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wild OVER WILDLIFE!

CREATE A LANDSCAPE THAT
INVITES NATIVE WILDLIFE INTO
YOUR OWN BACKYARD



INVITE MORE wildlife into my yard? Are you insane? I have enough deer and rabbits munching on my plants to film an urban wildlife documentary!" Well, ok, you can't always choose exactly which kinds of creatures you invite ... but there are many ways to attract desirable and necessary wildlife while safely and humanely discouraging the less desirable critters.

1. FOOD. Plant a variety of native or heirloom varieties of trees, shrubs, and perennials to provide nectar, pollen, seeds, nuts, and berries for local wildlife species. Supplement with seed feeders,

hummingbird feeders, and suet.

2. WATER. All animals need a clean, reliable water source for drinking, bathing, and sometimes even reproduction (e.g. frogs).

Sources can include lakes, ponds, rivers, and wetlands as well as man-made water features such as koi ponds, birdbaths, and water gardens.

3. SHELTER. Wildlife need a safe place to hide from predators, sleep, rest, and avoid inclement weather. Shelter can include trees and shrubs, wood and brush piles, thickets, and dead trees. Supplement with bird, bat, or toad houses.

4. BABIES. In order to maintain wildlife populations, animals need a safe place to successfully raise their young. Many of the shelter places mentioned above can provide this, but also consider bluebird houses, owl nest boxes, and butterfly host plants.

5. SUSTAINABLE GARDENING. How you maintain your landscape has a direct impact on the health of the air, soil, water, and habitat for wildlife as well as people! Sustainable garden practices can include mulching, composting, rain barrels, reducing (or eliminating!) the use of chemical pesticides, utilizing native and drought-tolerant plants, and reducing the amount of turf grass in your yard.

To discourage undesirable critters like deer and rabbits, plant deer-

resistant shrubs (remember nothing is deer proof!), and try pepper spray on your existing plants. You can also utilize visual deterrents like a fake owl (preferably with a rotating head) or iridescent reflective foil strips that reflect light in constantly changing patterns and cause a rattle that is unnerving to deer and rabbits. For squirrel issues, many of the new squirrel-proof bird feeders work well (and are hysterical to watch!). We have had good results at the nursery (and good feedback from our customers) using a line of botanically-based animal/insect repellents by I Must Garden™ that is safe to use around kids and pets.



If you want to get more involved with wildlife gardening, a local non-profit called Wild Over Lake Norman! is attempting something that has never been done before in the United States—to get an entire lakeside community (including Huntersville, Cornelius, Davidson, Mooresville, Denver, and Troutman) certified as a Community Wildlife Habitat by the National Wildlife Federation. Want to help? Get your backyard, schoolyard, or college campus certified as a Backyard Wildlife Habitat (info at nwf.org) or become a project volunteer by contacting the Lake Norman Wildlife Conservationists (lakenormanwildlife.org) or Wild Over Lake Norman! (wildoverlkn@gmail.com). 🦋