

## **How to Take Care of Your Share of the Planet**

### **Creating an Environmentally Friendly Landscape**

By Brad Schmett

Each property owner has the opportunity to take care of their share of the planet by maintaining healthy landscapes that are beneficial to local wildlife. Whether it's the planting of a tree for local bird nesting, the creation of a butterfly garden, the elimination of chemicals or the choice to leave a small corner of native plants for wildlife, each small decision is a step in the right direction for preserving the natural beauty of the world around us. As development continues, these preserved habitat areas will become more and more important as safe havens for displaced wildlife.

#### **Creating a Wildlife Friendly Landscape**

However large or small, any backyard or garden space can contain some elements that provide habitat for wildlife. The four basic elements for any wildlife friendly landscape are food, water, shelter and places to raise young. And although food and water are the easiest to provide, going a step further and providing the other two necessities for wildlife -- shelter and places to raise their young -- is becoming increasingly necessary to ensure the continuation of many local animal species.

#### **Environmentally Friendly Practices**

Many new homes are being built to meet the requirements for "green homes". It is a common misconception, even among some builders, that "green" building is only concerned with energy efficiency. However, many of these programs understand the importance of starting outside and creating an environmentally friendly landscape. Elements that are included in these programs may consist of choosing native plants, using mulch and drip irrigation systems, and using integrated pest management techniques.

Although some of these techniques may be easier to put in place during new construction, all current property owners have the same opportunities to do their part to create environmentally friendly landscapes, and there are many programs available to help with their efforts.