

# Native Plants and Conservation

Nicole Messacar, Education  
Coordinator

LaPorte County Soil and Water  
Conservation District





# What are Native Plants?

- **A native plant is one that is indigenous to Indiana-prior to European settlement.**



# What are the benefits?

- **MANY!**
- **No pesticides!**
  - Adapted to tolerate native pests
- **Better air!**
  - No need to mow, weed whack, etc.
  - Carbon sequestering
- **Better (and more) Water!**
  - No fertilizing
  - No pesticides
  - **NO RUNOFF!**
  - Do not need as much water



# Are there more benefits?

- **YES!**
- Pollinator Habitat
  - Bees
  - Butterflies
  - Birds
  - **MORE BIODIVERSITY!**



# What else?



- Adds habitat in urban areas
- Decreases storm water run-off
- Reduces erosion



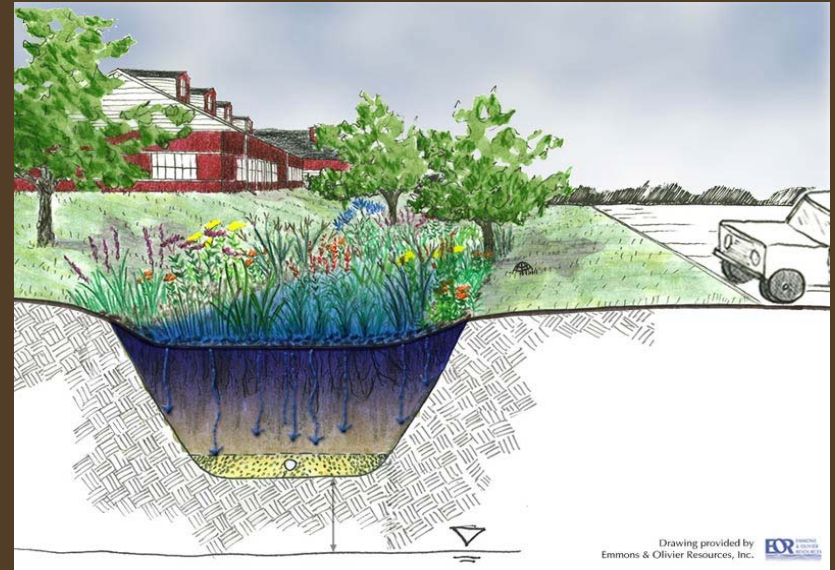


Sounds too good to be true!  
So...how does it work?

- Deep Roots
- Co-Evolution
- Adaptation to soil condition
- Adaptation to climactic conditions



# Raingardens



- Specialized gardens of native plants
- Used as a storm water *Best Management Practice (BMP)*
- Increases infiltration of storm water
- Protects streams and lakes





# How do I start?

- Determine Site Conditions:
  - Soil type (Contact SWCD for help!)
  - Slope
  - Water availability
  - Wetland? Woodland? Prairie?
- Determine any problems to be solved:
  - Soggy grass?
  - Erosion?
  - Not pretty?

# Now what?

- Get the plants!
  - Local sources:
    - J.F. New  
[www.jfnew.com](http://www.jfnew.com)
    - Spence Restoration Nursery  
[www.spencenursery.com](http://www.spencenursery.com)
    - Pizzo Ecological Restoration  
[www.pizzo.info](http://www.pizzo.info)

