

Rend Lake Wildlife Demonstration Garden

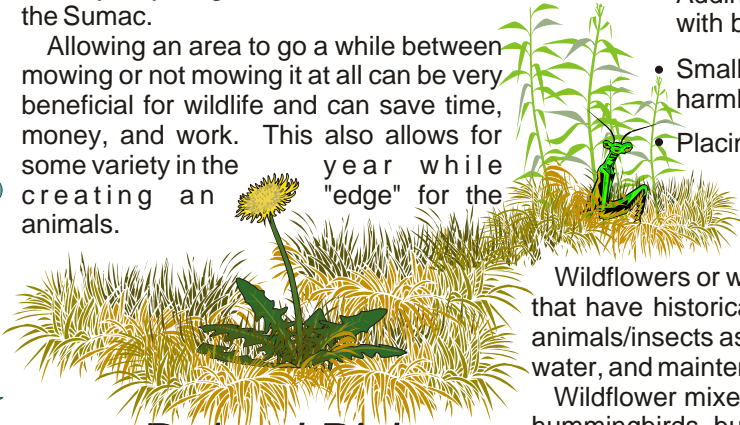


U.S. Army Corps
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Old Field

The scourge of a well-manicured lawn, a weedy field. Wildlife would not agree. The tall grass hides butterflies during storms, provides homes and nesting materials for birds and rodents, and is a nursery for young trees like the Cedar and the Sumac.

Allowing an area to go a while between mowing or not mowing it at all can be very beneficial for wildlife and can save time, money, and work. This also allows for some variety in the year while creating an "edge" for the animals.



Backyard Birds

The feathered friends you are inviting to your yard will need more than a birdfeeder. A bird garden should include planting trees, shrubs, vines, ground covers, and flowers that not only produce food but also provide cover. Providing water, year-round, will make your garden more inviting.

In addition to food, water, and shelter, providing the following can help to keep a variety of birds visiting your yard:

- A dust bath for dusting and cleaning.
- Grit to help the birds grind the seeds.
- A small area of tall grass and leaf litter.
- Feeders including tubes, platforms, hoppers, nectar, fruit, and suet.
- Nesting structures for the kinds of birds you want.



Wetlands

Shallow ponds and other types of wetlands are important for supplying water, food, and/or homes to all the animals that visit the garden. These wetlands are vital to a wide variety of animals, including tiny aquatic insects, fish, amphibians, reptiles, shorebirds, doves, turkeys, and deer.

- Adding logs and rock piles to the bank will provide salamanders, frogs, and snakes with basking and hiding places.
- Small brush piles at the water's edge will be used by bullfrogs, other frogs, and harmless water snakes.
- Placing logs in ponds and wetlands will supply turtles with places to sunbathe.

Prairie Forbes

Wildflowers or weeds? This would depend on whom you talk to. The flowers that appear on the roadside are flowers that have historically grown in this area. These prairie or wildflowers will support 10-50 times as many species of animals/insects as non-native plants. Since these plants are adapted to the area, they will need less fertilizer, water, and maintenance.

Wildflower mixes and plants are now locally available. They can be mixed for hummingbirds, butterflies, cut flowers, dried flowers, herbs, or cottage gardens. Check with a local nursery for ideas and selections.

Butterfly Garden



Large color blocks of fragrant, nectar producing flowers can be magnets to butterflies. Some of the best butterfly flowers have clusters of small, single blossoms which produce small amounts of nectar and have petals or leaves for landing pads.

- Provide not only food for the adults, but also for the caterpillars.
- Select a variety of plants that will bloom from early spring to late fall.
- Provide shallow water sources or ripe fruit for thirsty butterflies.
- The colorful visitors also appreciate flat, light-colored stones nearby on which to sunbathe.



Native Prairie Grass

A lawn that only needs mowing twice a year. Buffalo grass a prairie grass that can be used in lawns, is virtually maintenance free.

Native grasses or prairie grasses, which historically grew here before the area was settled are specially adapted for life in this region. These grasses vary in height from a few inches to nine feet tall. They can be used individually in a garden or can be mixed together in a prairie plot.

Once these grasses are growing strong, they require little maintenance to keep them healthy. The one thing that is special about a prairie plot is it needs fire. Prairies need to be burned every 2-4 years to make sure other trees and shrubs don't take over.

