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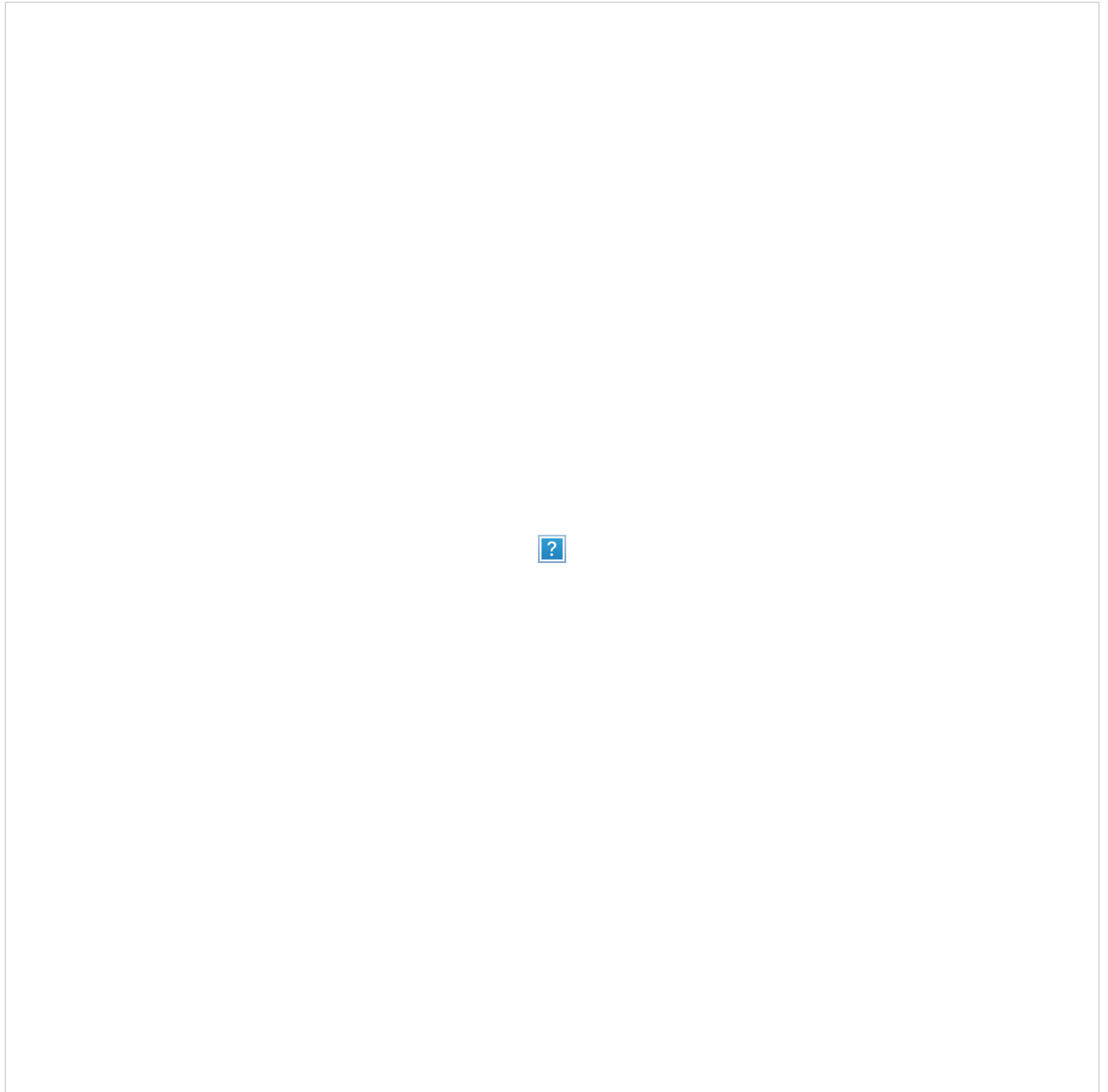


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Plant a Green Garden Starring Native Plants

A green garden should center around a selection of native plants, not only because they are more acclimatized to the local geography, hydrology, climate and easy for gardeners to manage, but also because they provide an important habitat for pollinators that contribute to our food security.^[i] With the increase in development and urban sprawl, important native habitats have been destroyed, putting various native plants on the **Endangered Species list**. For Hearts, developing a lifestyle in harmony with nature is of central importance, and what better way to do that than by including native plants to help ensure the conservation of plant and animal biodiversity?



Quick Guide: Planting a Garden with Native Plants

- **Native plants = money saved:** Native plants do not generally require fertilizers, pesticides,^[ii] and need minimal irrigation, even during drought^[iii] (non-native lawns require 10,000 gallons of water each year).^[iv] In other words, native plants will save you money!

- **200,000 pollinators need native plants:**^[v] This includes **pollinators like bees**, birds, flies, butterflies, and ants.

Take Action! Green Garden Based on Native Plant Species

1. **Determine your growing zone:** Enter your zip code on the [USDA Plant Hardiness Zone Finder](#) to your planting zone to determine which plants to select based on ability to survive the winters in your region. Most plant tags show a hardiness zone that is suitable.
2. **Determine which native plants are suitable for your region:** Check the [USDA Plants Database](#) by doing a search by state and then access fact sheets for individual native plants.
3. **Buy organic native plants:** It's best not to disrupt your natural habitat by collecting native plants from wild places in your area (although, if there is development going on near you that will destroy native plants, by all means discuss the option of rescuing them). If your local nursery doesn't have the native plants you desire, check the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center [Native Plant Suppliers Directory](#) or [Seeds of Diversity's](#) list of suppliers.
4. **How to care for native plants:** For the first year or so, until they get established, native plants need the same care as your other plants. [NCSU's Going Native](#) program recommends you use soil amended with organic material, water regularly, and mulch. After native plants are established, they no longer need fertilizer and require minimal watering (as little as once a month).^[vi] For more advice on how to incorporate native plants check out this [How to Go Native](#) guide.
5. **Advocacy for endangered plant protection:** It is critical that state and federal [ESA](#) include protection for native plants. If equal protection for native plants is important to you, tell your members of Congress: find contact information for your [House Representative](#) and [Senator](#).

Dig Deeper: Native Plants and Green Gardens

[i] *Vocabulary Catalog List Detail – Top Green Home Terms* . (2010, December 2). Retrieved from US Environmental Protection Agency:
http://ofmpub.epa.gov/sor_internet/registry/termreg/searchandretrieve/glossariesandkeywordlists/search.do?details=&glossaryName=Top%20Green%20Home%20Terms

[ii] *Greenacres: Landscaping with Native Plants*. (2012). Retrieved from US Environmental Protection Agency:
<http://www.epa.gov/greenacres/>

[iii] (Green Building: Outdoor Area)

[iv] *Green Building: Outdoor Area*. (n.d.). Retrieved from US Environmental Protection Agency:
<http://www.epa.gov/greenhomes/Outdoor.htm>

[v] *Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services Recognizes National Pollinator Week* . (2011). Retrieved from Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services: <http://www.freshfromflorida.com/press/2011/06172011.html>

[vi] *Gardening with Oregon Native Plants West of the Cascades*. (2008). Retrieved from Oregon State University Extension Service: <http://ir.library.oregonstate.edu/xmlui/bitstream/handle/1957/19399/ec1577complete.pdf>

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