

To receive an educational packet on how to create habitat for Florida critters in your landscape, please send a \$10 donation to “Backyard Habitat Program”, Hillsborough County Extension Service, 5339 County Road 579, Seffner, FL 33584.

Fill out the form below. Please make checks payable to the Master Gardener Program.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_



The Cooperative Urban Wildlife Program is a cooperative effort between the Florida Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS), University of Florida, and Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission's Non-game Wildlife Program. In Hillsborough County, the program is organized through the Master Gardener volunteer program of the Cooperative Extension Service.

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# Backyard Habitat Program

*Create Homes for Florida's Critters!*



## HILLSBOROUGH BACKYARD HABITAT PROGRAM

**Creating wildlife habitat in your landscape** is different than simply attracting them with feeders or flowers. By providing habitat you are giving wildlife a place to live; feeders and flowers simply attract animals that live elsewhere to visit you. Habitat allows you to produce your own birds, butterflies and other critters. Without habitat in your yard, you are relying on someplace else to produce the wildlife that you wish to attract. These wildlife may not always be around if that someplace else becomes developed or altered.

**Landscaping with wildlife in mind** does not have to be complicated or force you to create a "wild"-looking yard. However, it does require you to think about your plant choices and consider how these plants will affect the wildlife you wish to attract. Cardinals, for example, prefer to nest in hedges and feed on small fruits and seeds. To provide cardinal habitat, you would want to look at your present landscape with those factors in mind. Your future plant choices should be made to complement the plants already in your yard. Even formal landscapes can provide for wildlife when some attention has been given to plant selection and landscape design.

**Native plants** are stressed in the Backyard Wildlife Habitat Program. Native plants generally are better at providing for the needs of wildlife since Florida plants and Florida wildlife evolved together. The right selection of native plants can provide a natural food source year-round. Many native plants are quite attractive, and when used correctly they also

will require less water, fertilizer, and pesticides. Our plant lists will help you select suitable native plants.

**Certify your habitat!** If you wish, you can certify your habitat through this program. The requirements are:

- Food, water and cover are provided for wildlife;
- The area is a minimum of 10 square yards (approximately 12 feet by 12 feet);
- 50% of the plant species in your habitat area are native to Florida.

When your yard is certified, you will receive an aluminum "habitat sign" and a certificate. We wish you well in your efforts to help Florida's wildlife. Your yard can have a big impact and it will bring you much enjoyment.

To receive the **Wildlife Habitat Application Packet and subscribe to the "Creature Comforts"** newsletter, send \$10 to:

Backyard Wildlife Habitat Program

Hillsborough County Extension Service

5339 C. R. 579, Seffner, FL 33584

*(Please make checks payable to: **Master Gardener Program**)*

Educational presentations by Master Gardeners and a display are available to groups or organizations upon request. For more information, call the Hillsborough County Extension Office at (813) 744-5519 x139.