



Home Lawn and Garden

Planting Along Streams

If you are fortunate enough to have a stream that runs along or through your property, even if it's a small drainage ditch, you have the opportunity to both enhance your landscape aesthetic and protect our precious water resources.

Taking good care of a stream involves taking care of the land around it. A healthy stream needs to have a planted area along its banks with deep-rooted trees, shrubs and wildflowers. This vegetated area is called a riparian buffer. The wider the buffer is, the healthier the stream!



A well-planted riparian buffer:

Absorbs nutrients and pollutants – native plants remove pollutants from the waterway, leaving water cleaner and clearer.

Stabilizes the stream banks and prevents erosion – deep rooted native plants hold soil in place and keep the stream banks stable. Turf grass has roots only an inch or two deep – not very effective at preventing erosion!

Reduces floodwater damage – fully grown plants slow the speed of overland flows by providing enough resistance to allow some of the water to seep into the soil. This helps to recharge our groundwater supplies and reduces flood damage downstream.

Helps control the temperature of the stream – trees help shade the stream, which keeps the water cool. Fish and other aquatic life need cool temperatures to survive.

Provides habitat – riparian buffers with habitat for amphibians, birds, and other critters. They also serve as corridors for movement.