

# VIRGINIA FRIENDLY LANDSCAPES



**Virginia Friendly Landscapes** refer to any intentional and maintained planting of native plants such as a Pollinator Garden, Rain Garden, Wildflower Meadow, that have been designated as a Certified Wildlife Habitat through the National Wildlife Federation.

## HOW TO CREATE A VIRGINIA FRIENDLY LANDSCAPE

Any person who owns or occupies property within the City of Richmond may establish a Virginia Friendly Landscape. Please make sure to follow the 3 Steps for a Virginia Friendly Landscape and include the 5 requirements to qualify.

### Step 1: Plan & Plant

Learn about habitat essentials and native plants as you design your garden.

### Step 2: Get Certified

Follow the National Wildlife Federation's "Certified Wildlife Habitat" checklist and complete their application.

### Step 3: Register with the City

Fill out the Virginia Friendly Landscape registration form to let the City know that you're participating.



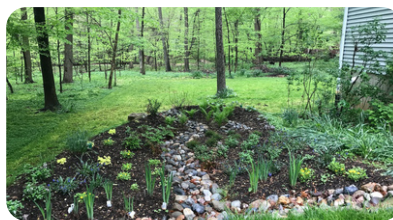
### Pollinator Garden

A native garden designed with nectar- and pollen-producing flowers, shelter or shelter-providing plants, and zero use of pesticides, with the intent of attracting pollinators.



### Rain Garden

A native garden that is designed to reduce the amount of storm water runoff and accompanying pollutants from entering local streams, rivers, and lakes.



### Wildflower Meadow

An open habitat vegetated by grasses, herbs, wildflowers, and other non-woody plants which provide animals and pollinators with food sources, nesting, mating, and sheltering spaces.



## REQUIREMENTS FOR A VIRGINIA FRIENDLY LANDSCAPE

- **Meet the definition of Virginia Friendly Landscape** as a Pollinator Garden, Rain Garden, or Wildflower Meadow;
- **Include "cues-to-care" practices** such as borders, fencing, well-maintained edges, and clear signage indicating that the garden is a permitted Virginia Friendly Landscape;
- **Be well-maintained** by discarding vegetative material, removal of dead trees and pruning of live trees as necessary to protect public safety;
- **Include setbacks** of at least five feet from all property lines adjacent to neighboring yards, sidewalks, and roads; and
- **Include at least 80% native plants** on the subject property.



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## LET'S GET INTO THE WEEDS

### What is a native plant?

**Native Plants** refer to any indigenous plant, including grasses, wildflowers, forbs, ferns, shrubs, and trees, which occurs naturally in and are well-adapted to local soils, climate, wildlife, and growing conditions of the Mid-Atlantic region.

### Benefits of Native Plants:

- Increase habitat & supports biodiversity
- Reduce stormwater runoff
- Mitigate urban heat
- Easier to maintain (lower costs, reduced GHG emissions)

[Learn more about native plants here.](#)



Spotted Beebalm (*Monarda punctata*)

### What is an invasive plant?

**Invasive Plants** refers to a plant that reproduces outside its native range and outside cultivation that disrupts naturally occurring Native Plant communities by altering soil structure, composition, natural processes, or habitat quality.

### Drawbacks of Invasive Plants:

- Loss of biodiversity
- Increased stormwater runoff & erosion
- Infrastructure & structural damage
- Labor intensive to remove and remediate

[Learn more about invasive plants here.](#)



Kudzu (*Pueraria montana var. lobata*)

Gardens that are designated as Virginia Friendly Landscapes will be exempt from the 12" lawn height restriction set forth in the municipal code in section 11-105(a). This designation may be revoked at any time if the property is not in compliance with the requirements as provided in section 11-105(f), the property has become a threat to health, safety or the environment, or if all required setbacks are not adequately maintained as provided in section 11-105(f)(iv).

 [Get familiar Richmond's Municipal Code by clicking here.](#)

## WANT TO LEARN MORE?

Visit [rvagreen2050.com/vafl](https://rvagreen2050.com/vafl) to find more on how to plan and plant, certify, and report your Virginia Friendly Landscape as well as resources on where to find native plants, recommended reading lists, YouTube videos, and more!



**Questions?** Email us at [rvagreen@rva.gov](mailto:rvagreen@rva.gov)



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