

Debbie

I believe using native plants in your gardens, in your homes, in your environment as opposed to using invasive plants that actually thug out the native communities and destroy the wildlife habitat is very important because it used to be that if man left alone nature, nature would take care of itself and regenerate and balance the perfect sustainability; it would create the balance the wildlife habitat as well. But with the introduction of invasive, it's not the case anymore. Man has to intervene to eradicate these thugs in the landscape, in the wild, in nature, in woodland areas and meadow areas, before nature can get back to doing its thing.

I was inspired to be a landscape architect from the time I was a little girl. I always loved the outdoors, spent a lot of time there, and I loved to draw so it was a natural affinity for the profession. Of course right now, I also really love the environment and the wildlife and wanted to promote that in my practice rather than just do regular ole' landscaping, which is now almost irresponsible, because many of nurseries still carry a lot of invasive plants. They're ornamental and interesting in the right place. But, for the most part, if you are at a woodland edge or where it could escape into the wild, you're really doing harm rather than good. Not that you can't plant your lilac or your peonies that you learned to love at your grandmother's, just do it responsibly. Learn your native plants and promote them with the nurseries that you go to. Educate yourself on the natives especially if you live in the woodlands or by a waterway.

One obvious step is to educate yourself. There are state and local agencies where they can learn about beautiful native plants and there derivatives. There are conservancy sales of native plants. Look around and learn what is an invasive, and go around and take care of your own property by eradicating them properly. There's information at nurseries and state agencies on how to do that.

A really fun thing to do is plant a butterfly garden or a song bird garden. That way you're helping to create habitat for birds and butterflies which you love in your yard anyway.

One tip I learned at a native plant conference was to eradicate those nasty tree of Ailanthus or multi-flora rose or anything that has a fairly big trunk to it. Take full strength Round Up, which neutralizes the soil soon after using it, and get a slurry of substance they sell nurseries that they put in the soil to absorb water and keep pots that are hanging safe from drying out. Put this slurry mixed with the Round Up on a wound after you cut the Ailanthus tree or multi-flora rose, and it will stay on that wound and take down the Round Up to kill the plant as if it's getting several doses, so you don't have to redo it.

I also think it is important to be an advocate at your nursery and ask them to carry more native plants. Some of the smaller native plant nurseries need your support, so I would seek them out and help them by buying from them.