



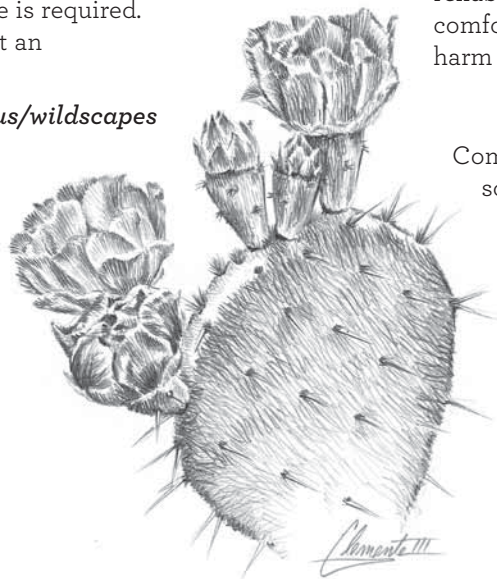
WHAT WILL I NEED FOR CERTIFICATION?

In reviewing properties for certification, we look for:

- Food plants and complementary supplements
- Reliable water sources maintained year-round
- Layers of shelter and artificial nest sites that wildlife will use
- 50% native plant composition

A \$15 application fee is required. Find out more or get an application at:

www.tpwd.state.tx.us/wildscapes



WILDSCAPING TIPS

Use as many native plants that produce seeds, nuts, berries and nectar as possible. Plants of varying size and season will have the greatest effect.



Water is vital. Ponds are great, but not always practical. *Shallow* wildlife pools, birdbaths, planter trays and water troughs work well. Drippers and misters are effective ways to provide fresh, moving water.



Rock walls, brick piles and stacked wood make excellent cover and homes for insects, reptiles and small mammals. It is best to keep such cover several yards from the house.



Be firewise. Where nothing separates you from a greenbelt or wildland, create firebreaks, avoid ladder fuels and do not plant resinous plants close to your home.



Maintaining a feeder will not disrupt a bird's migratory pattern. A well maintained, reliable feeder makes those that stay more comfortable. Missing a few days will not harm the birds.



Composting will provide natural sources of soil nutrients to your developing Wildscape.



Native plants will use less water. Irrigate in early mornings or evenings to reduce evaporation loss.



Make sure your Wildscape complies with local and neighborhood regulations.

"There are some who can live without wild things, and some who cannot. ...

Like winds and sunsets, wild things were taken for granted until progress

began to do away with them. Now

we face the question whether a still

higher 'standard of living' is worth its cost in things natural, wild and free.

For us of the minority, the opportunity

to see geese is more important than

television, and the chance to find a

pasque-flower is a right as inalienable as free speech."

Aldo Leopold

A Sand County Almanac



Life's better outside.®

4200 Smith School Road
Austin, TX 78744

www.tpwd.state.tx.us

©2012 TPWD PWD BR W7000-538 (5/12)

In accordance with Texas Depository Law, this publication is available at the Texas State Publications Clearinghouse and/or Texas Depository Libraries.

TPWD receives federal assistance from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and other federal agencies. TPWD is therefore subject to Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, in addition to state anti-discrimination laws. TPWD will comply with state and federal laws prohibiting discrimination based on race, color, national origin, age, sex or disability. If you believe that you have been discriminated against in any TPWD program, activity or event, you may contact the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Division of Federal Assistance, 4401 N. Fairfax Drive, Mail Stop: MBSP-4020, Arlington, VA 22203, Attention: Civil Rights Coordinator for Public Access.

Texas Wildscapes



Gardening for Wildlife



Life's better outside.®

The term *Wildscapes*

is a deliberate adaptation of “landscape.” By definition this means altering and maintaining the habitat we create. **Simply “letting an area go wild” will not create an effective Wildscape.**

As urban centers continue to sprawl into wildlife habitats, it increases the strain on wildlife by reducing the resources they need for survival. This habitat loss occurs throughout Texas. State Parks and Wildlife Management Areas can help, but with more than 90% of Texas privately owned, action from private landowners is necessary for effective habitat restoration. The Texas Wildscapes program provides information and recognition to people who provide wildlife habitat at their homes, schools and work places.

