

This booklet is produced by

The Virginia Native Plant Society
Piedmont Chapter
P.O. Box 336, The Plains, VA 20198
www.vnps.org

The VNPS furthers appreciation and conservation of Virginia's native plants and habitats. Chapters support a variety of programs including lectures, field walks, workshops. Publications include state and chapter newsletters, list of nurseries and other material helpful to those interested in native plants. The VNPS State office address is: State Arboretum of Virginia, 400 Blandly Farm Lane, Boyce, VA 22620 (540) 837-1600.

Membership: \$15 student, \$30 individual, \$40 family; other categories.

in partnership with the following organizations

State Arboretum of Virginia
At Blandly Experimental Farm
400 Blandly Farm Lane, Boyce VA 22620
(540) 837-1758
www.virginia.edu/blandy

The mission of Blandly Experimental Farm is to increase the understanding of the natural environment through research and education. 175 acre Arboretum and 40 acre Virginia Native Plant Trail feature woodland, meadow and wetland habitats. Open 365 days a year from dawn to dusk with no admission fees. Lectures, workshops, walks and tours throughout the year.

Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy
P.O. Box 2088, Purcellville, VA 20132-2088
(540) 554-2542
www.loudounwildlife.org

Our mission is the preservation and proliferation of wildlife habitat. Educational programs include lectures, field walks, Young Naturalist activities. Newsletter: *Habitat Herald* available
Membership: \$10 student, \$20 individual, \$30 family, other categories

Land Trust of Virginia
P.O. Box 14, Leesburg, VA 20118
(540) 687-8441
www.landtrustva.org

The Land Trust's main purpose is to hold voluntary conservation easements which provide the most effective permanent protection of historical and natural resources.
Membership: \$25, other categories

Environmental Studies at Airlie
7078 Airlie Rd., Warrenton, VA 20187
(540) 341-3239
www.trumpeterswans.org

Encourages diverse wildlife habitat emphasizing native flora and fauna. Programs include symposia, education, habitat area and migratory bird projects (swan research program).

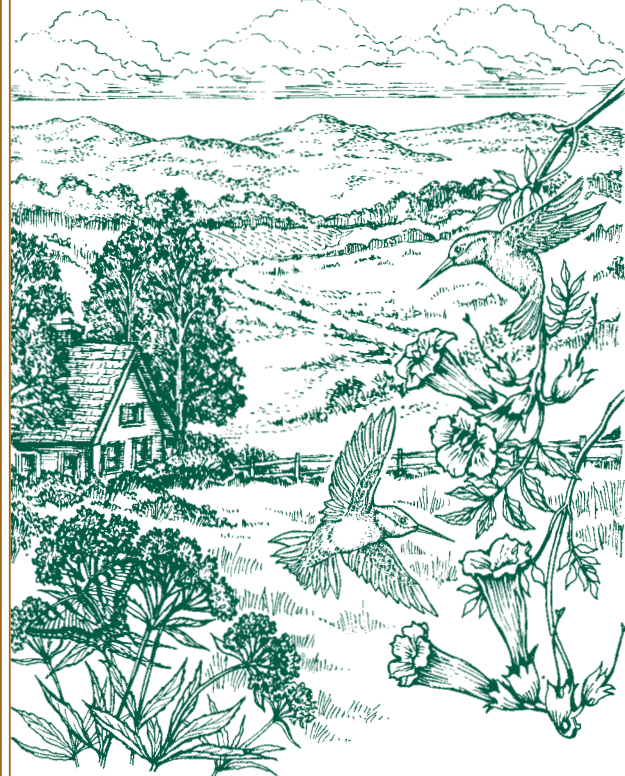
The Audubon Naturalist Society
Rust Nature Sanctuary and Manor
802 Children's Center Road, Leesburg, VA 20175
(703) 669-0000
www.trumpeterswans.org

Founded in 1897, ANS is the oldest and largest independent nonprofit environmental organization in the region. ANS's mission is to foster the stewardship of the region's native wildlife, plants, and ecosystems by educating citizens about the natural world, promoting conservation of biodiversity, and protecting wildlife habitat.

Design and Illustration - Merri Nelson
Printed on Recycled Paper

(c)1999-2007

"Do I Have to Mow All That?"



Homeowner's Guide to Preserving our Natural Landscape

produced by

The Virginia Native Plant Society
Piedmont Chapter

with the

State Arboretum of Virginia
Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy
Land Trust of Virginia
Environmental Studies at Airlie
Audubon Naturalist Society

Our Changing Landscape

Here in Virginia, our beautiful landscape holds a rich variety of terrain, native plants and wildlife.

But our rural landscape is changing as forests are cleared, habitat is destroyed and farms disappear. We as individual landowners hold the keys to preserving and protecting the natural beauty of Virginia's countryside—for ourselves, our children and future generations.



How can I make a difference?

Changes we make now in our home landscaping can benefit all of us—and wildlife.

- Maintain "wild" areas—the more the better: woodlands, wetlands, and thickets help nature survive.
- Blend homes into the landscape—consider natural contours when building.
- Plant less lawn and more "natural green" areas: a meadow of grasses and flowers, clusters of trees and shrubs, a butterfly garden.
- Make a place for wildlife—plant native trees, shrubs and plants.
- Avoid pesticides and herbicides—keep our water, air, and land poison-free.



