

A Homeowners Guide to Native Shoreline Gardens

Owning lakefront property can be one of the most rewarding experiences in a person's life. It can also be one of the most frustrating experiences. There are many issues related to owning lakefront property that even experienced homeowners do not know how to deal with. Some of these problems; erosion of the shoreline, loss of leisure time because of lawn maintenance, or having 25 Canada Geese take up residence on your shoreline making it unusable, are all common complaints. There is, however, a very easy and fairly inexpensive answer that will help solve all of problems mentioned above. A **shoreline garden**, filled with native grasses, wildflowers, trees and shrubs will help protect your shoreline from erosion, take less time and money for maintenance, protect the lake from contaminated storm water runoff and deter Canada Geese! Since most lakeshore landowners are extremely interested in protecting the water quality of their lake and their property value, a shoreline garden can be a small investment with a big payoff. As you begin planning your native shoreline garden, you may wish to consider enhancing the benefits of your shoreline garden by extending it out into the shallow water area. Native near-shore aquatic plants, will help protect your shoreline by dissipating wave energy, stabilize sediments and create important wildlife habitat.

Many people ask why we always suggest native plants for a shoreline garden. There are actually several reasons. Native plants evolved in Wisconsin and therefore are more likely to survive the extreme weather conditions in Wisconsin. The extensive root system of native plants will strengthen and stabilize your soil, which will help protect it from erosion. Native plants also provide important food and habitat for birds, amphibians and insects.

Please be aware that any work below the ordinary high water mark, such as erosion control measures and planting native aquatics, require a permit from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. In addition, every county in Wisconsin has adopted and enforces shoreland zoning ordinances for the protection of our waterbodies. These ordinances include (but are not limited to) controls on any vegetation trimming, killing or removal, land disturbance, standards that regulate setbacks for structures from waterways, and wetland protection. Before starting any project, please contact your county zoning department and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to find out if you will need a permit. For more information about the WI DNR regulations please consult the DNR website at <http://dnr.wi.gov/permits/water/>. For additional information about Walworth County Shoreland Zoning regulations, Land Disturbance and Erosion Control please contact the Walworth County Land Use and Resource Management Department at 262- 741-4972 or see our website at <http://www.co.walworth.wi.us/>.



City of Delavan Arboretum
2001 Before Native Shoreline Garden Planted



City of Delavan Arboretum
2003 After Native Shoreline Garden Installed