



# SUSTAINABLE GARDENING CHECKLIST

Please complete and return with your Habitat Certification Application

Sustainable gardening practices are an important part of your home landscape. What you do on your land not only affects local wildlife, but also soil and water quality. Currently, the biggest threat to our nations' water is not pollution from industry, but contaminated runoff from yards, farms, roadways, and construction sites, collectively known as non-point source pollution. There are many ways to promote healthy soil and water quality while providing habitats for wildlife on your property. Certified homeowners are asked to implement a minimum of 5 conservation techniques throughout any of the following categories.

## Water Quality & Conservation

- Use a rain barrel with a mosquito-proof cover to capture roof runoff
- Maintain a rain garden
- Allow vegetated buffers around natural water features including ponds, streams, and wetlands
- Direct roof downspouts away from impervious surfaces onto lawn, garden, gravel areas, or rock beds.
- Limit paved surfaces to favor more porous options such as wooden decks and gravel paths
- Wash your car away from paved surfaces so that soap does not flow directly into the sewer, wash your car with low phosphorous soaps, or use a professional car wash where they recycle the water
- Use a certified Livable Lawn landscaper
- Other – explain \_\_\_\_\_

## Fertilizer

- Never use fertilizer
- Conduct a soil test to see how much if any fertilizer is needed. (The University of Delaware Cooperative Extension can provide this service at a nominal cost)
- Never apply more than the recommended amount of fertilizer according to label directions
- Create and/or use compost
- Use only organic fertilizers such as:
  - Nitrogen (N) – grass clippings, compost, blood meal, cotton seed meal, fish emulsion
  - Phosphorous (P) – compost, bone meal,
  - Potassium (K) – compost, aged manure, fire wood ash, green sand, seaweed
  - Minerals (magnesium, zinc, iron, sulfur) – kelp meal
- Reduce nutrients and bacteria by removing pet waste from your yard
- Other, explain \_\_\_\_\_

Use a certified Livable Lawn landscaper

**Pesticide**

Eliminate use of chemical pesticides

Practice Integrated Pest Management (IPM), which involves implementing a variety of strategies to control pests, while causing minimal impact to the environment

Choose the least toxic control methods available, explain \_\_\_\_\_

When applying pesticides, read the entire label and follow directions carefully, wear protective clothing, and dispose of excess materials appropriately (reuse or bring to a hazardous waste drop-off site)

Other, explain \_\_\_\_\_

**Soil Conservation**

Prevent erosion by stabilizing steep slopes with plants, rocks, or terraces, protect exposed soil during construction projects with a tarp, or simply inspect your property for signs of erosion and manage as needed.

Use mulch or natural materials such as leaves, twigs and pine needles on garden beds.

Other, explain \_\_\_\_\_

**Promote Native Species Diversity**

Plant native plants

Remove invasive plants

Reduce lawn areas to incorporate more natural landscapes

Keep cats indoors or closely monitored outside and never feed feral cats

Install a deer fence in areas where deer are overpopulated to encourage native plant diversity and improve wildlife habitat

Other, explain \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

I am currently a member of the Delaware Nature Society

I am interested in becoming a member of the Delaware Nature Society