

Beautify and Fortify: Why Choose Natives?

Native Trees are the low-tech solution to many of our environmental issues. They can save energy, reduce wind, and fight flooding. Not all trees are equal though. Native trees are tree species that were here before European Colonization (over 500 years). Because they have been here so long, many other creatures, like birds and pollinators, depend on them as food sources. Natives are well equipped to survive these conditions, which makes them easier to care for and more beneficial than non-native tree species.

DID YOU KNOW: Lightning Bug larvae love to eat snails and slugs and then hide under fallen leaves to survive the winter? More trees could mean more fireflies for you to enjoy in the summer and fewer slugs in your garden.

Source: Lynn Frierson Faust, Fireflies, glow-worms, and lightning bugs.

Native trees are vital to the life of an ecosystem. In the spring, hungry birds wake up early to search for food for their families. Many of the songbirds will need to catch over 5,000 caterpillars and bugs to feed their babies. The parents will eat all the protein- and fat-rich foods they can find, like seeds and fruits. Native trees support hundreds of species of insects that the baby birds can eat and plenty of edible seeds for their parents. Bumblebees and other important pollinators also need food in the spring. Certain trees and shrubs offer early-season nectar and pollen.

Native trees can absorb and hold hundreds of gallons of rainwater, which reduces flooding and wet spots. Native trees have extensive root systems that absorb large amounts of water and can trap chemicals that soak into the ground. Chemicals like pesticides and fertilizers, that could cause toxic pollution at high levels, are absorbed by the tree and kept out of our waterways.

Native trees can save you money. After the first two years, native trees usually require almost no maintenance. Once trees are fully grown, they can help cool your house in the summer and block it from the cold winter wind. Thriving trees will increase also your property value, and natives are very easy to grow.

DID YOU KNOW: A native oak tree can support over 500 different species of butterflies and moths?

Source: Doug Tallamy, Bringing Nature Home