

# Backyard Stewardship

**Are you trying to attract wildlife to your backyard?**

**To create a dynamic habitat you need to provide these three essentials:**

## Food

- Choose plants which provide nutrition for wildlife and support vital insect populations.

For example:



**Black cherry (*Prunus serotina*)** trees support 456 butterfly and moth species. The young of many bird species are reliant on caterpillars and insects as a food source. Also the fruit is eaten by 54 species of birds.



**Oaks (*Quercus*)** support 534 species of butterflies and moths and 29 species of birds. Acorns feed numerous animals, i.e. squirrels, deer, mice, turkeys, ducks, jays, and other birds, to name a few.



**Goldenrod (*Solidago*)** is not an allergen. Its pollen can only be carried by insects. One of the most important plants for pollinators, it supports 115 species of moths and butterflies.

## Shelter

- Include refuges to protect animals from the elements and predators.

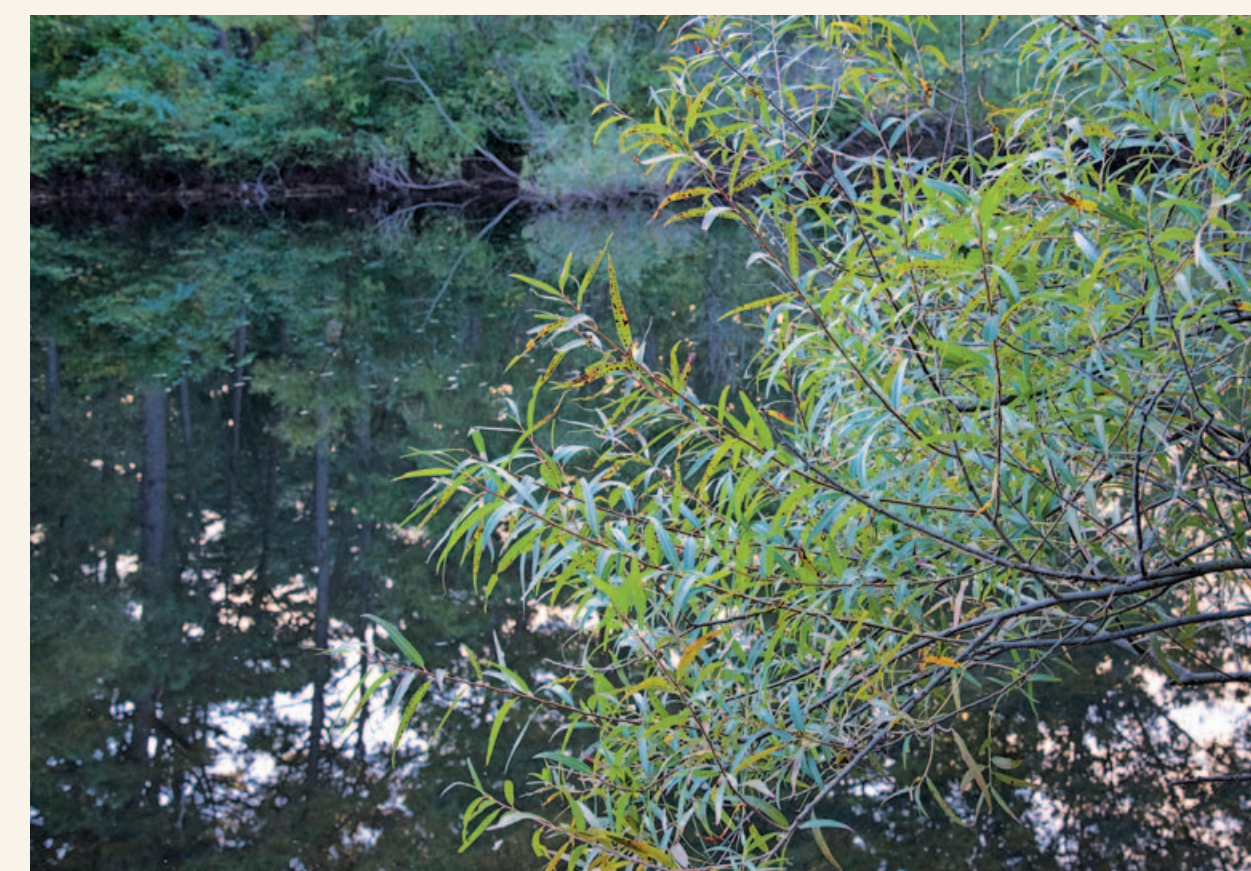


Brush piles offer important food and safety for insects, reptiles, amphibians, mammals and birds.

- Dead trees and nesting boxes provide cavities for shelter and raising young.
- Animals, especially birds, use forest stories or layers. Your landscaping should replicate these layers — building from the bottom up with rocks, small plants, brush, shrubs, young trees and then mature trees.

## Water

- Provide water for a variety of wildlife species by incorporating a pond or stream in your landscape.



**Black willows (*Salix nigra*)** are commonly found near water. They support 455 species of moths and butterflies.

- Consider a birdbath. Keep water changed two to three times a week to avoid breeding mosquitoes.
- Maintain your birdbath throughout the year especially when water is scarce.

