

Clinton's Backyard Habitat

Clinton Hill founder of Kids for Saving Earth loved his backyard habitat. It had space to play but space for the living creatures in the area. There were no pesticides or toxins used in his backyard so it was safe for humans, plants, animals and insects.

1. Learn what makes a good habitat.

Most backyards in the U.S. are good for only a few kinds of animals. We may think that a big green lawn looks pretty, but how pretty is it if no animals live there? Or if the chemicals we use on grass make them sick? By turning part of your lawn into a wildlife habitat, you save the energy it took to mow that grass, some of the precious water it took to keep it green, and the pollution caused by spraying dangerous chemicals on it. It will also make your yard a happier place for wildlife in your area. Here are the things you will need to give your wildlife friends a place to hang out!

A happy habitat has.....

SPACE!

Every living thing needs space. A lot of natural habitat is destroyed each day around the world. So even if you just have a small space to work with, every little bit counts! When they see what you have done, your friends and neighbors may want to try, too! Little by little, neighbor by neighbor: that's how good changes happen!

FOOD!

Learn which critters live in your part of the country, and plant the things that they like to eat: Fruits and berries, grain and seeds, flowering plants for nectar-eaters

WATER!

If you're alive, then you need water! So your wildlife habitat will need some source of water: a birdbath or pond for the creatures, and regular watering for the plants

Shelter!

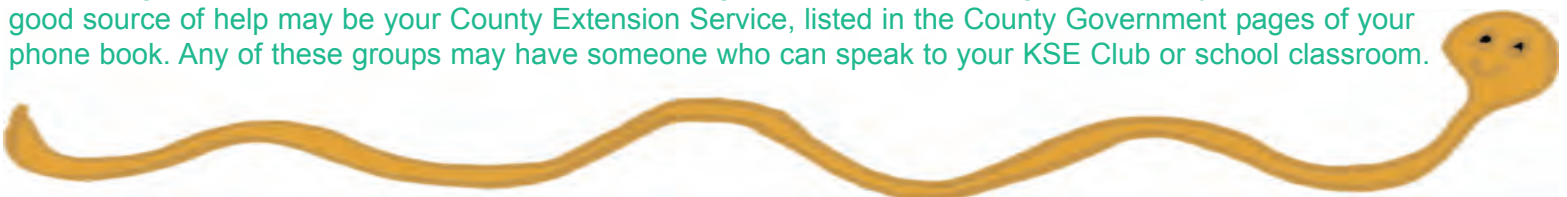
Animals need shelter, from the weather and from other animals! Trees, shrubs, grass and rocks form natural kinds of shelter. Bird-houses provide shelter for your feathered friends, and you can build the yourself! Make sure your pets don't bother the wildlife your habitat attracts. Some people put a bell on their cat to warn the birds.

2.

Find out what works where you live.

Each area of the country is home to different plants and animals. What works in the north may not work in the south, so you will need help deciding what's right for where you live. You will want to choose plants that bloom at different times of year so that you will always have flowers to attract butterflies and hummingbirds. In colder climates, the birds like bushes with berries that stay on the plant all winter.

Find out what grows well where you live. Always try to grow native plants. See "Learn More About It" at the end of this pamphlet for places that can help. Your librarian or science teacher will be able to help you. You can also check with local garden clubs or nature center, conservation groups and wildlife refuge centers in your area. Another good source of help may be your County Extension Service, listed in the County Government pages of your phone book. Any of these groups may have someone who can speak to your KSE Club or school classroom.



3.

Make a plan for your habitat.



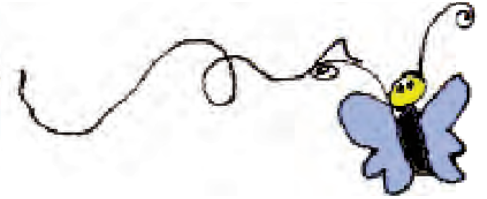
It's easier to change things on paper than it is to shovel dirt, so make a plan! You should draw it out. Make sure you have enough space. Place the plants to make a stair-step effect, shorter plants and grasses in front, bushes and shrubs in the middle, and taller plants and trees in back. This will make a lot of space where your animal friends will feel "at home". If you live in an apartment, find a place nearby where you can plant a habitat with food, water, and enjoy it together! Window feeders and patio gardens can bring birds, squirrels, and butterflies to visit even if you don't have a yard. Remember, every little bit counts!

4.

Make sure your space is safe.



Whenever you dig up the ground, make sure it's safe! Don't dig where there may be buried electric or telephone cables, sewage or septic-tank lines, or other underground problems. Get an adult to help check out the area, to make sure it is safe.



5.

Go for it!



You have made your plans and gotten permission. You have your plants and supplies. the only thing left is a little hard work and a lot of fun! Don't be surprised if things don't work out exactly the way you planned. We all learn by trying new things.



Keep a diary listing the different birds and butterflies, chipmunks, lizards, ladybugs (whatever!) that come to visit your habitat.



Find out what works in your little part of the world, and please share it with your neighbors and friends, and get them to try it too!



When you have created your own "Clinton's Backyard Habitat" we'd love to hear about it! Please send us the story (and before-&-after photos, if you can) so we can share it with others



Thanks again for your interest, and good luck! You really can create a better world, starting right in your own backyard!