

Beauty

Recognizing the awe, wonder and amazement provided by the sounds, fragrance, motion, texture and colors nature provides.



The beauty of nature can “dazzle the senses” whether it results in disbelief in its very existence or feelings such as awe, wonder or amazement. Every landscape lies under “the necessity of being beautiful” and “beauty breaks in everywhere.”

--Ralph Waldo Emerson

Many times, we find natural things to be beautiful. We react to the forms, colors, details and textures of what we see in nature. The term "biophilia" means "love of life or living systems." It was first used by Erich Fromm to describe a psychological orientation of being attracted to all that is alive and vital.¹ E.O. Wilson, a noted scientist, explains in his 1984 book *Biophilia* that attraction for nature’s forms, colors, details and textures are rooted in our own DNA.²



While beauty is in the eye of the beholder, there is generally a consensus about what is beautiful.

One of the main reasons nature is valuable is because it is so beautiful. The tall trees, shrubs, grasses and flowers, along with birds, butterflies and wildlife create a lush and intricate beauty found only in nature. Beauty is present in the sounds, fragrance, motion, texture and colors that surround us. From the first colors of spring to the color burst of

¹ Fromm, Erich (1964). *The Heart of Man*. [Harper & Row](#).

² E.O. Wilson, 1984. *The Biophilia Hypothesis*. Kellert & Wilson.

summer and from the changing blush of leaves in the fall to the showy evergreens and majestic silhouettes of trees in winter, comes the natural beauty created by this ecosystem.

Your definition of beauty may come from the blue colors of an Indigo bunting, the amazing spring color of a Redbud tree, the blossom texture of a Goat’s beard flower, the motion of a butterfly, moth or hummingbird or the shape of a leaf from a sensitive fern. By seamlessly blending the boundaries between your home and your surroundings, your family will be inspired by nature’s wonders and the healing powers of the natural world. Being home will not seem like an escape from nature, but an intrinsic part of it.

One way to understand beauty is to see how it can change dimension with the seasons. Wildlife live in different layers of habitat—canopy, understory, shrub, wildflower, grass and groundcover. Besides providing shelter for wildlife, these layers also add horizontal and vertical dimensions and colors to your landscape. You can have wildlife and beauty at the same time.

Layers of Habitat Color and Interest	Seasons				
	Early Spring	Spring	Summer	Fall	Winter
Canopy					
Understory					
Shrub					
Herbaceous					
Grasses and Ferns					
Groundcover					

Zelenski and Nisbet conducted two studies to determine if there is a link between nature and happiness independent from other things that make us feel emotionally connected to life, like family, country, culture, music, and friends. They concluded that our emotional connection with nature often predicts our happiness regardless of other psychological factors.³

Studies like these should motivate people to take a walk in their neighborhood, to look up and see the sun gleam through the brislings leaves-to hear the sounds, smell the fragrances and appreciate the seasonal diversity and colors that nature provides with new interest.

³Zelenski, J. M., & Nisbet, E. K. 2014. Happiness and Feeling Connected: The Distinct Role of Nature Relatedness. *Environment and Behavior*, 46 (1): 3-23.

Beauty can become a consistent element in a backyard conservation design and an important part of our happiness and everyday life. Every window in our house is a picture frame for the blossoms of spring, the stillness of summer and the colors of the fall. *Designing With Natives* allows you to create a beautiful place to relax, play, and entertain and which can be a paint box for your children's imagination. Before you know it, your yard will become your favorite room in the house.

The following indicators can be used to track beauty.

- The percentage of canopy covering the site. 60% canopy cover is the goal.
- The vegetation layers present on the site are in place - canopy, understory, shrubs, grasses and wildflowers. Having all 5 layers are the goal.
- The percentage of the site cover by native species is over 60%.
- The number of different native plant species present on the property. Having more than 25 species is the goal.
- The beauty and color present in each season (spring, summer, fall and winter).
- Pollinator gardens in place.
- Beautiful plants that create a special "wow" factor.
- Turf grass only used to cover play areas and walking paths.
- Flowers with long bloom times and awesome blossoms.
- Vegetable and cutting gardens.
- Relaxation gardens.
- Water features.
- Focus gardens.

For more details, see *Natural Curb Appeal and Creating Beautiful Habitat and Reducing the Size of Your Lawn*, *Garden Styles and Long Bloomers and Awesome Blossoms* @DWTN.net

Learn simple steps to understand how each place is unique and how you need to work with your natural surroundings, cycles and native plants in each design. Do-it-yourself designers can implement places that are healthy, beautiful, inspiring, relaxing and low maintenance.