

## Living in Harmony with Your Yard – More Life with Less Lawn

### *Did you know...*

A turfgrass lawn absorbs less than ten percent of the water absorption capacity of a natural woodland area? Lawns contribute to stormwater and flooding too- just because it's green doesn't mean it's letting the water soak in! Turfgrass roots are very short and don't hold soils in place or absorb significant quantities of water, contributing to erosion and flooding in suburban areas.

This year, consider reducing the size of your lawn and replacing some of your turfgrass with native plants. Native trees, flowers, and shrubs have long roots that go deep into the soil, creating spaces for water to soak in and locking the soil in place. Pollinators like bees and butterflies use the native plants as a food source, unlike turfgrass. Native plants require little or no harmful pesticide applications, which contribute heavily to the loss of beneficial pollinators and the deaths of millions of birds per year. Your backyard can play an important role in wildlife conservation! Building a native plant buffer along a stream is especially beneficial as it can reduce erosion along the streambank and filter pollutants that would otherwise be going into the stream.

Some beautiful native plants include:

- Butterfly milkweed (*Asclepias tuberosa*) – critical food source for monarch butterfly caterpillars
- Cardinal flower (*Lobelia cardinalis*) – pollinated by the ruby-throated hummingbird
- Prairie blazing star (*Liatris pycnostachya*) – supports adult butterflies including monarchs, swallowtails, skippers, and sulfurs
- Wild bergamot (*Monarda fistulosa*) – popular with hawk moths, hummingbirds, and bumble bees

For more information on residential stormwater- friendly landscaping options and the benefits of native plants, you can visit CRWP's webpage at: <http://www.crw.org/index.php/homeowners/>



Butterfly Milkweed



Cardinal Flower