



# THE CIRCLE OF LIFE

The Foundation of our Ecosystem  
is Rooted in Native Plants.  
Be Sustainable. Plant Natives.

PRAIRIE MOON NURSERY®

**THE CIRCLE OF LIFE:** Native plants co-evolved with native insects and wildlife; they are deeply dependent on one another. Plants provide food and shelter to insects, birds, and other small animals, which, in turn support larger predators. Native plants are the fundamental stepping stones of a healthy eco-system.

## WHY NATIVES?

Introducing native plants to your garden or land can bring many seasons of delight and discovery. Their many merits, though, exceed their virtues of beauty, resilience and appeal to birds and pollinators.

**Ecosystem Restoration:** Tallgrass prairies are North America's most threatened major ecosystem, with about 99% plowed up or paved over since the 1830s. By planting native species, you are restoring ecosystems and preserving countless species that might otherwise be lost forever.

**Clean Air:** Like forests, prairies and meadows sequester pollutants and carbon from the atmosphere. Even small plantings can help filter the air around your home, and large plantings can help to mitigate climate change.

**Clean Water:** Because of the deep root system of most native plants, they act both as a sponge and a filter. They help water soak down into the soil and filter out excess nutrients and pollutants, improving water quality.

**Healthy Soil:** The dance between native plants and animals created some of the most fertile soil on Earth, making the American Midwest the "Breadbasket to the World." Native plants prevent soil erosion, create topsoil and build fertility.

**Invasive Species:** Outside of their native environments, some plants will aggressively out-compete others because they lack natural checks and balances like pests and predators. Some of our worst non-native invaders - Buckthorn, Honeysuckle, Dame's Rocket - were first planted in gardens. By choosing natives, you can help prevent further habitat loss.

**Resource Conservation:** Once established, native plants can save you time and money because they require little or no irrigation, fertilizer, pruning or mowing.

## KEEP THE CIRCLE COMPLETE - PLANT NATIVES!

- Predators like foxes, snakes and birds of prey rely on small mammals, amphibians, birds and insects for their survival. All of these prey species are sustained by native plants.
- 90% of our native insects are specialists, meaning they require a native host plant in their life cycle.
- Birds sustain their young almost exclusively on native insects, primarily caterpillars. It takes thousands of caterpillars and insects in order to raise and fledge a clutch of young birds.
- Essential nutrient cycling is expedited by carrion beetles, fly larvae and other scavenging insects, enriching the soil.

A few square feet or several acres, we can all make a difference...

**HOPE GROWS IN EVERY BACKYARD**



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