



Delaware Nature Society

Yard care for healthy birds, bees & butterflies and clean water
Did you know?

1. Make it a pesticide free zone

In a healthy garden, birds, wasps, toads, bats and others keep the insects under control. 96% of all songbirds eat insects and feed them to their babies. Very few insects are considered pest species, and manual removal is usually more effective. Poisons always kill more than their intended target and can keep killing bees, butterflies, caterpillars and birds for weeks and months. Insects (and minor leaf chewing) are signs of a healthy habitat.



2. Plant native plants for the birds, bees & butterflies

Butterflies need more than pretty nectar-laden flowers. They also need the leaves of native plants for their caterpillars. Native plants also provide food for a variety of critters all year long with nectar, fruit, seeds, nuts, and leaves. Not only are they beautiful, but appropriately chosen and located, native plants won't need extra water or fertilizers making them tough and easy care too.



3. Liveable Lawns –lawns don't have to be death zones

Lawn fertilizers, weed killers and pesticides turn your lawn into a death zone for birds, butterflies and insects, plus they can run off and pollute our waterways. Replacing some of your lawn with native plants, adding clover to your lawn and mowing later in the day can turn your lawn into habitat, not just for Japanese Beetles. Find more info on proper lawn care and certified contractors at Delaware Livable Lawns:

www.delawarelivablelawns.org



4. Leave the leaves and save the fall cleanup for spring

Fallen leaves are nature's mulch –rake them into your landscaped beds where they feed and protect your soil, and shelter wintering fireflies, butterflies, toads and turtles. The seed heads on your native flowers serve as mini bird feeders all winter and provide winter garden interest, while the stems shelter hibernating native bees.





5. Direct your downspouts away from pavement

Clean rain water that runs down driveways and into the street picks up pollutants and often dumps them right into the nearest stream. A simple downspout angle will direct the water towards your lawn, landscaped beds, or even a rain garden, so it can infiltrate into the ground instead, cleaning and replenishing our drinking water.



6. Create a Rain Garden

A Rain Garden is a landscaped bed in a shallow depression that collects rainwater and allows it to infiltrate into the ground instead of running off and causing flooding, erosion and other problems downstream. Plant it with the right native plants and they will take up some of the water, and filter out trash and pollutants as well. Visit www.delnature.org/NativePlantSale to find a plant list.



7. Plant native plants on slopes and streambanks

Native plants help prevent soil erosion with their deep roots so they stabilize slopes and banks much better than lawn. The plants also filter out sediment, trash and pollutants from entering streams, helping to improve water quality. Aim for at least a ten-foot wide buffer along streams and natural water courses. And who wants to mow a slope anyway?



8. Control and clean up after your pets

Pet waste is high in bacteria that can get washed into waterways if left on the ground. Also, our native wildlife is under ever-increasing pressure due to habitat loss, poisons and other man-made threats like non- native predators - our cats and dogs. Please keep your cats and dogs safely indoors, in a confined outdoor space or on a leash – it is safer for them and better for wildlife too.



[Find more information and certify your yard.](#)



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Delaware Nature Society is an organization that helps connect people with nature, preserve natural areas, and advocates for stewardship and conservation of our natural resources. If you are interested in learning more about what we do or visiting one of our sites, please visit www.delnature.org.



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