plants to keep/exotics to remove
- Note existing wildlife



Photo: UF/IFAS

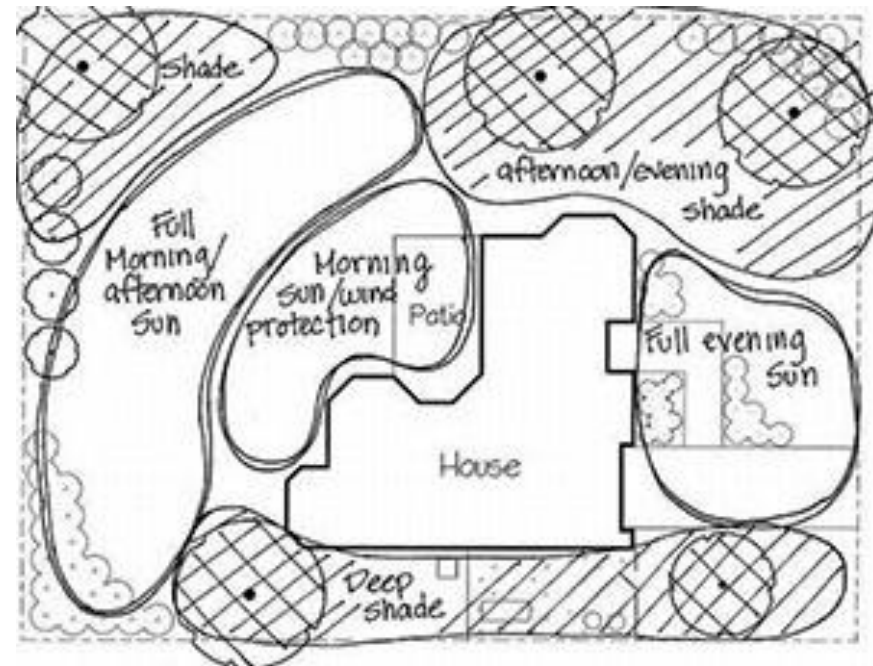


Photo: UF/IFAS, Gail Hansen

Nature



## Increase Diversity

# Nature



- Plants

- Note your existing plants

- How many total different species?
- How many are native?
- Increase the overall # or species by adding at least 30% more native species

Photos: Theresa Badurek, UF/IFAS



- What if everyone in your neighborhood did this?



# Increase Diversity

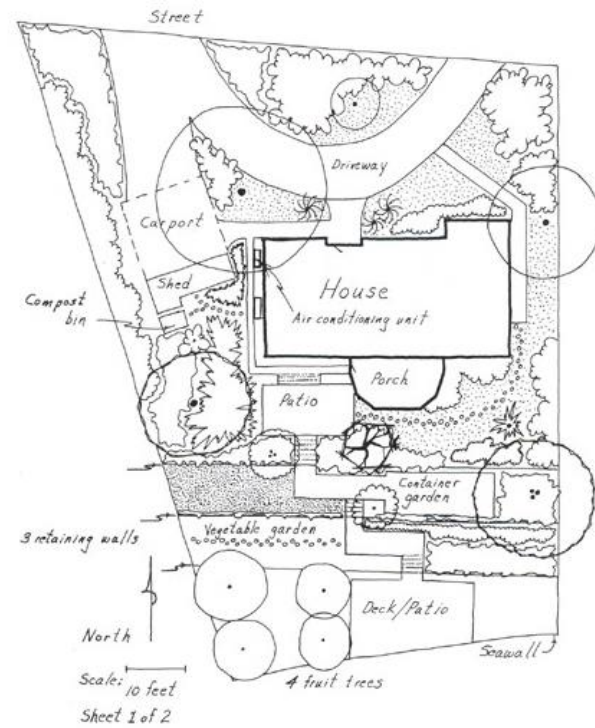


Photo: Linda Hartong

- Wildlife
  - Note the common “visitors”
    - Look up what they eat and plant more of that
  - How can attract others?
    - Add water
    - Plant more fruiting plants
    - Provide year-round flowers, fruit, and nuts (use an old calendar to plan)
  - <https://www.nwf.org/NativePlantFinder/>
  - Bugs are baby bird food!

# Create a Re-wilding Plan

- Tree framework
- Layer plants for variety of homes
- Areas of bare soil?
  - Yes!
  - Brushpile?
  - Snag?
- Less maintenance
  - No dead-heading
  - Mow less
  - No leaf blowers/loud equip.





# Maintenance for a “Wild”er Yard

Nature

- Convert lawn to meadow
- Reduce watering, water only when necessary
- Native plants near water to filter runoff/provide cover
- Mind the edges- neighbors like order
- Encourage volunteers, relocate if necessary
- Weed out invasive exotics
- Avoid pesticides
- **Tolerate pests**
- Maintain snags

**99% of insects  
are good!**



Creative Commons Greencolander

# Insects

# Nature



Insects are the base of the food web- if they collapse, those above collapse.

**No insects=No food**



The common spiny oakworm, photo: Les Harrison, UF/IFAS, Wakulla County Extension



Monarch butterfly larval stage, Photo UF/IFAS Santa Rosa County

**If your plants are being eaten by something- that is success!**



# Nature



## Why are native plants better for insects?



Baby monarch larvae on swamp milkweed (*Asclepias incarnata*), Photo: UF/IFAS Wakulla County



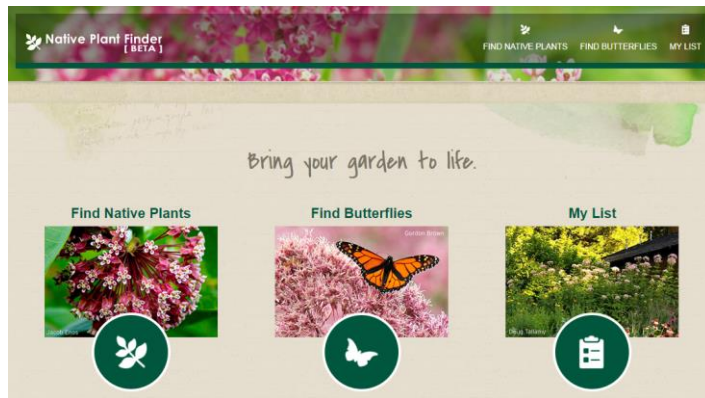
Monarch butterfly on dense blazing star (*Liatris spicata* var. *spicata*). Beverly Turner, Jackson Minnesota, Bugwood.org

- Native pollinators prefer native flowers
- More bugs = healthier ecosystem

# Nature

## What plants do I choose?

- National Wildlife Federation Plant Finder:  
<https://www.nwf.org/NativePlantFinder/>



- Florida Native Plant Society Plant Selector:  
<https://www.fnps.org/plants>



# Nature



## What's a Gardener to do?

- Plant variety of native plants
- Stop using pesticides
- Do less
- Be more wild
- Tell everyone





# Nature



Your landscape is your nature...





## Other Resources

# Nature

- Create Wildlife Habitat at Home (FWC):  
<http://myfwc.com/viewing/habitat/>
- *Planting a Refuge for Wildlife*, Wildlife Foundation of Florida, bound book:  
<http://myfwc.com/viewing/habitat/refuge/>



# Nature



- Thank you tree...

- You're welcome !