

Cast Iron Garden: Plants for Scared People in
Central Oklahoma

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Introduction: What's the deal with native plants?

Why should I bother switching to native plants and/or putting more effort into my yard?

- Saving the world
- Saving you money
- Saving you time

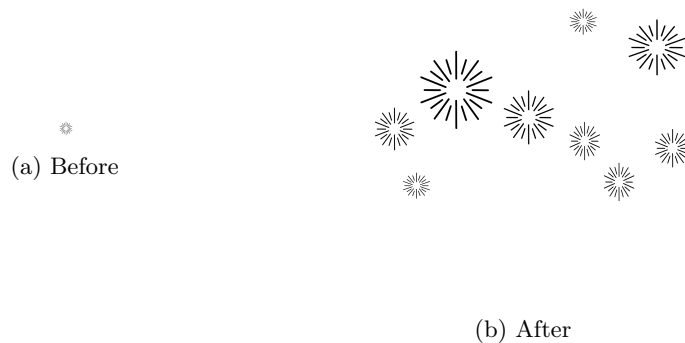


Figure 1: What native plants can do for the world

Saving the world

Several big problems can be addressed with native plants

1. The biodiversity crisis in general
 - a. The insect apocalypse in particular
 - b. Invasive species harming local ecosystems
2. Water shortages
3. Carbon footprints

Are you really serious, I don't think my garden can save the world.

Actually, it can! Every plant can make a difference in ever-expanding human colonization of the landscape [Vogt, 2023]. Many insects are tiny, and thus even tiny changes can help them [Tin].

Benjamin Vogt. Rewilding Suburbia in the American Plains. *Ecozon@: European Journal of Literature, Culture and Environment*, 14(1):174–179, April 2023. ISSN 2171-9594. doi: 10.37536/ECOZONA.2023.14.1.5063

Water usage by lawns.

Carbon footprint of shipping non-native plants or cut flowers, foods.

Tiny Places for Tiny Animals: Building the Microhabitats that Bugs Need to Thrive. <https://xerces.org/blog/tiny-places-for-tiny-animals-building-microhabitats-that-bugs-need-to-thrive>

I live in an apartment, I don't think so.

Container gardening info.

home and will die soon.

thrive and support a family!

Why should I bother switching to native plants and/or putting more effort into my yard?3

Saving you money

- Water shortages
- Endless annuals from big box stores
- Fewer plants that fail dramatically
- Tax dollars spent keeping invasive species out of special places like public lands
- Tax subsidies spent keeping invasive species out of food/agricultural lands



Figure 4: Before: no

Figure 5: After: with

Saving you time

This overlaps a lot with saving you money. But also, once things are established in appropriate habitats, goodbye endless watering!

This does not count if you become an obsessive gardener.

Book info

This document was created are using the **quarto** package [Allaire and Dervieux, 2024] to format this book. Some ideas from [Odell, 2019].

JJ Allaire and Christophe Dervieux. *quarto: R Interface to Quarto Markdown Publishing System*, 2024. URL <https://github.com/quarto-dev/quarto-r>. R package version 1.4

Jenny Odell. *How to Do Nothing*. April 2019. ISBN 978-1-61219-750-0

Part I

Gardening is not as scary as
it seems

Chapter 1

The really really short version

1.1 Stop stuff

1.1.1 Stop killing things

Stop killing insects and plants. If you have plants breaking your driveway cracks, pour boiling water on it. We'll get to roundup/bermudagrass/poison ivy in a bit, but for now, just stop until you know what you are doing.

1.1.2 Stop doing so much unnecessary work

Leave the leaves. Leave the twigs. Leave stuff where it falls unless it's a tripping hazard.

1.1.3 Stop watering stuff that's not in pots

Save time, save money, save water.

1.2 Start stuff

1.2.1 Add in new things between October and April. (NOT IN THE SUMMER)

Plants are easy if you put them in the right spot, and it's okay if some die. This book covers a very small area, so I can tell you almost exactly what's going to work at some place in your yard. But, it's still okay if some plants die. That's how gardening works. We do our best and keep going.

1.2.1.1 Pick plants that are tough

Just because a plant is native doesn't mean it's native to your yard. However, there are a few species that work all over town, usually.

first determine where you are and what kind of soil you have. Soil types in Norman area and pictures of them wet and dry and crumbliness

Chapter 2

From the ground up (aka soil, dirt, earth, etc)

Let's call it soil. "Dirt is what you sweep up" is another "all my weeds are wildflowers". (who said the dirt vs soil thing?)

Map of Norman with geology maps

Pictures of red clay, sandy loam, sand, and black clay wet and dry

Some plants like some soil. Some like others. We'll tell you which are which based on what we have tested and read.

Chapter 3

Reduce, reuse, revegetate

Lawn clippings as mulch, compost Lawn post from blog [here](#)

Chapter 4

What about trees?

Tree post. What about trees?

Part II

Species accounts

Chapter 5

Species Accounts Model/Example

This is what each section should have and mean.

5.1 Imaginary Plant Species

This plant is neat.

5.1.1 Which plants look dead in the winter but will come back

Leaves die back in winter, come back from base (not stem).

- 5.1.2 Is the plant movable and when is best and how
- 5.1.3 Species accounts with pictures of all stages and seeds
- 5.1.4 How and when can it be pruned
- 5.1.5 What shape if left alone? what shape in a group?
- 5.1.6 What size of containers can it be grown in?
- 5.1.7 foot/dog traffic
- 5.1.8 “agreeableness rating” a la diboll/cox/voigt
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- 5.1.10 Links to all sources (bonap, ladybird center, dave’s garden, hostplant database archive, which books have more info)
- 5.1.11 Commercially available (maybe? A lot of work)

Chapter 6

Primrose family

6.1 Showy Evening Primrose / Pinkladies (*Oenothera speciosa*)

6.2 Fluttermill Evening Primrose / Missouri Primrose (*Oenothera macrocarpa*)

References

Tiny Places for Tiny Animals: Building the Microhabitats that Bugs Need to Thrive. <https://xerces.org/blog/tiny-places-for-tiny-animals-building-microhabitats-that-bugs-need-to-thrive>.

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Appendix A

Species that do well all over

Almost anywhere in Norman that's sunny and not touching standing water -
Maximilian sunflower

A.1 Shady habitats

- White avens
- Lyre Leaf sage
- Inland Sea Oats
- Frostweed
- Texas mallow
- Fall obedient plant
- Horseherb
- Purpletop grass

A.2 Sunny habitats

If you have the red clay soil and live on the “north” (loosely north) side of town,
these are your keystone plants:

- Maximilian sunflower
- Rudbeckia
- Little bluestem
- Showy evening primrose

Sandy loams (not sticky clay, doesn't have giant cracks form in summer dry), but not loose sand

- Maximilian sunflower
- Rudbeckia
- Winecups
- Frogfruit
- Showy evening primrose Section 6.1
- Fluttermill primrose Section 6.2
- Common annual sunflower

If you have sandy soil and elsewhere in town, plant these:

- Monarda punctata
- Spiderwort (which one?)
- Little bluestem
- Gaillardia aestivalis
- Tall thistle

Dark clay

- I need to ask J/J what grows in their yard.

For more species and what they like, see Chapter 5.

Appendix B

Garden Calendar

-Calendar of seasons and what to do when

Appendix C

Favorite plant sources

C.1 Online

C.2 In person

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