BACKYARD WILDLIFE HABITAT

A wildlife habitat is the natural home or environment of an animal or other organism. This environment provides FOOD, WATER, SHELTER and SPACE TO RAISE THEIR YOUNG. All of these elements are absolutely necessary to sustain wildlife.

Provide a minimum of three food sources.

Food is provided naturally by native plants, such as seeds, nuts, berries, fruits, nectar, sap, foliage, twigs, or pollen. Supplemental feeding with feeders is a great way to support birds, hummingbirds, butterflies, and squirrels. Also using lots of native plants, which are familiar to the local wildlife.

Provide at least one water source.

Fill a shallow dish with pebbles, sand and water for the birds and bees, or you may create a tiny pond.

Provide at least two sources of shelter or cover.

Provide a brush pile, log pile, wooded area, dense shrub or thicket, meadow planting, a cluster of evergreens, or a rock pile are all great options.

Provide two places where wildlife can raise their young.

Birdhouses, planting several host plants and native flowers for your butterflies, and rocks, logs, mulch piles, hollow trees serve as nesting areas for birds, rabbits, lizards, salamander, opossum, snakes many other animals and insects.

Get certified!

Go to the National Wildlife Federation link:
 https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5804eb039f74569692067655/t/58e67bde59cc68936b316776/1491500004901/2017gardenforwildlife+application.pdf, check the boxes that apply to your space or garden, elaborate a little bit on your habitat, and pay the $20 fee which

gets you a subscription to the NWF's magazine, a certificate, and also goes towards NWF outreach. You can also spring for the $30 sign: The sign won't help attract more wildlife, but it might inspire family and neighbors to create their own wildlife habit.

Can you do all these things without getting certified? Sure. But there's something satisfying in feeling like you're part of a community of gardeners across the nation, working towards the same goal of helping out local wildlife.