



Buffer Strips

What is a buffer strip?

A buffer strip is a plant bed installed between the lawn and the lake. Typically, it is 10'-30' wide and can extend the entire width of the property or can be targeted to specific areas to capture runoff water.

Why are buffer strips important?

A buffer strip captures and filters stormwater runoff before it leaves the property or enters a water body protecting water quality.

How to get started:

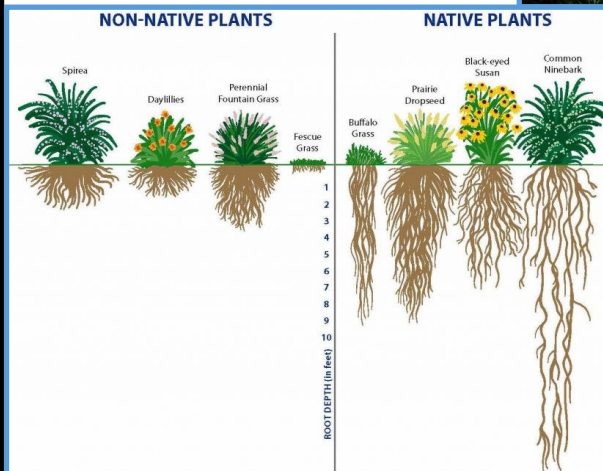
Work with the Antrim Conservation District and local landscapers to design and/or install your buffer.

Or

Quit mowing the last 10' of the lawn adjacent to the lake especially if that area is already a bit wet with mucky soils. The resulting plant growth can be quite beautiful.

How to install a buffer on lakefront property:

- Stake out at least a 10' wide area next to the lake parallel to the shoreline.
- Identify the soil type – sandy or mucky/wet or dry/acidic or basic; a soil sample can be taken to the MSU Extension and analyzed for a small fee.
- Determine the look desired: tall, short, trees, shrubs, flowers, grasses, ferns, symmetric or wild.
- Identify whether the site is sunny, shady, or both.



- Match the plants to the site: wet/dry, sunny/shady.
- Draw out the design – bunch same plants in odd numbers: 3, 5, 7 etc., keep in mind color, bloom time, and height.
- Prepare the site by removing the lawn/grasses in the buffer area to help the desired plants thrive by reducing the competition for water and nutrients.

- If the ground slopes significantly to the lake, dig the buffer area to a 6" depth to more effectively capture runoff and plant the "wetter" plants in the bottom.
- Plant following your design. Plants should be no closer than 1.5' apart and staggered to slow and capture runoff.





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Maintenance:

- Water the plants after planting to help compact the soils and eliminate air pockets, and an inch per week for the first two years to help them establish.
- Learn what are weeds or invasive plants, and remove them from the garden regularly to keep them from outcompeting the desired plants.
- Wrap the base of any trees in the fall to keep mice and rabbits from girdling them.
- Pay attention to what plants work and which ones don't. Remove any dead plants and replace them with ones that work.



Antrim Conservation District has lists of:

- native plants and native plant cultivars
- deer resistant native plants
- local plant nurseries that specialize in native plants
- local contractors that install native plantings and buffers

Remember, the Antrim Conservation District and the Healthy Lakes Landscaping Initiative is here to help you with planning and designing your buffer. Don't hesitate to contact us:

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