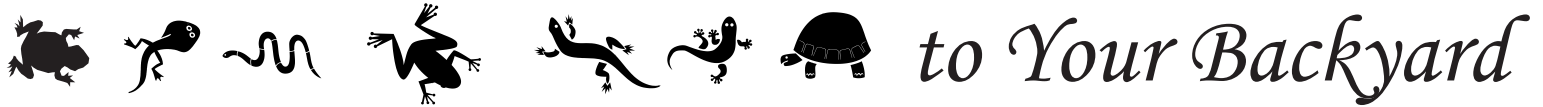


INVITING REPTILES AND AMPHIBIANS



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 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)

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 (from 3 to 4 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.

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.

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 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).

Backyard ponds do not have to be large to attract frogs.

Lastly, 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!

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 use than non-native plants.

Interested in Reptiles & Amphibians?

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.

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For information on NCPARC or to download free information on reptiles and amphibians, visit: www.ncparc.org

