



Colorado Native Landscaping Coalition



Photo: Lisa Olsen

Who We Are

The Colorado Native Landscaping Coalition (CNLC) is a growing coalition of mission-aligned organizations working in collaboration to advance policies that will transform landscaping across Colorado. Current coalition partners:

- Wild Ones - Front Range Chapter
- People & Pollinators Action Network
- Audubon Rockies
- Denver Audubon
- Colorado Native Plant Society
- Colorado Wildlife Federation

Our Goals as a Coalition

Promoting landscaping with native plants for healthy ecosystems in Colorado.

1. Local and state governments should promote native landscaping. There are many effective measures available to implement this, ranging from modified development codes, to financial assistance, to education, to demonstration projects. We stand ready to advise in this vitally important process and help Colorado make this transformation.
2. The definition of “xeriscape” should be revised to prioritize the native plant palette. The term xeriscaping should be updated to explicitly recognize the many benefits of native plants.
3. Landscape management practices should build healthy regenerative soils and support biodiverse ecosystems. To achieve natural resilience in Colorado landscapes, we should reduce ornamental turf areas, minimize pesticide use, adjust landscape maintenance practices to benefit wildlife, and boost the percentage of native plants on state, municipal, and privately managed lands.

Why Transform Colorado Landscaping? Together We Make an Impact.



It's simple: native plants are essential to regional food webs. The vast majority of native insect species are specialists: they feed only on host plants with which they have co-evolved. The act of feeding pollinates plants, ensuring their survival and enabling the spread of native plant communities. Landscapes planted with non-native species are literally inedible to most of our insects. Why is this important? Insects form the foundation of the majority of bird and many mammal species' diets. Native plant habitats are vital to preserving biodiversity. To address the critical loss of biodiversity, we begin at home, converting lawns to native gardens.

The good news is that municipal, commercial, and residential landscapes of all types and sizes can help reverse the global biodiversity crisis. By creating networks of native plant landscapes, each patch of habitat — no matter how small — can serve as part of a collective effort to maintain resilient ecosystems and sustain living landscapes for pollinators.

Native plants are part of the solution to the climate crisis. Native landscapes supported by healthy soils are efficient carbon sinks and require less water, fertilizer and pesticides to maintain, reducing individuals' carbon footprints. Native landscapes reflect the inherent beauty of Colorado and honor the cultures and land management practices of the indigenous peoples who tended this land for generations.

Reforming “Xeriscaping”

The “xeriscaping” term, used since 1981, should be updated to explicitly recognize the many benefits of native plants. Although Colorado must continue to promote low-irrigation landscaping, it is time to also recognize the prime importance of landscaping with native plants within that effort.

Specific actions

1. Water supply and land use organizations should reform the definition of “xeriscape” to emphasize the dominant use of native plants.
2. Revise literature and programs promoting “xeriscaping” to implement this message.

Putting Policies in Place

Want to take action and make meaningful change in your community? Consider obtaining and reviewing carefully the Coalition's “Recommended Native Landscaping Policies for Colorado Local Governments and Water Providers.” This is available by contacting the CNLC at: **CoNativeLC@gmail.com**

The Coalition offers guidance on municipal programs and materials that promote native landscaping and regenerative maintenance practices.



For more information or to receive Coalition updates, email us at **CoNativeLC@gmail.com** and check out: www.peopleandpollinators.org/cnlc

Learn more about the current coalition organizations:

- Audubon Rockies: rockies.audubon.org
- Denver Audubon: denveraudubon.org
- Colorado Native Plant Society: conps.org
- Colorado Wildlife Federation: coloradowildlife.org
- People & Pollinators Action Network: peopleandpollinators.org
- Wild Ones Front Range Chapter: frontrangewildones.org

