

11 NATIVE PLANT GARDENING TIPS



The **ROOT DESIGN**
COMPANY



Choose Native Plants for Your Region

- Research your state-native plants that thrive in your climate.
- Check your Plant [Hardiness Zone Here](#).
- For Missouri some great choices are:
 - Wildflowers: Purple Coneflower, Black-eyed Susan, Butterfly Weed
 - Grasses: Little Bluestem, Prairie Dropseed, Side Oats Grama
 - Shrubs: Serviceberry, Fragrant Sumac, Gooseberry
 - Trees: Redbud, Bur Oak, Flowering Dogwood





Know your Soil & Sunlight Conditions

- Get a soil test. Know your soil pH, drainage, composition, etc. before planting.
- Group plants by sun exposure:
 - Full Sun (+6 hrs/day)
 - Coneflower
 - Partial Sun/Shade (3–6 hrs/day)
 - Blue Phlox
 - Full Shade (<3 hrs/day)
 - Wild Ginger



Design with Microclimates & Plant Communities

- Observe your area - location of sunlight, water shed, slope, wind, moisture, traffic, or anything else potentially useful.
- Mimic natural plant communities or guilds by grouping species that naturally coexist or complement one another.
 - Prairies, Wetlands, Forests, Woodlands, Etc.
 - Example:
 - Canopy Layer: Switchgrass
 - Mid-Layer: Prairie Clover
 - Groundcover: Wild Strawberry



Prioritize Diversity for Resilience

- Plant a mix of flowers, grasses, shrubs, trees, and vines to support biodiversity.
- The greater diversity the stronger the system.
- Note time of bloom to ensure color throughout the different seasons and support pollinators year round.

Use Mulch

- Mulch is a great asset to suppress weeds, retain moisture, reduce erosion, and increase soil fertility.
- Avoid too much mulch for native plants - they like some exposed soil for reseeding.
- You can frequently get this item for free from arborists, landscapers, and municipalities!





Water Only When Needed

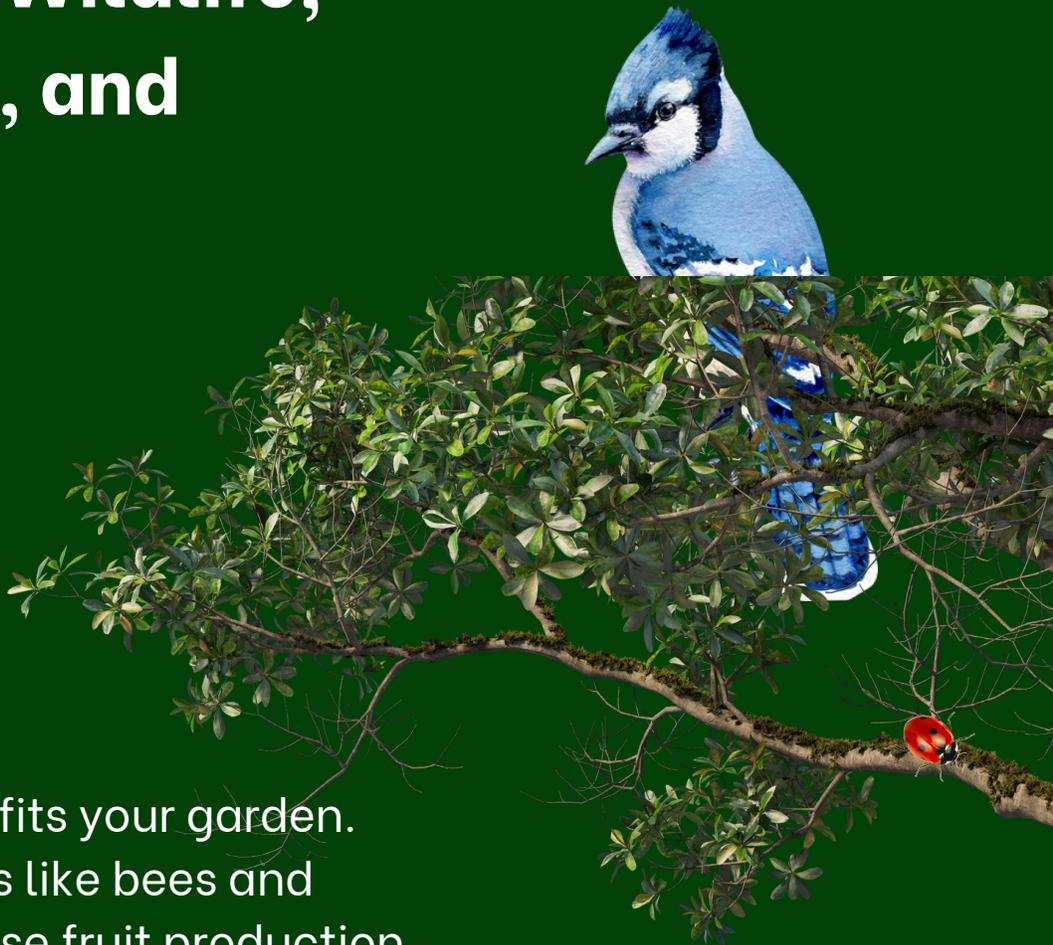
- Year One: Water deeply, but infrequently. This will strengthen roots.
- After native plants are established, they are drought tolerant and need little watering.

