

# “Lakescaping” (Lake-friendly landscaping)

A traditional lawn is not very lake-friendly because it is shallowly rooted, provides little habitat for wildlife, and often receives far too much fertilizer. This can lead to erosion and sedimentation problems, excessive algae and aquatic plant growth, loss of wildlife habitat and an increase in nuisance animals such as Canada Geese.



The essence of lakescaping is to create a buffer zone between the lake and your home that restores the natural ecosystem function of a shoreline. This buffer zone could be a simple unmowed strip of land along the lakeshore, or it could become a more complex landscaping project that might involve shoreline plantings and/or the landward planting of native herbaceous and woody vegetation.

An effective buffer zone should be at least 10-15 feet wide, but larger buffers of 25-50 feet are ideal for protecting the lake from sediment and runoff and for providing wildlife habitat. Additional information on lakescaping, including native plant lists, native plant nurseries, and shoreline planting assistance can be found online on the TWF Healthy Shorelines Initiative website at [www.tippecanowatershed.org](http://www.tippecanowatershed.org).

## How does lakescaping help promote healthy lakes?

- ◆ Lakescaping provides a native plant buffer that filters pollutants and runoff that degrade water quality and cause excessive algae and aquatic plant growth.
- ◆ Buffer zones absorb wave action and prevent shoreline erosion.
- ◆ Lakescaping restores the ecosystem function of a natural shoreline and provides habitat for a wide variety of wildlife.
- ◆ Native plants create a beautiful landscape that requires minimal maintenance once established, leaving more time for leisure and enjoying the beauty of lakeshore life.



## What special considerations are there with lakescaping?

- ◆ A permit is not necessary for planting or other landscaping done landward of the shoreline. Alterations to the shoreline itself or lakeward of the shoreline may require a permit and should be discussed with the Indiana Department of Natural Resources.
- ◆ Be sure to use plants appropriate to both the soil type and light availability of your property.
- ◆ Native plantings, although self-sustaining once established, will need some maintenance during the first growing season.

**Estimated cost:** Varies widely based on size of project. Depending on the number and type of native plants, they might cost \$60 per linear foot.

