

# Why Native Plants?

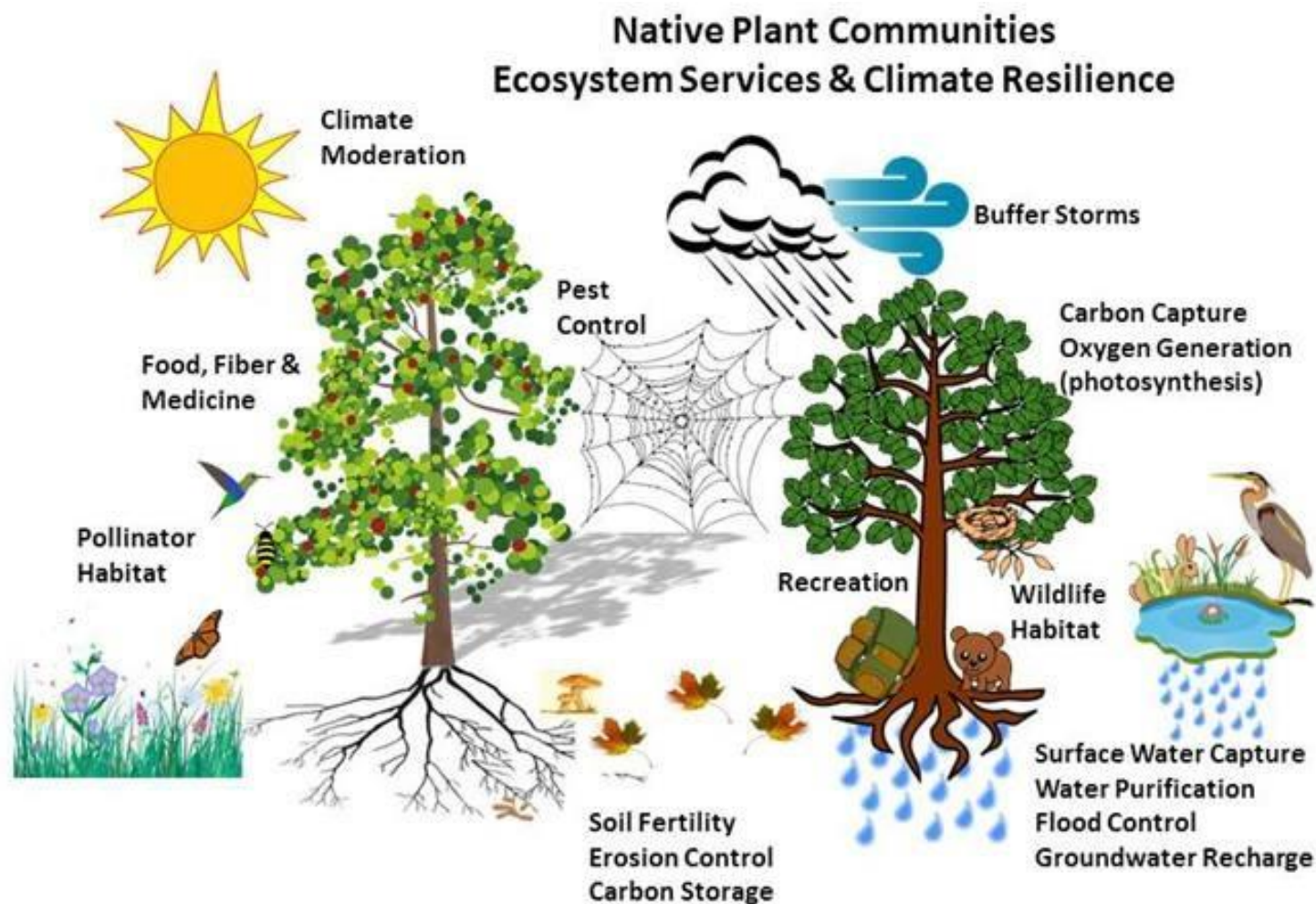
*All life on Earth depends on plants*

**Oxygen. Food. Habitat.**

These three words compose a short list of the essential conditions for life that plants provide to all organisms on Earth, including humans. Plants also regulate the climate and clean the water. But nothing on the planet can live without these three.

Native plants are the cornerstone of Earth's ecosystems and the base of the food chain that leads to our dinner tables. They evolved in and define particular locations, where they provide the habitats—food and shelter—that specific insects, birds, mammals, and other animals need. Together, native plants and animals form a web of mutually beneficial interactions that is greater than the sum of its parts: an ecosystem.

By conserving native plants in the wild and using them in designed spaces, we protect and enhance the integrity, resilience, diversity, and beauty of our planet. *From Native Plant Trust*



## NATIVE PLANTS

- Are the foundation of the entire food web that all animal life relies on.
- Are essential host plants for many insects, including the caterpillars of butterflies and moths which themselves are an extremely important part of web as well as pollinators.
- Thrive in the soils, moisture, and weather of their native region, which means less supplemental watering and fertilizing.
- Often have deeper root systems which help reduce watering needs, manage rainwater runoff, and maintain a healthy soil structure.
- Can sequester more carbon by taking it out of our atmosphere and storing it in the soil through their deep root systems than many non-native ornamental garden plants do.
- Are less prone to pest problems that may require toxic chemicals that can enter our ecosystems and waterways.
- Provide a sense of place and space that ties our gardens to the unique regional natural history of the land where we live and honors the importance of these species in Indigenous culture.
- Support birds, pollinators and other wildlife that are under increasing stress from climate change. Native plants provide the best possible habitat for native wildlife.