Why Choose Native Plants?

Native plants are part of the natural growth here in Virginia; they make our landscape beautiful and provide habitat for wildlife.

Native Plants survive and thrive.

- They're well-adapted to the soil and climate here.
- Hardy and drought-resistant, they need less care.
- They have attractive natural shapes.
- They offer the best food, shelter and nest sites for wildlife.

"Right plant, right place": Our natural countryside has a variety of very different areas—rocky hillsides, shady woodlands, meadows, wetlands: choose the right plant for your site. VNPS offers a list of native plants for habitats.



Save a Place for Wildlife

Do you thrill to the sight of a hawk soaring overhead? Enjoy seeing wild turkeys in a field or a heron standing in a stream? Would you like your children to grow up seeing a cardinal feeding a nest of hungry babies, hummingbirds and butterflies at your doorstep?

Wildlife needs our help to survive:

As forests are destroyed and housing replaces open land, our local wildlife is losing ground—literally. Mowed lawn and a few isolated trees are no substitute for the rich tapestry of native trees and plants that have always sustained wildlife. Their loss is one reason for a rapid decline of our songbirds. Chemical fertilizers and pesticides kill our valuable pollinating insects—butterflies and honeybees.

What can I do?

Make your property more friendly to wildlife. Read inside...



Our home is on open land...

Do I have to mow all that?

No! Consider landscaping alternatives to a lawn that can be attractive and mean less work for you.



The Bad News:
Lawns cost you time, effort and money.

Tired of spending every weekend seeding, feeding, spraying, watering, weeding, mowing, edging, raking? Mowers shatter the quiet and pollute the air, chemicals endanger our environment. Acres of lawn provide no habitat, and wildlife ends up...banished.

The Good News: less IS more.

Less lawn means more time for you—time with your family, to enjoy nature and living in the country.

- Plant less lawn and more “natural green”—a meadow of native grasses and flowers: mow paths for walking.
- Choose native plants and shrubs.
- Keep woodlands and fields natural; save existing trees and shrubs.

Where property lines meet



Join with neighbors—
Plant a cluster of native trees and shrubs for beautiful boundaries that create privacy and save a place for wildlife.

Be a Homeowner for Habitat

Save growth along old fencerows; it often includes flowering trees, berry bushes and wildflowers. Plants along fencerows and roadsides provide a “corridor” of connected habitat for wildlife.

Create a Bird and Butterfly Garden

It's easy to do in your own backyard, and fun for children and adults. Start with native plants—many have attractive flowers and others are “host” plants for caterpillars that become butterflies. Combine flowers with shrubs to create a plant community that is a real habitat. Avoid pesticides or herbicides that poison birds who are the best insect control. They can also harm honeybees and butterflies, our valuable pollinators. Keep a birdbath nearby filled with fresh water.



Plant shrubs and trees. Many favorite birds only nest in leafy branches, never in boxes: robins, cardinals, catbirds, song sparrows, goldfinches, wood thrushes and warblers.



Build a brush pile

Leave a space for a small brush pile in a quiet corner of your yard. Add leaves, branches and yard waste and don't disturb. It will soon become a haven for wildlife.

Plant a Tree

It's the single best thing you can do for the environment—and yourself. Trees are beautiful and they add height, shape, color, and texture to our home landscapes. Trees provide shade, windbreaks and privacy screening; they enhance air quality, provide the oxygen we breathe and cool summer air temperatures.



Tulip Tree

Choose trees that are regional natives; check the conditions of your site: right plant + right place = success!

Smaller CAN be better!



Small trees (whips) cost less and are often more vigorous and quicker to establish than larger specimens, which can suffer transplant shock.

Protect Our Water

- Avoid using chemicals that can seep into streams and ground water and pollute wells.
- Encourage natural growth along stream banks to control erosion and on pond banks to provide cover for wildlife.
- Save existing wet areas, no matter how small. Wetlands, springs and streams are all important parts of our natural watershed.
- Don't fill in bogs and shallow ponds—these are vital habitat for frogs, toads and turtles.



If our home is in a woodland...

What should we do?

Little or nothing! With a “don't disturb” policy, your woods can be beautiful and a haven for wildlife.

- Let dead trees stand when possible—they are home to owls, woodpeckers and other cavity-nesters.
- Fallen logs and branches provide insects and grubs for birds.
- Never plant grass in a woodland.
- Clear out “invasive alien” plants, like Japanese honeysuckle, that choke out our native plants.
- Leave the leaves! Leaf cover is nature's own mulch—no raking needed. Clear walking trails and leave the forest floor undisturbed.



Enjoy native woodland wildflowers in the spring.



Mayapple

Trout Lily

Columbine

Jack in the Pulpit

Keep the Night Sky Dark

Do you enjoy country evenings and seeing the stars at night, far away from the glare of all-night lights and superhighways? Shield your outdoor bulbs to direct light to the ground. Be courteous to neighbors: don't leave outdoor lights on all night. Bright, artificial lights confuse nocturnal wildlife (like owls) and migrating birds that need the night sky dark. Nature's insect patrol, toads and bats, are hard at work after dark.