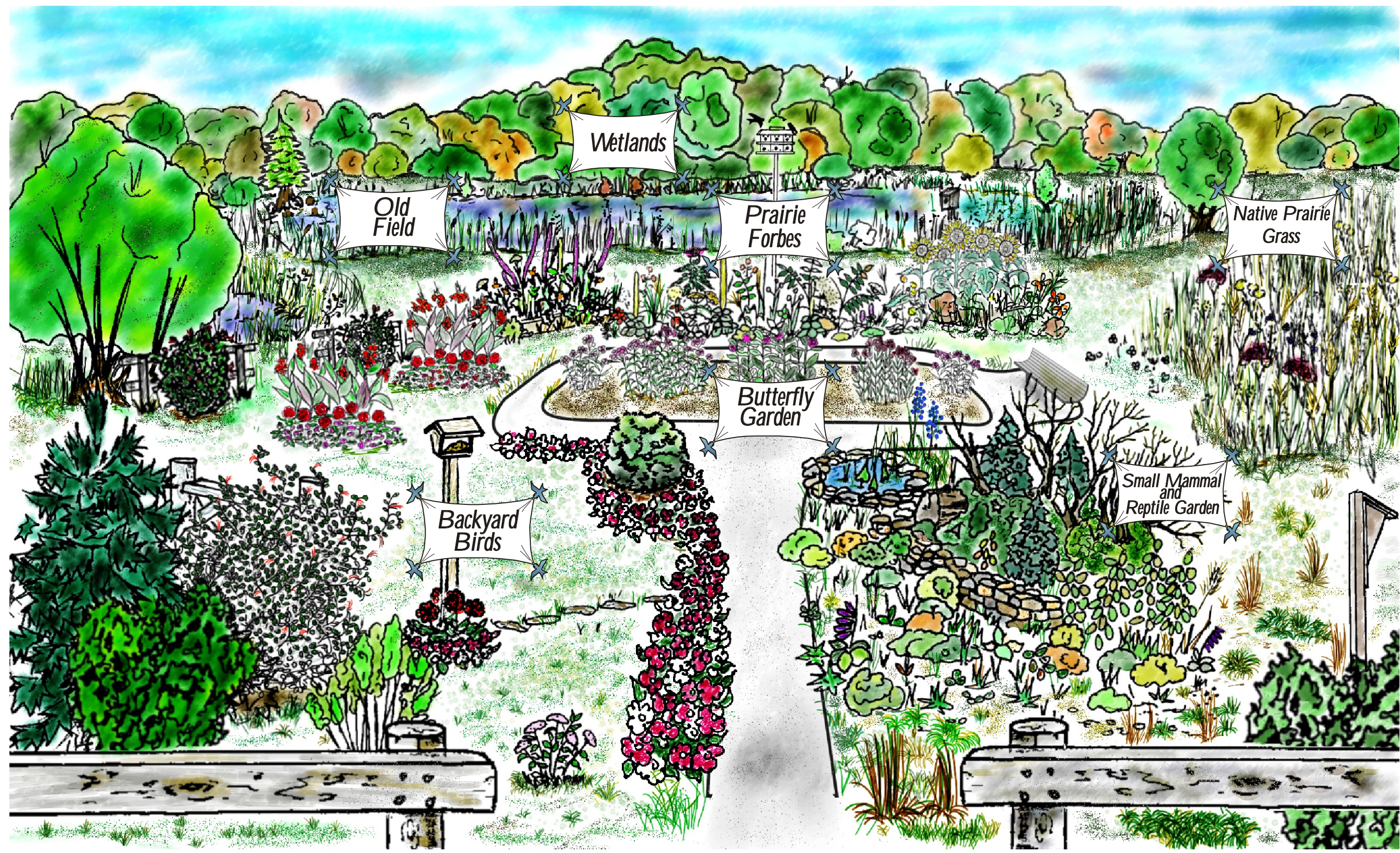


Small Mammal and Reptile Garden



Providing water and shelter for your wildlife guests will give them a place to hide, rest in safety, and raise a family. The construction of brush piles can improve homes (habitat) for many kinds of wildlife. Rock piles or walls, logs of all sizes, and stacks of bark slabs provide homes for beneficial insect eaters such as salamanders, lizards and snakes. An upside-down flower pot with a door cut into it makes a great toad home.

All animals need water. Providing water can be as simple as a planting saucer or bowl from the kitchen filled with tap water. Or, you can create a water garden with plants and waterfalls. Try to have some water, at varying depths, throughout the year.



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Forbes

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Grass

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