

May

Mother May I . . . Plant Native Flowers

Reduce Water Waste and Nutrient Run Off

By Jacquelyn Buck

During the month of May, Allen County Partnership for Water Quality (ACPWQ) is encouraging residents to consider using native plants in their landscaping. Many people are aware of the biodiversity benefits that native plants offer, but did you know that native plants offer more than habitat and food for pollinators and local birds? They also offer incredible benefits to our local water ways and can help improve water quality!

How can native plants affect water quality? It is a good question with even better answers! For the purpose of this article, I am going to focus on three points: less water, less pesticides, and less fertilizers are needed for native plants to survive and thrive in our yards.

The average lawn requires thousands of gallons of water over the course of the growing season in order to maintain that green color most residents strive for. Native plants however require significantly less water, because they have deep roots that allow them to find water that most grasses used for our lawns and plants used in landscaping are unable to get too. Not only does this mean that your plants will require less attention from you, but they are also helping you by increasing your soil's capacity to hold water in the future!



Another common garden practice is to apply pesticides and fertilizers to help keep your property pest free while also helping to give the plants around your property all the food they need to blossom. With native plants around, these practices might not be necessary. Native plants have adapted with this area, meaning they are used to native pests and have ways to combat their presence. Additionally, they do not require any fertilizer. They were made to thrive here and require very little maintenance or work from us. Less pesticides and fertilizers in our yards also means less pesticides and fertilizers being washed away into our rivers, streams, and lakes.

So this Mother's Day, give the gift of a beautiful flower that requires little work! This allows your mother the opportunity to have a stress free easy summer while also helping improve your water quality for all the people in your area!