

Did you know that Vermont ranks first in the country in percentage of residents (60%) actively observing wildlife?

This is according to a U.S. Fish & Wildlife survey. And according to public comments at community meetings, many residents stated that they want to protect areas important to wildlife. Given the limited amount of public land, the fate of wildlife rests with what WE do in our backyards and back forty.

What makes a spot attractive to wildlife? As realtors say, the 3 most important features of real estate are: location, location, location. For wildlife, the saying could be habitat, habitat, habitat, and variety is the single most important element for providing the most habitats for the most species.

We know that food, water, shelter, a mate, and a good place for the youngsters create a favorable habitat for both humans and wildlife. Yet, while pursuing our own version of the perfect landscape, human nature seems to compel us to "tidy-up" our surroundings in order to "improve" them. These human impulses, in fact, diminish or eliminate the very elements that provide shelter, food, and favorable breeding sites for our wildlife. We need to look at the lands in our backyards, and beyond, with wildlife in mind remembering that interconnections abound among species from micro-organisms to large animals.

RECOMMENDED TREES AND SHRUBS FOR WILDLIFE

TREES		Tolerance	
		Drought	Salt
Hophornbeam	<i>Ostrya virginiana</i>	High	High
Mountain Ash	<i>Sorbus americana</i>	Med.	Med.
White Oak	<i>Quercus alba</i>	High	High
Red Oak	<i>Quercus rubra</i>	High	High
American Beech	<i>Fagus grandifolia</i>	High	Low
Red Maple	<i>Acer rubrum</i>	Low	Low
Quaking Aspen	<i>Populus tremuloides</i>	Low	High
Black Cherry	<i>Prunus serotina</i>	High	Med.
Bitternut Hickory	<i>Carya cordiformis</i>	High	Low
Hemlock	<i>Tsuga canadensis</i>	Very low	Very low
White Cedar	<i>Thuja occidentalis</i>	High	Med.
SHRUBS		Tolerance	
		Drought	Salt
Common Winterberry	<i>Ilex verticillata</i>	Med.	Med.
Bayberry	<i>Myrica pensylvanica</i>	High	High
Red Chokeberry	<i>Aronia arbutifolia</i>	High	High
Black Chokeberry	<i>Aronia melanocarpa</i>	High	High
Nannyberry	<i>Viburnum lentago</i>	Med.	Med.
Wild Raisin	<i>Viburnum cassinoides</i>	Med.	Med.
Shrub Dogwoods	<i>Cornus spp.</i>	Low	Low
Highbush Blueberry	<i>Vaccinium corymbosum</i>	Med.	Med.
Serviceberry	<i>Amelanchier ssp.</i>	Med.	Med.
Beaked Hazlenut	<i>Corylus cornuta</i>	Med.	Med.

**CONSERVATION NOTES
WILDLIFE HABITAT**



If you were a wild animal, would you choose the woods above or below to:

- hide from predators?
- raise a family?
- find shelter?
- find food?



FOLLOW THESE GUIDELINES AND PUT OUT THE “WELCOME MAT” FOR WILDLIFE

- Leave part of your backyard un-mowed. Even a small amount of lawn allowed to go wild can provide habitat for many small wildlife species, including songbirds and butterflies.
- Create brush piles that offer cover for small mammals, perches for birds, and breeding, feeding, and resting sites for amphibians and reptiles. Best arrangements incorporate large woody material at the bottom, are 10-20 feet in diameter, and 4-8 feet high.
- Leave dead or partially dead standing trees (snags) that provide cavities for nesting, perches for hunting and displaying, and food for insect eaters.
- Provide a source of water.
- Retain stonewalls, cellar holes, and other landscape elements for the variety they provide.
- Place nest boxes and structures in areas where natural sites might be absent. Work with neighbors to expand the area and diversity of habitat and create travel corridors for wildlife through coordinated management.
- Learn about the Backyard Wildlife Habitat program and introduce children to wildlife and the outdoors to pass on our heritage. **National Wildlife Federation site:** <http://www.nwf.org/gardenforwildlife/>

When choosing plants for wildlife:

- Provide multiple layers of vegetation—low growing plants, medium sized shrubs and large trees—using native plants (see table on reverse).
- Select plant species that provide food (fruits, acorns, seeds) and protective cover, e.g., shrub thickets.
- Plant a variety of species to provide different foods throughout the seasons, e.g., a combination of deciduous and coniferous trees and shrubs, including fall and winter food plants such as oaks, native sumac, and hawthorn.
- Plant or maintain trees, shrubs, and grasses along rivers and streams (a riparian buffer) to provide wildlife travel corridors.

In grassland habitats:

- For birds, mow after August first, if possible, and allow shrubs and small trees to grow along the edges whenever possible.
- For monarch butterflies, whose larvae eat only milkweed, mow after mid-late September.
- Where field meets forest, create a feathered and meandering forest edge with multiple layers of vegetation.

In forested habitats:

- Retain dead and downed wood on the forest floor as well as a layer of leaf litter.
- Keep forests undeveloped and maintain tree canopy over trails.
- Encourage growth of certain tree and shrub species that provide cover and food, e.g. releasing and pruning old fruit trees or mast-producing trees such as cherries, serviceberries, oaks, beech, apple, and hickories.
- Protect temporary pools such as vernal pools to provide breeding and hibernating areas for amphibians.
- Manage for structural diversity both vertically with trees of different sizes and ages and horizontally with patches of different vegetative species.
- Maintain or create wildlife travel corridors.

More information about wildlife habitats:

Visit the site below to learn more about the following habitats: grasslands, shrublands, vernal pools, marshlands, oak-pine forests, and floodplain forests.

<http://extension.unh.edu/Wildlife/WLHabitats.html>

A PDF of this brochure can be downloaded from the following site:

<http://www.hartford-vt.org/content/conservation/>