Manage with Natural Techniques

- Native plants don't need synthetic fertilizers.
- Use biochar, compost tea, mulch, and fungal inoculants to improve microbial diversity.
- Avoid pesticides which harm pollinators like butterflies and bees.
- Leave the leaves. Bees and other pollinator species overwinter in leaves, dying when disturbed.

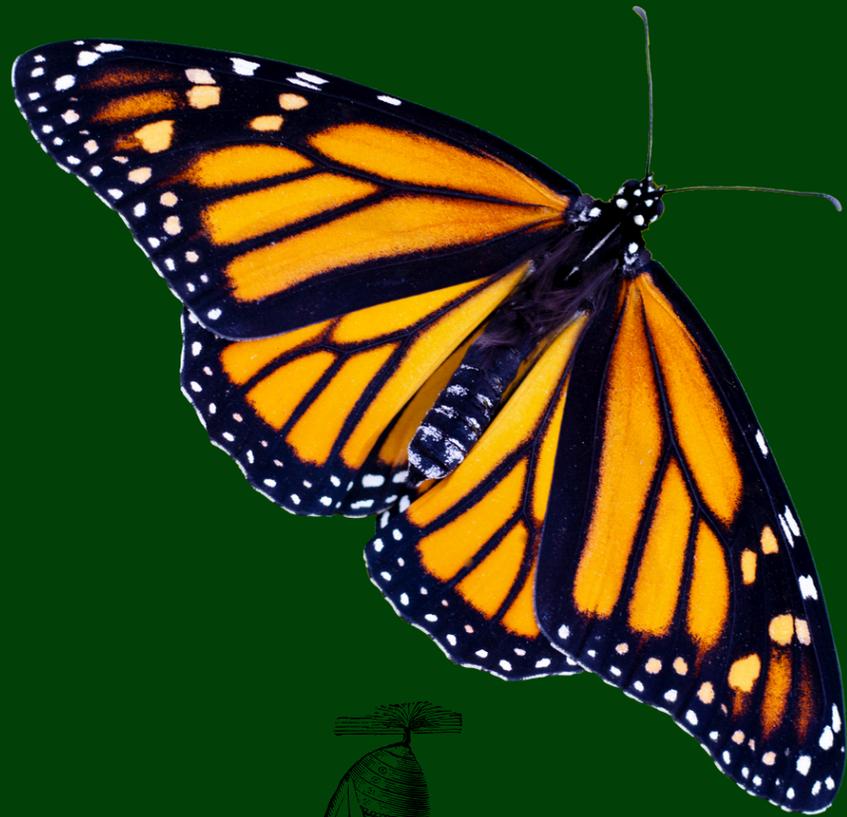


Encourage Wildlife, Pollinators, and Insects



- Biodiversity benefits your garden. Pollinator species like bees and butterflies increase fruit production. Ladybugs eat pests.
- Add a small water source (birdbath, pond, etc.) for wildlife.
- Leave plant stalks standing for bird food & insect shelter.