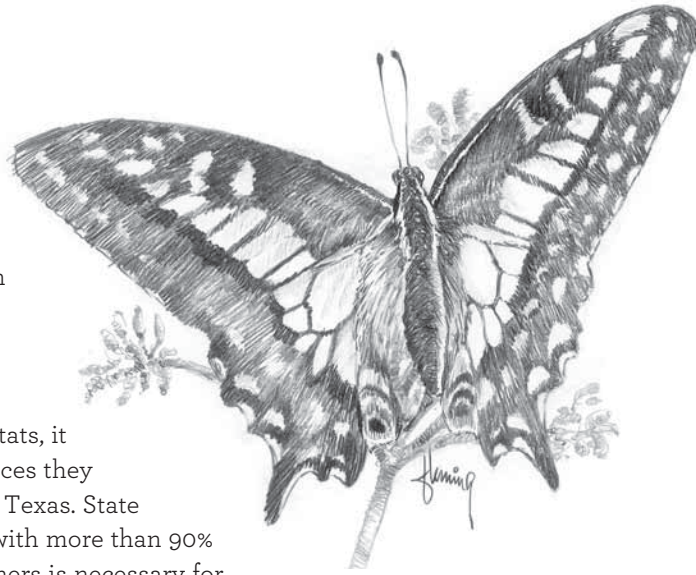
Through Wildscapes, the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department encourages landowners to restore habitat — food, shelter and water — for birds, butterflies, reptiles and even small mammals in their backyards. **These habitats must still abide by local and county ordinances,** but small changes in our landscape can result in significant improvement in wildlife habitat.

Since the actions of one are magnified by repetition, we encourage people who develop a backyard habitat to have their property certified as an official Texas Wildscape. The attractive yard sign that can be purchased after certification encourages others in your neighborhood to look at their yards from a wildlife perspective.

WHAT ARE THE ESSENTIALS?

An effective wildlife habitat will provide all three basic needs for wildlife — food, shelter and water — in a way that they can readily use and easily access. Providing the basics, in a diverse and well-planned manner, will make your garden more attractive to native wildlife.

Since wildlife thrives in the presence of plants they have adapted to, native plants are encouraged in the Wildscapes program. **Properties applying for certification must ensure that at least 50 percent of the plants used in their landscaping are native to Texas.**



HOW CAN I PROVIDE THE BASICS?

The most important step in developing a Wildscape is learning about the plants and soils that characterize your region. **The fact that a plant grows in an area without human assistance does not make that plant “native” to that area.** Introduced plants are not good substitutes for the native plants used by wildlife. Texas has 10 distinct ecoregions. A careful look at undisturbed areas around your home will help you understand what plants should be found in your ecoregion.

Plants provide both food and shelter requirements for wildlife. Select plants for their food value as well as plants that will grow to different

heights and density. This layering effect will allow wildlife to select areas they find most comfortable.

You may want to supplement natural resources with artificial ones. Feeding stations, nest boxes, rock piles, brush piles, bird baths and water troughs enhance the effects of plants and ponds.

WHERE CAN I LEARN MORE?

A good guide to help you through the development of a Wildscape is: *Texas Wildscapes: Gardening for Wildlife*. This book is available through Texas A&M University Press.

BE FIREWISE

While shrubs and brush are important to wildlife, and we do want to have some brush on our properties, it is also important that we maintain this with a sense of community responsibility and safety. We all have a role to play in protecting our home and community from fire.

This is especially important if you live in an area known as the wildland urban interface (WUI), a place where homes back up against large stretches of undeveloped land. This area becomes particularly vulnerable in drought situations, when extensive areas of dry brush become a tinder box. Providing a separation — ideally 30 feet — between your home and these fuels is very important. This area does not need to be lost to wildlife habitat, though — use it to plant materials that maintain their moisture, use hardscape to create shelter, and use it for your supplemental feeding and watering features.

Avoid plants that are highly resinous or dry quickly close to your home. Cedar/juniper, yaupon, possum haw, rosemary and grasses should not be used around the foundation of your home. Replace them with plants that maintain their moisture without becoming resinous. Succulents are ideal.

For more information on being firewise in these areas, visit www.texasfirewise.com



TRAPS TO AVOID

A Wildscape is not an excuse for ignoring or violating city and county regulations. Health and safety regulations make it possible for people to live in harmony with each other. Wildscapes make it possible to live in harmony with wildlife and each other. Maintain your Wildscape for your enjoyment and that of your neighbors.

A Wildscape is a safe harbor in which wildlife can find the resources they need. It is not an “official wildlife sanctuary.” You determine what can and cannot be done on your property within the context of your city or neighborhood association guidelines.

