

CREATING AN ECO-FRIENDLY YARD

(MUCH ABBREVIATED VERSION)

1. **Limit the lawn and reduce its impact**

Consider replacing lawn with groundcovers and other plantings
Mow less, use an electric or human-powered mower, leave the clippings
Avoid fertilizer and pesticides
Water wisely

2. **Sequestering carbon**

Sequester carbon in large trees, deep-rooted perennials and soil

3. **Keep soil covered**, ideally with growing plants. Avoid tilling.

4. **Provide food & habitat for pollinators** with native plants (& leave fall leaves)

5. **Be a waterwise gardener**

Water deeply and less often
Capture rainwater & slow runoff
Consider xeric plants, rain barrels, rain gardens, and permeable surfaces

6. **Landscape for Energy Savings** -- See resources section for link on using shade & windbreaks

7. **Compost** kitchen scraps and yard waste

8. **Grow some of your own food**

Consider tucking in perennial herbs and fruits, growing annual food plants in containers, adding fruit trees & shrubs and/or a veggie patch

9. **Spread the word** and help others make their yards more eco-friendly also!

Resources and Plant Lists

Plant vendors in our region

<https://xerces.org/pollinator-resource-center/great-lakes>

<http://mnnps.org/links/>

<https://www.prairieresto.com/>

<https://www.prairiemoon.com/>

Waterwise plants

<https://www.highcountrygardens.com/plant-finder/drought-resistant-perennials/filtered/zones-4>

<https://www.highcountrygardens.com/plant-finder/very-drought-tolerant-plants/filtered/zones-4>

Pollinator Plant List from Xerces Society

https://xerces.org/sites/default/files/2018-05/17-047_03_XercesSoc_Pollinator-Plants_Great-Lakes-Region_web-3page_0.pdf

National Wildlife Association Plant Finder

<https://www.nwf.org/nativePlantFinder/plants>

DNR Resources on Native Plants

<https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/gardens/nativeplants/index.html>

Companion Planting

<https://homesteadandchill.com/benefits-companion-planting-chart/>

<https://www.motherearthnews.com/organic-gardening/companion-planting-guide-zmaz81mjzraw>

Vegetables that Grow in Shade

<https://www.healthygreensavvy.com/vegetables-that-grow-in-shade/>

Perennial Vegetables List

<https://www.healthygreensavvy.com/perennial-vegetables/>

Tree Benefits Calculator

<http://www.treebenefits.com/calculator/>

Ecological Footprint Calculator

<https://www.footprintcalculator.org/>

Landscaping for Energy Savings

<https://www.energy.gov/energysaver/design/landscaping-energy-efficient-homes>

Guide to Composting

<https://www.smallfootprintfamily.com/100-things-you-can-compost>

UMN Soil Testing

<http://soiltest.cfans.umn.edu/>

Permaculture/Ecological Design Company

<https://www.ecologicaldesign.land/>

Sheet Mulching

<http://lawntogarden.org/how-to-sheet-mulch>

<https://www.chelseagreen.com/2014/9-simple-steps-to-sheet-mulching/>

PLANTS TO CONSIDER

(not an exhaustive list, but a place to start)

Native Plants for Pollinators and Waterwise Gardening

Echinacea
Milkweed
Bee Balm
Butterfly Weed
Yarrow
Black Eyed Susan
Joe Pye Weed
Liatris
Russian Sage
Catmint
Coreopsis
Goldenrod
Wild indigo
Wild geranium
Prairie grasses

Many perennials can be obtained for free as divisions from other gardeners. Asking on Nextdoor, Facebook, or neighborhood lists can help you find them.

Fruiting Trees, Shrubs, and Vines

Serviceberry (Juneberry)
Apples
Plums
Pear
Hazelnuts
Paw Paw
Honeyberry
Elderberry ([detailed growing info](#) and [overview of varieties](#))
Cranberry
Mulberry
Sea Buckthorn
Nanking Cherry
Currants

Gooseberry
Raspberry
Blueberry
Grapes
Hardy Kiwi

Other Perennial Food Plants

Rhubarb
Asparagus
Strawberry & Alpine Strawberry
Sunchoke (Jerusalem artichoke)
Perennial herbs: Chocolate mint and other mints, lemon balm, oregano, thyme
Loads more ideas here: <https://www.healthygreensavvy.com/perennial-vegetables/>

Some common “weeds” you can eat:

- [Creeping Charlie](#)
- Chickweed
- [Virginia waterleaf](#)
- [Dandelion](#)
- [Violets](#)
- [Wood sorrel](#)
- [Purslane](#)
- Lambsquarters

[Eat the Weeds](#) is a great source for information on edible wild plants

Happy gardening!