

Protect Your Investment Protect Water Quality

Greenbelt Gardens

*Higher Water Quality
Higher Property Values
Higher Quality of Life*



Do you want to increase the long-term value of your substantial investment in waterfront property while protecting water quality?

One of the easiest, most beautiful and cost-effective ways to do this is to incorporate a greenbelt garden in your landscaping.

A greenbelt garden is simply a strip of natural vegetation such as native plants, tall grasses, shrubs and trees planted between your lawn and the water. Greenbelt gardens are also called buffer strips. Greenbelts prevent erosion, sediment and nutrients from reaching waterways.

Turf grass lawns that extend all the way to the water's edge without any trees or shrubs are less effective at absorbing nutrients that cause water quality problems such as algae growth. A diversity of longer rooted plants such as trees, shrubs, plus native grasses and flowers is more effective at absorbing nutrients and preventing erosion.

Lawns create more runoff than wooded areas, as they absorb less rain. Lawns carry eight times as much phosphorus to waterways than wooded areas the same size.

Benefits of Greenbelt Gardens

Greenbelt buffers provide these aesthetic, time-saving and money-saving benefits:

- 💧 Saving as much as 48% in maintenance costs as compared to traditional landscaping
- 💧 Spending less time on high-maintenance lawn care such as mowing, weeding and fertilizing—that means more leisure time for you!
- 💧 Preventing erosion, which is vastly more cost-effective than repairing shoreline
- 💧 Enhancing your view of the lake by framing it with plants, grasses, shrubs and trees to render your scene even more picturesque
- 💧 Creating a meandering path to the shore, incorporating the cherished element of unfolding and expanse in your landscape plan
- 💧 Attracting birds, butterflies and other wildlife

***Planting a greenbelt garden
is the number one thing
you can do on your
waterfront property
to protect water quality.***



Protecting Our Water Quality and Quality of Life



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*Photos of Purple Coneflower, butterflies and garden footpath
by Patricia Pennell. Other photos of native plants by Michigan
DNR. Torch Lake photo this page by H.G. Judd.*



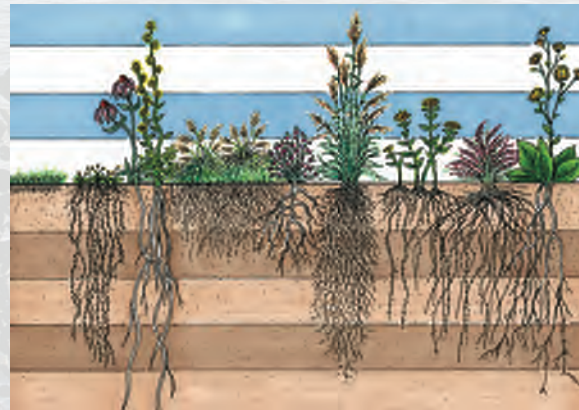
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The Beauty of Native Plants

Native plants, grasses, shrubs and trees are preferable. Native plants are well-suited to your soil type and climate, making them remarkably hardy. This saves you money from having to replace plants that perish.

Native plants are naturally drought-resistant, very low maintenance and pest repellent. They also attract diverse plant and animal life. Your yard will be teeming with beautiful birds and butterflies!

The roots of native plants are deeper than those of grass. Thus, they are far superior in absorbing water, preventing erosion, plus reducing and cleaning runoff. Native plants, grasses, shrubs and trees stop pollution from reaching the water. They trap sediments and absorb excess nutrients such as phosphorus.



Making the Transition to a Greenbelt Garden

Soil type, slope and vegetation mix are all factors in designing an effective greenbelt. There is no one-size-fits-all design. Your greenbelt garden can be as unique as your home.

Generally, the wider and deeper your greenbelt, and the higher the diversity of plants, the more effective it will be in protecting water quality. The depth that your greenbelt extends inward from shore will depend on soil type, slope, runoff area and other factors. The Watershed Center can put you in touch with expert advice for specific design ideas.

If you're building a new home, you can easily incorporate a greenbelt into your landscape plan. Avoid large hardscaping elements such as seawalls.

If your existing lawn extends all the way to water's edge, simply stop mowing next to the water. This will allow naturally occurring native seeds in the soil to germinate. Beautiful things happen when you quit mowing! Native plants begin blooming. This is free landscaping!

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