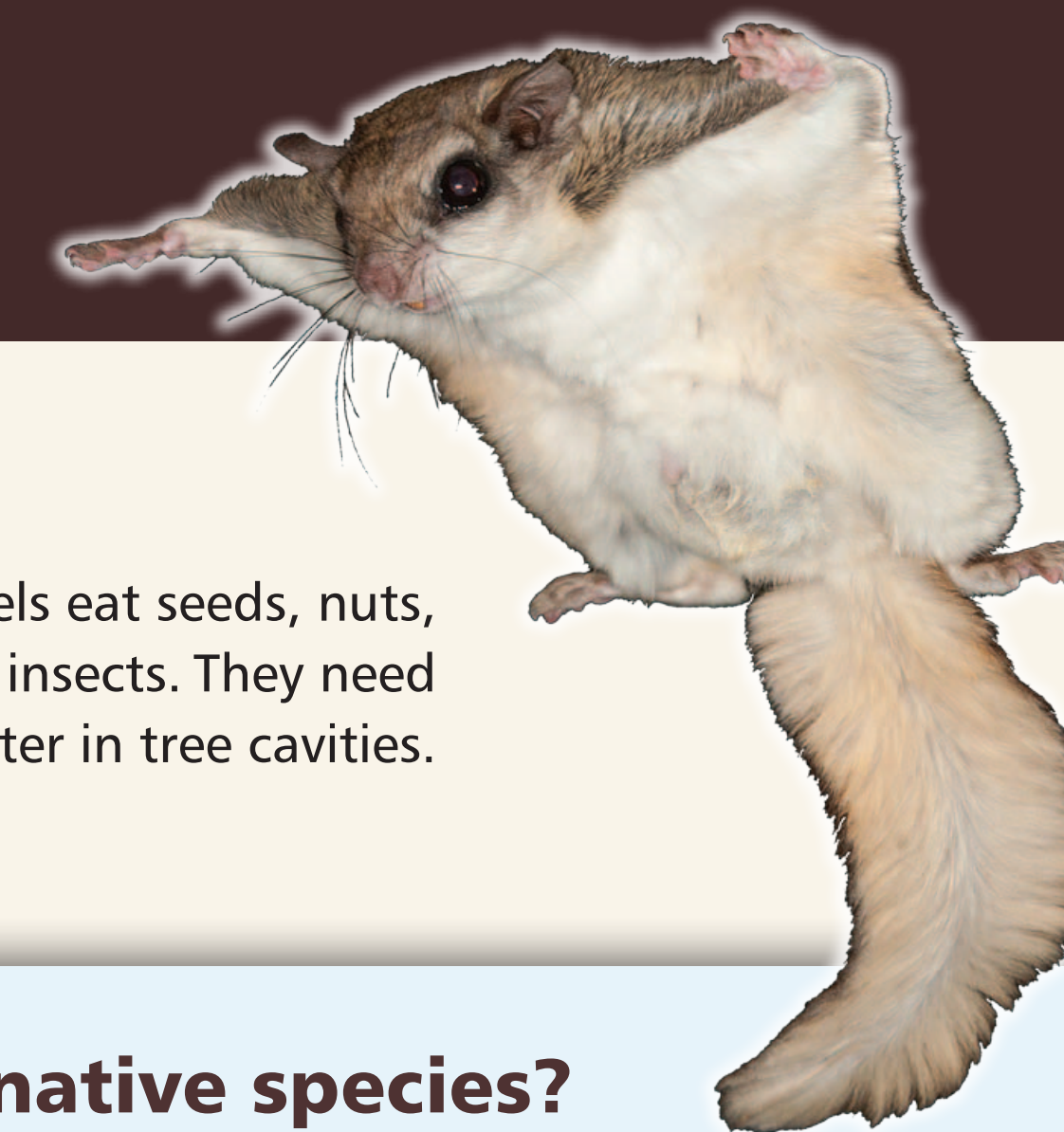


At least 30 percent of the world's crops and 90 percent of our wild plants rely on pollination for reproduction.

Gabriela Chavarria, *Pollinator Conservation*

Native mason bees are two to three times better pollinators than honeybees.

Bryan Danforth, Cornell



Flying squirrels eat seeds, nuts, fungi, fruit, and insects. They need to shelter in tree cavities.

## Why plant native species?

- Native plantings provide habitat, food, cover, and breeding areas for indigenous wildlife.
- Native insects have evolved as specialists on specific native plants on which they are dependent. Insects are the very foundation of most species' existence, including people.
- Native plants support pollinators that fertilize food sources for indigenous animals and people, too.
- Native plants are an integral part of a diverse habitat community and help reverse species loss.
- Native plants are more adaptive, and once established take less care than exotic species.
- Exotic species are often invasive and out-compete native species that are essential for our region's wildlife.

For more great ideas about attracting nature to your yard consult Doug Tallamy's book *Bringing Nature Home* and Pat & Clay Sutton's website: <http://www.patandclaysutton.com>

**You Can Help!**

## Your backyard habitat can...

- supply animals with important food sources that may be in short supply.
- create critical oases or links between protected tracts of land providing for numerous species.
- replace lawn areas that are high maintenance and require harmful fertilizers, mowing and pesticides.
- provide shelter using a brush pile of fallen branches with larger logs and limbs at the bottom. Leave openings for entry points.

Flying squirrel photo: Stan Tekiela's NatureSmart Images®. Acorn photo: Muffet.



Para obtener versión en español, visite: [cumauricriver.org/signs/011s.html](http://cumauricriver.org/signs/011s.html)