



Give back to the Earth



1. Think connected

- Even if you don't live adjacent to a lake/river, or even near it (up to 25 miles away), your yard is connected to a lake/river. Everything you do, use and plant in your yard **helps** or **hurts** our lakes and water ways.
- Many of the problems facing our lakes/ivers are problems created by a lot of people doing small things that add up to big problems. So start by changing one thing you do, and tell your neighbor, and he'll tell his neighbor...

2. Make your yard a sponge

- Say **NO** to run-off.... It carries excess nutrients, sediments and litter directly into streets and storm drains and then into the lakes and rivers.
- Use bricks, stones, wood or crushed shells **not** concrete or pavement for your driveway, patio and walkways so water can be absorbed.
- Aim your gutter drainpipes into your yard or garden.

3. Think of your yard as a filter

- Whatever you put on your yard filters through to the ground water below and then into our lakes and waterways. Make your yard a "good filter" by planting native shrubs, trees and grasses (many actually absorb pollutants).
- Fertilizers can add nitrates and phosphorus to our lakes and waterways causing algae blooms and low oxygen levels. Avoid over-use of fertilizers.
- Use natural alternatives to herbicides and pesticides whenever you can. Mulch to prevent weeds. Try soapy water or hot pepper and garlic spray to **ZAP** pests.
- For outside clean-ups, try natural products (like Borax – a mineral).
- Bring hazardous waste to municipal clean-up sites.
- "Own" not only your yard, but your street, neighborhood and waterways. It's all connected. Clean up litter and dog waste and don't dump anything in storm drains.

4. Make your yard into a habitat

- Section off a little piece of your yard and restore it to its natural state by putting in native plants. You'll save \$, time and work, and you'll give vital habitat back to the earth.
- Think differently about weeds. Some flower beautifully and some are now sold as pricey "ornamental grasses". So, plant in a circular bed or on a small dune, and don't call them weeds anymore. Many provide vital habitat – the monarch butterfly feeds on goldenrod and lays its eggs only on milkweed.. So cultivate your important weeds!

- **Thank you for giving back to the earth!** 🌍