Start Your Backyard Habitat

Page one: notice what you have before deciding what to change.

Name / date / location:

1. Choose one manageable patch

Start small: a 6 x 6 ft lawn patch is one option, not a requirement. Keep useful existing habitat and space your household needs.

Where is the patch, and approximately how big is it?

2. Read the site

- [ ] Observe direct sunlight at different times of day.
- [ ] Check moisture after rain and again during a dry spell.
- [ ] Identify existing plants before removing them.
- [ ] Note paths, play space, pets, drainage, and wildlife browsing.

Sun / shade and soil moisture notes:

Plants, shelter, and wildlife signs already present:

3. Set practical limits

Spending limit: **Weekly care time:** **Who will help?**

- [ ] Confirm boundaries, local requirements, and buried utilities before digging.
- [ ] Preserve access, drainage, sightlines, and necessary clearances.

Plant selection: verify local native range, mature size, light, and moisture needs.
Hardiness zones alone do not tell you whether a plant is native or suitable.

Make One Useful Change

Page two: pick a project, plan its care, and record what happens.

4. Choose your starter project

- [ ] Native planting patch: convert a small lawn area and establish suitable plants.
- [ ] Leaf refuge: retain whole leaves in a suitable existing tree or shrub bed.

Choose one. For planting, plan mature spacing and remove turf and persistent weeds carefully. For a leaf refuge, use a loose layer, not a deep compacted pile; keep leaves away from trunks, crowns, drains, and structures.

Plants / materials and quantities (verify each plant before buying):

First action and target date:

5. Plan care before you begin

- [ ] Assign moisture checks and watering while new plants establish.
- [ ] Identify unwanted plants and remove them before they dominate.
- [ ] Keep suitable stems and leaves; maintain paths and clear boundaries.

Who will check the patch, and when?

6. Watch, record, and adjust

- [ ] Take a before photo and return to the same camera position.
- [ ] Repeat a ten-minute observation; record date, weather, and effort.

What I observed (including no wildlife seen):

What needs care or a change next time?

A small patch is a starting point, not a guarantee of wildlife recovery. Use the free rewilding guide for project details and sources. Our practical habitat book is in development.