



Suggested Certification Details:

1. Control **invasive** species: buckthorn, garlic mustard, purple loosestrife, Canada thistle, sweet clover, and others. Provide evidence of management practices for these species on a major portion of the property.
2. Incorporate **native** plants in the landscape: trees, shrubs, forbs, and grasses.
 - Plant native trees for shade and wildlife habitat.
 - Create or restore an area of prairie in a sunny location.
 - Create or restore a woodland.
 - Use native plants in new or existing flower gardens.
 - Create butterfly or rain gardens.
3. Conserve **water**.
 - Use rain barrels to collect water from downspouts.
 - Avoid runoff by directing downspouts to vegetative areas keeping water on the property.
 - Replace sprinklers with drip hoses.
 - Minimize mowed areas by replacing some areas of lawn with native groundcovers, mulch or stones.
4. **Minimize** or eliminate the use of pesticides, including herbicides, insecticides, and fungicides. Minimize or eliminate the use of inorganic fertilizers.
5. Establish wildlife **habitat**.
 - Provide bird feeders, nest boxes, and water.
 - Use native plants that provide nectar sources for birds and butterflies.
 - Install bat houses as insect control.
 - Use native fruit trees and scrubs as a food source for birds and other wildlife.
 - Use native plants to attract pollinators.
 - Leave plants standing for winter interest and to provide food and shelter for wildlife.
6. If applicable, stabilize stream banks and lake shores.
 - Create buffers of native plants along streams to control erosion.
 - Minimize or eliminate pesticides and fertilizers near water.
7. Divert natural materials from landfills.
 - Use a mulching mower instead of picking up grass clippings and leaves.
 - Compost yard and vegetable food waste.
 - Use dry leaves as mulch and as winter ground cover under trees and shrubs.

Certified Conservation@Home properties meet all five of the following criteria:

- A young oak tree is present
- Plants native to NE Illinois cover at least 5% of the landscape
- Lawn care chemicals are absent and lawn clippings are mulched, not collected
- Rainwater flows through a garden or other water-absorbing feature
- Buckthorn is absent or covers less than 5% of the landscape