



LIVING PLANET
@CAMPUS

Create an Action Plan for Wildlife

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Why create an action plan?

Restoration takes time and can involve many steps that can feel overwhelming. An action plan helps you break a project down into manageable steps that feel achievable: learn more about your space and what it needs, assess what you have, and create one or several possible courses of action. Not only is your action plan a place to collect your research, organize your ideas and build your case for habitat creation, your action plan creates a roadmap for how the spaces where you live, learn and work can help fight biodiversity loss and climate change.

What types of habitat could I create for wildlife?

Habitat can take so many different forms and shapes. Pollinator gardens can be created on rooftops, stoops, patios and small balconies, as well as in garden beds, raised beds and container gardens. Other habitat for wildlife can include: reconciliation gardens, seed gardens, no-mow or low-mow zones, brush piles, veggie patches and more.

Habitat restoration seems like a big project for one person. How can I get started?

Habitat restoration is a slow process that doesn't happen overnight! Have conversations and collaborate with others to share responsibilities and workload. Use this action plan template to break down habitat restoration into individual, actionable steps. Starting here and documenting your findings and ideas gives you a roadmap to follow and others will naturally join when they see that you're passionate about what you're doing.

I don't know a lot about local native plants and habitats. What should I do?

Native plants differ depending on where you are located. Use the Ecozone map in our guide Create an Action Plan for Wildlife to locate your ecozone. From there, you can use the Easy to grow native plants resource, broken down by ecozone, to identify specific native plants to use. You can also reach out to

local botanists, naturalists and growers who can be found at native plant nurseries and even on campus — many ecology professors have this expertise, and you may find great champions in your campus sustainability office and grounds department.

The bottom line is: talk to others, people may surprise you with their knowledge and connections.

Where can I get funding for my project?

Interested in bringing your action plan to life? To create your habitat for wildlife, you may be able to:

- access funds, donations or in-kind support through your campus sustainability office or student union
- recruit an existing environmental student club to join your efforts; the club may have resources or knowledge to bring your project forward
- secure native plant seeds from seed libraries (your campus might have one!)
- borrow equipment from tool lending libraries
- connect with local community gardens or community garden groups who might have space you can use or extra native plants to share
- fundraise to bring a campus project to life
- reach out to local suppliers and plant nurseries and tell them about your project to see if they could donate any soil or equipment or give a discount

Each fall, students, staff and faculty can apply for WWF-Canada funding to bring habitat projects to life through our Go Wild Grants program. Stay tuned to our website each fall and register for our Living Planet @ Campus newsletter for the latest updates.

My outdoor space has invasive plant species. Should I remove them?

There are different perspectives on this question, as removal and eradication of invasive species can be costly and disruptive depending on the scale and method of removal. Invasive plants are defined as non-native species that do harm to people's bodies (can cause allergic reactions), economies (contaminating a crop field, costing money to remove) or to ecosystems (by crowding out native species). Lists of invasive species and best practices for their removal can be found on the Canadian Council for Invasive Species website.

If you find a single, isolated individual invasive plant or a small patch of an invasive plant that you can remove by hand, it's likely a good idea to do so before it spreads. If you have an extensive invasive cover over a large area, then removal may be a futile task. Other options to consider include safeguarding native plants from being overrun and planting more native plants in adjacent areas. Many invasive plants including garlic mustard and Japanese knotweed can even be harvested and eaten. This practice even has a name: invasivory.

Whatever you choose to do, we caution against seeing any plant as an enemy or "monster." Rather, by approaching with curiosity and asking questions like "Where did this species come from and how did it get here?", "How is it used in its native range?" and "Why is it spreading so much and so fast?" you can see a bigger and more complex picture of ecology, which includes your role, too.

