Rain Gardens
Make the most of natural rain that falls on your property by creating depressions that allow rainwater runoff from impervious areas like roofs, driveways, walkways, parking lots and compacted lawn areas the opportunity to be absorbed and filtered by deep rooted native plants such as Eastern Gamagrass or Maximilian Sunflower. Visit a model landscape 1700 College St (Junction, TX).

Native Shortgrasses
Buffalograss and Curly Mesquite are a few of the many shortgrasses native to central Texas that create responsibly beautiful lawns.

Much of the water that recharges our aquifers, feeds our springs and maintains our rivers is filtered through deep rooted native plants. By working together to restore native vegetation, we can all help maintain an adequate supply of fresh, quality groundwater for our future.

What Makes a Plant “Native”?
A native plant is one that occurs naturally in a certain place or region as opposed to being introduced or cultivated by humans.

Native Plants Are Adapted to Local Conditions:
Because indigenous plants evolved over the millennia under local conditions, they are better adapted to our harsh “boom and bust” weather patterns, rocky soils, and periodic infestations of pests and pathogens. When planted in situations that are similar to where they are found in the wild, native plants require fewer resources of time, money, and water in order to thrive.

Invasive Species
Many of our woodlands, prairies, and other natural landscapes are being overwhelmed by exotic invasive species. These aggressive intruders are able to crowd out and smother plant communities, resulting in an impoverished and depleted landscape. When the variety of native plants is diminished, the landscape is less able to support a healthy “Web of Life”. All indigenous creatures, including micro-organisms, insects, birds, reptiles, and mammals depend on a species-rich landscape to flourish. Therefore, what you plant on your property really does matter. Exotic grasses, non-native wildflowers, and woody plants from Asia have the potential to negatively affect not only your own property, but your neighbor’s as well.

“Become native to your place. Choose a path of stewardship and a lifetime of wonder and learning” ~ Bill Neiman, Native American Seed
Benefits of Natural Landscaping

Many people are drawn to the Texas Hill Country because of its scenic vistas, rolling hills, spring-fed streams and extravagant wildflower displays. Yet somehow, during home construction, or the expansion of development and its accompanying infrastructure, we end up erasing those very qualities that attracted us to Central Texas in the first place. Take the time to educate yourself on alternatives to a hasty replication of traditional suburban landscape models by observing those natural features that could be incorporated into your residential design. These include groves or mottes of various sized trees, woodland shrub plantings, dry stream beds, and reduced turf areas that allow more room for wildflower meadows.

Consider reducing the size of your lawn

It's hard to maintain a lush lawn on the thin and rocky soils of the Texas Hill Country without relying on frequent watering, fertilizing, and expensive additions of garden topsoils. While it's tempting to lay large areas of sod as a quick fix to battered construction sites, in the long term, it's not a good solution for your budget or the environment. The better way to go is to first, shrink your lawn area, and then select an appropriate drought-resistant grass variety for your specific location.

Helpful Resources:

- Native Plant Society of Texas [www.nspot.org](http://www.nspot.org)
- Native Prairie Association of Texas [www.texasprairie.org](http://www.texasprairie.org)
- Native American Seed [www.seedsource.com](http://www.seedsource.com)
- Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center [www.wildflower.org](http://www.wildflower.org)
- Texas Master Naturalist [www.tmn.org](http://www.tmn.org)
- Texas Invasives [www.texasinvasives.org](http://www.texasinvasives.org)

For more information, visit [www.hillcountryalliance.org/HCA/NativePlants](http://www.hillcountryalliance.org/HCA/NativePlants)