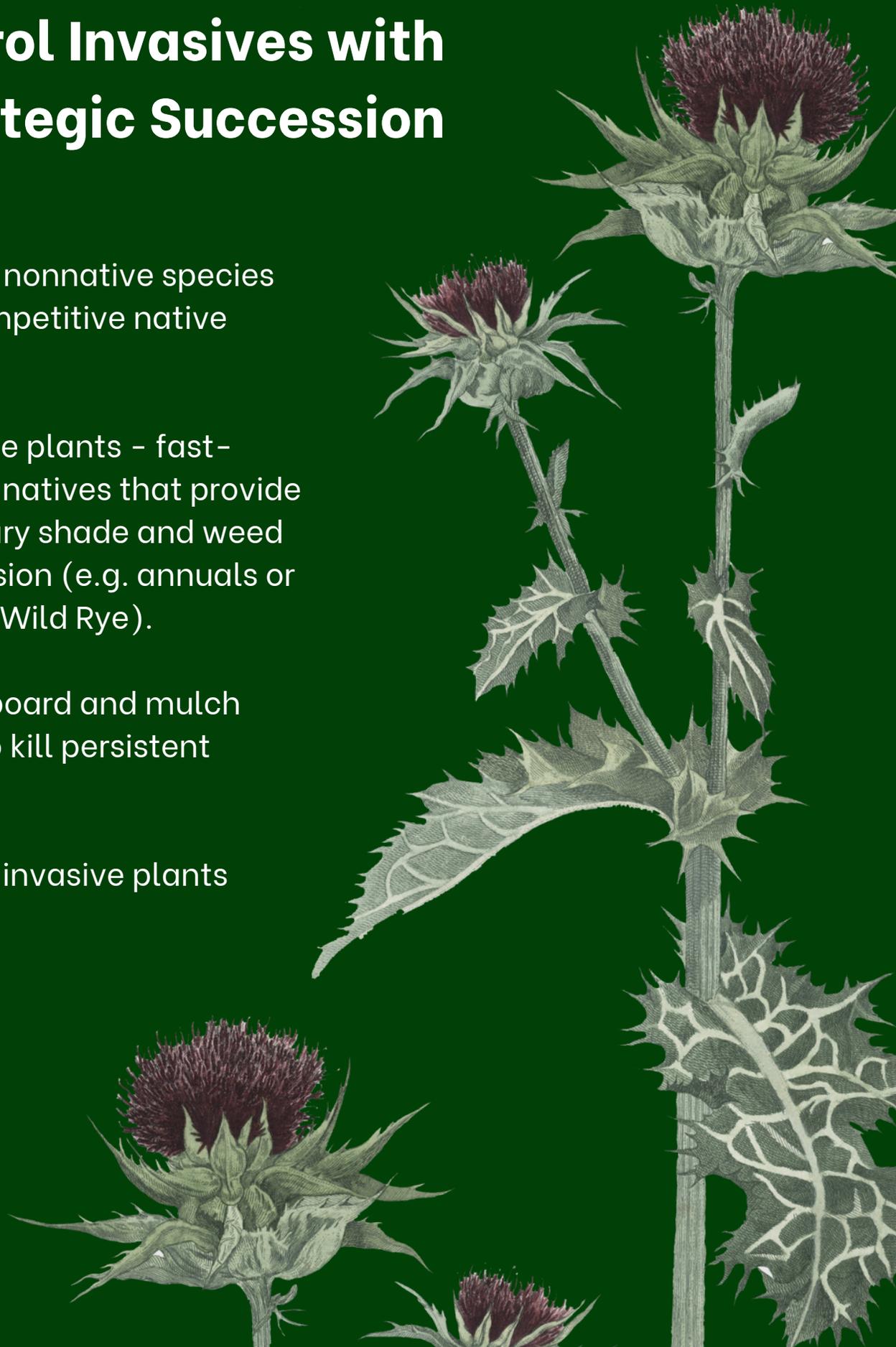
Be Patient Nature takes Time

- Native plants establish deep root systems in their first 1-2 years.
- 2-3 years bring more growth, blooms, and wildlife.

*“First year they sleep,
second year they creep,
third year they leap.”*

Control Invasives with Strategic Succession

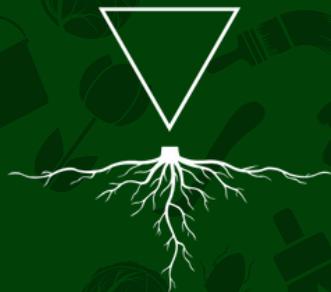
- Replace nonnative species with competitive native species.
- Use nurse plants - fast-growing natives that provide temporary shade and weed suppression (e.g. annuals or Canada Wild Rye).
- Use cardboard and mulch layers to kill persistent plants.
- Remove invasive plants early.



Join a Local Gardening Group

The best way to learn is from others.





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