

Backyard Conservation



Backyard Terracing

Terraces can break your backyard into several minigardens. On steep slopes, terracing can make planting a garden feasible.

Terraces prevent erosion by shortening the long slope into a series of shorter, more level steps. This allows heavy rains to soak in rather than run off and cause soil erosion.

Materials for terraces

Building terraces is like building a staircase. The material you use to make the face of the stair may be treated lumber—such as railroad ties, poles, or posts—or bricks, rocks, concrete blocks, or similar materials.

Height of walls

The steepness of the slope often dictates wall height. Make the terraces in your yard high enough so the land area between them is fairly level. Be sure the terrace material is strong enough and anchored well enough to stay in place through freezing and thawing, rainstorms, and so forth. Large projects, such as retaining walls, may require a professional design and specialized assistance and equipment. Be sure to check local building codes regarding the installation of high walls, and work safely.

Erosion control is a consideration

Heavy rains can cause erosion between terraces, and create small gullies if water concentrates as it goes over a terrace. To help prevent erosion, add mulch or other good ground cover on land between terraces.

<https://www.landcan.org/pdfs/backyardbooklet.pdf>

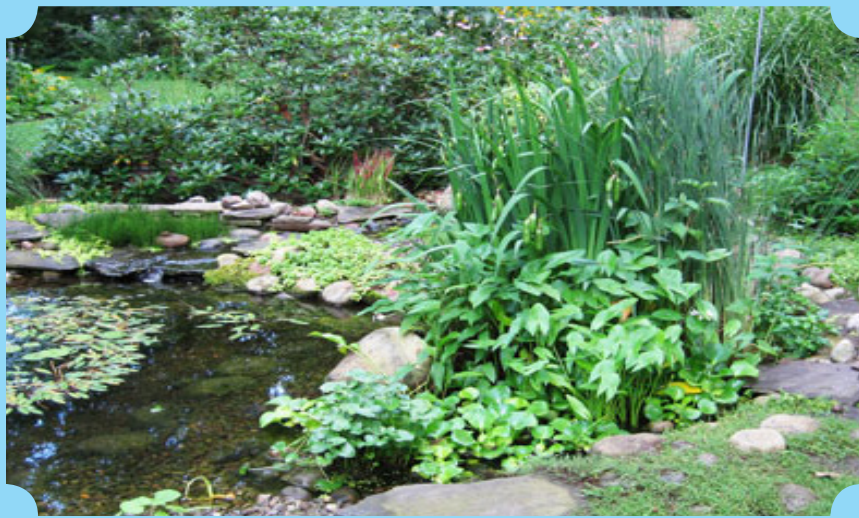


Benefits of a Wetland

Many yards can support a backyard wetland that benefits you and your community. Letting runoff from your roof, parking area, and lot slowly filter through a mini-wetland helps prevent pollution of neighboring creeks and may help prevent flooding. Wetlands filter excess nutrients, chemicals, and sediment, and provide habitat for a host of interesting creatures.

Where to put a wetland

Low areas that remain wet or damp much of the year are the easiest places to establish wetlands. Any depression that collects rainwater or runoff from downspouts, or serves as the path of drainwater leaving your yard, is an excellent spot to plant wetland plants. You'll create a backyard wetland area that will be very low maintenance. There will be no more "bogged down" lawn mowers because no mowing will be needed! The area will attract wildlife and filter the water draining off your property. If you do not have an appropriate natural site, you can create a wetland the same way you would a backyard pond. Do not put excess fertilizer or pesticides on your lawn or other areas feeding your wetland.



Wildlife in your wetland

Many birds and small animals will quickly start using your wetland. Usually frogs, toads, salamanders, and aquatic insects will find your wetland during the first spring. A deep, permanent pool in the wetland can support native frogs, toads, and possibly fish that will eat mosquito larva and other insects. Most frogs and toads need spring pools in which to breed; their tadpoles need shallow water for several weeks while they mature. Wetlands that dry out in the summer can support a variety of plants and wildlife and will not produce mosquitoes.