



INVITING REPTILES & AMPHIBIANS to Your Backyard



Inviting reptiles and amphibians to your backyard is pretty simple to do and it's important. Reptiles and amphibians need our help. They're vital parts of the ecosystem and they can be a gardener's best friend! For instance, snakes eat mice and other vermin that can carry diseases. Toads and frogs eat tons of insects and slugs that can damage your plants. By following some of the easy-to-do suggestions on this page, you can improve the quality of your yard for amphibians and reptiles. More information on making your backyard amphibian and reptile friendly can be found by visiting www.ncparc.org/pubs/EOProducts.htm.

Creating Your Own Toad Abode:

A toad abode is a small ceramic house for toads. To create one yourself, turn a ceramic flowerpot upside down and, if it does not already have a toad-sized crack or hole in the side for an entrance, prop it up with a rock so the toad can get in and out. It is better not to have a floor in your toad abode because toads like to dig. Place your toad abode in a shady spot under a plant and near a water source, such as a small pond or even larger saucer of water. For more information on toad abodes visit www.nwf.org/doteontoads.

(Information courtesy of National Wildlife Federation)



Place your toad abode under some vegetation and near water to attract toads. This American toad loves his abode!

Attracting Treefrogs with PVC Piping:

Both of these methods work well, no matter the size of your backyard.

1) Bury or drive a piece of PVC pipe (~ 5 feet long) into the ground so that at least 2 ½ feet of pipe is exposed above ground. Place pipe within a foot of a tree.

OR

2) Attach a piece of PVC pipe (from 2 to 3 feet long) to a tree trunk using rope or a cord. Seal or cap the bottom of the PVC pipe and drill a hole into the pipe about 1 inch from the bottom. This allows moisture to build up in the pipe, which frogs need, but doesn't allow water to fill up the pipe.



PVC pipes placed near trees or attached to trees can attract treefrogs.

Creating Rock and Brush Piles:

Rock and brush piles placed in suitable locations in your backyard can attract a variety of reptiles and amphibians, such as green anoles, skinks, snakes, toads and salamanders. Stack rocks loosely near vegetation in a sunny location (preferably) to provide crevices for critters to hide as well as places for them to warm their bellies. Don't throw away leaves, sticks or logs. Place them in a pile in your backyard. They'll provide excellent habitat for lizards, snakes and toads. Place logs in damp areas of your backyard to attract salamanders.



Rock and brush piles placed in sunny locations provide cover and suitable places for reptiles, such as this garter snake, to bask.

Building a Frog-Friendly Pond:



Backyard ponds don't have to be huge to attract frogs. A pond as small as 4 feet wide, 6 feet long and 18 inches deep can provide a good place for frogs to live. Decide where you want to put your pond. It's best if your pond gets at least 5 hours of sunlight, although less sunlight can work too. You can either dig a pond, or you can buy a pre-form hard plastic liner (available at most home and garden stores). A pond with sloping sides is good to allow the frogs to get in and out of the pond easily. If you use a pre-form pond liner, be sure to add rocks in the water to form a ramp so that frogs can get in and out. A pond that gradually slopes from shallow to deep is best, although not necessary. Add rainwater or water that hasn't been chemically treated. Add rocks around your pond to keep the liner in place. Also, plant some native vegetation in and around the pond to provide shade for frogs and their tadpoles, and to give frogs places to avoid predators. No need to add aeration or filters - frogs like calm, still water. And do not add fish. Fish can prey on frogs, their eggs and tadpoles. If you don't want to build a backyard pond, you can try using a galvanized tub (or similar container). Place the tub under or near some vegetation. Fill it up with rainwater (or water that hasn't been chemically treated). Add aquatic plants to provide cover for frogs and their tadpoles. Finally, be patient! It can take some time for frogs to find your pond. But when they do arrive, it will be the worth the wait!

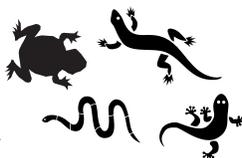


Backyard ponds do not have to be large to attract frogs. The one above measures 4' wide, 8' long and 12" deep, and is home to several large green frogs. During the summer, it's a favorite hangout for Cope's gray treefrogs to mix and mingle.



A galvanized tub placed in a suitable location in your backyard can make a nice substitution for a pond.

Planting Native Vegetation:



Thick beds of ferns and other small to medium-sized shrubs are ideal places for lizards, snakes, toads and frogs to hide. Don't use fertilizers and pesticides, if possible, as they can be harmful to reptiles and amphibians. And remember to go native with your plants. Plants adapted to live in your area are often hardier and require less water, fertilizer and pesticide than non-native plants. When mowing, set the blade higher to keep the grass longer. This benefits critters and reduces the need to water your lawn as often.



Native vegetation, planted densely, makes nice cover for lizards, toads, frogs, snakes and other critters.

Interested in Reptiles & Amphibians?



N.C. Partners in Amphibian & Reptile Conservation

NCPARC is North Carolina's chapter of the world-wide organization Partners in Amphibian and Reptile Conservation. NCPARC members are interested in the conservation of amphibians and reptiles and their habitats. We welcome anyone with an interest in these animals, conservation or nature to join NCPARC and help us conserve amphibian and reptile populations. Membership is FREE. For information contact NCPARC coordinator Jeff Hall. E-mail: jeff.hall@ncwildlife.org. Phone: 252-917-1683. Or visit: www.ncparc.org

It's Good to Be Social



The N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission now has a host of social media sites to provide you with the latest and most up-to-date news and information from the agency. Share insight and feedback with Commission staff and other wildlife enthusiasts when you visit ncwildlife.org, to "like" us on Facebook, follow us on Twitter, connect with us on Google+, view our videos on YouTube and read more about wildlife in North Carolina on our "Conserve & Protect" blog.

