

Residents landscape with native plants

By Scott Abella
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As appreciation of our area's natural features grows, many residents are taking the next step: restoring native northwest Ohio plants to their property. Landscaping with native plants, replacing parts of lawns with restored patches and wildflower gardening are becoming increasingly popular for both local businesses and homeowners.

To help area residents plan native plant projects, the Metroparks will run a program on March 25 at 1 p.m. titled "Gardening With Wildlife." Metroparks naturalist Bob Jacksy said he will provide information on appropriate plants for planting to allow residents to work with their property.

"Anyone can restore native plants to their property regardless of property size because not even plant boxes outside apartments are too small," Jacksy explained. "People find that greater numbers of butterflies and birds are attracted to their property after native

plants have been reintroduced."

Rick Bryan of the Portage Valley Plant Company propagates native northwest Ohio plants and said popular natives include wild lupine, black-eyed susan, bergamot, blazing star and Indian grass. Bryan will be supplying native plants for the annual plant sale May 12-14 at The Toledo Botanical Gardens.

Local resident Mike Adams recently founded a new business called Adams Enviroscope that specializes in native plant landscaping or providing technical assistance for residents interested in completing projects themselves. Adams said the idea for the business originated from his experiences working with a Decker Homes developer interested in including nature preserves and native plant landscaping in a housing development. "Native plant restoration allows residents to bring nature to their homes while enhancing the property aesthetically," Adams said.

Jacksy said native plants typically require no herbicides or fer-

tilizers and minimal water compared to non-native plants. "After establishment the first year, native plants are relatively self-sustaining and maintenance-free," he added.

Northwest Ohio contains the greatest plant diversity of any area in Ohio and many rare Ohio plants including prickly pear cactus, western sunflowers and carnivorous sundews. Housing and business development have reduced or eliminated many native plant communities, but now these developed areas ironically may represent the only places to restore some native plants because local Metroparks and preserves are too small.

General information on native plant landscaping can be found at www.epa.gov/greenacres and www.icenter.utoledo.edu/icenter/oak/openings for a partial list of native northwest Ohio plants. Adams Enviroscope can be contacted at (419) 382-2846. For further information on the Metroparks native plant workshop, call (419) 535-3058.