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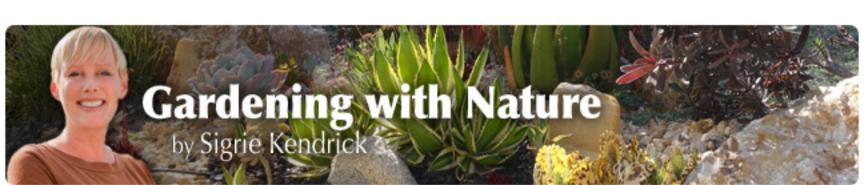
CANADA



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IMPORTANCE OF NATIVE PLANTS

Mother knows best-Mother Nature, that is

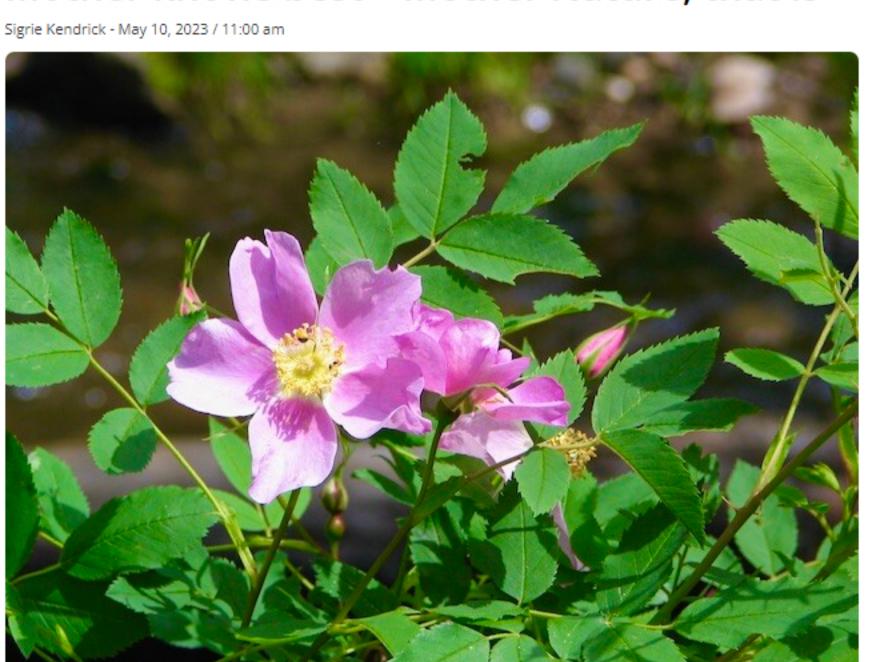


Photo: Judie Steeves

Wild plants such as these local wild roses are great candidates for a native plant garden, which will be bee and pollinator friendly, as well as drought-tolerant. There are often cousins of these available in local nurseries which are also more drought-tolerant than the hybrid roses that are so popular, but need far more water and care. Consider yarrows, arnica and asters as well.

Native plants naturally thrive in the climatic conditions where they're growing, so let's encourage them in our own gardens.

Native plants don't require supplemental water once they've become established, so they are great water conservationists, and they're beautiful. These plant species have been living and growing in our region for thousands of years. They're adapted to our local conditions and have deep co-evolutionary relationships with pollinators, birds and small mammals.

shelter to bees, caterpillars, butterflies, birds and other small wildlife.

By including native plants in your green space, you can create living habitats that offer food and

hardy. And through the wonders of biodiversity, there are native plants that will flourish in a broad range of conditions—from sunny to shady to wet.

In addition to being crucially important for supporting wildlife, native plants are also beautiful and

In the Okanagan, it is particularly important they thrive in extreme heat and dry conditions. Your garden will be more resilient to the changes in our climate with native plants that have already adapted, ones that survive and thrive in this environment.

If this idea interests you, here are some tips to keep in mind as you create your native garden:

Okanagan Xeriscape Association website and its xeriscape plant database, which lists some local wild plants, as well as e-flora BC, iNaturalist and Seek apps and reliable books, such as Plants of Southern Interior B.C. by R. Parish, Coupe & Lloyd or Trees, Shrubs and Flowers of B.C, by C.P. Lyons. Knowing the Latin names helps you find plants in the same families that have been developed for garden use and are more-readily available in local nurseries.

2. Watch for plants when you walk or hike in the forest and meadows of the region and learn to

1. Get to know local plants, including their proper Latin names. Local resources include the

- identify local flowers, shrubs, and trees.

 3. Match your garden to a wild spot nearby with similar conditions. The native plants that grow in
- 4. Plan for seasons and succession because timing is everything. Planting with a goal of creating continuous bloom is a great way to attract pollinators.

your reference spot will likely do well in your garden, too.

- 5. It's generally not recommended to source your plants from the wild, unless you have permission from a private land-owner to do so. The alternative is to buy from a local nursery that sells propagated native plants. XEN, Wild Bloom and Sagebrush Nursery offer them, and others sell some, as well. Do not remove any parts of plants from parkland. Propagating native plants can
- be tricky, so do your research before attempting it.

 6. Grow it to know it. Recognize that much of what you have to learn can only be achieved through hands-on experience, and there's no better time to start than right now.

Planting a native plant includes not only annuals and perennials, but also trees and shrubs, such as Ponderosa Pine or Douglas Fir, or large shrubs such as Saskatoon or Mock Orange. That helps create habitat for hundreds of species of insects, birds and small mammals while sequestering carbon, cooling the air, stabilizing the soil, helping manage runoff water and literally transforming

a landscape.

Looking for cousins of native plants in local nurseries can also be rewarding. Often they will have similar drought-tolerant characteristics. Do ensure that is the case before expecting them to be

xeric. Check the OXA website's plant database for more information, or the nursery where you are purchasing them.

Follow us on social media for inspiration on the sustainable beauty that is xeriscape.

The Okanagan Xeriscape Association is extremely grateful for the ongoing financial support of the Okanagan Basin Water Board and is proud to be collaborating with them on their Make Water

Work campaign.

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This article is written by or on behalf of an outsourced columnist and does not necessarily reflect the views of Castanet.

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