



## *Don't Beat Around The Bush*

Bushes are important sources of food and shelter for wildlife, as well as plants that will help stop water runoff and soil erosion.

The space between the ground and tops of trees can be rich with life. In fact, birds build nests lower than five feet from the ground, so they need bushes and shrubs. You can plant bushes at the base of trees. You can plant a single decorative bush on a lawn or a row as a fence or barrier. These plantings will help slow water down in your yard. Water that soaks through the soil will provide moisture for the roots of your shrubs, thus, they'll grow healthy and beautiful. A local nursery, extension agent or conservation district can help you choose a good bush for conservation.



## *A Little Off The Top*

A simple way to conserve resources in your backyard is to not cut your grass too short. Grass with enough leaf growth is healthier than grass that is cut too short. It needs much less watering in hot weather. It can resist pests better. It makes stronger roots. And when grass has enough leaf, it doesn't grow so quickly, so you don't have to mow as often.

## **Save Your Soil**

Are there bare patches of soil or gullies in your yard? These are signs of soil washing away, or soil erosion.

Soil is too valuable a backyard resource to lose. And eroded soil can degrade water supplies and harm water life. When plants cover soil, erosion is reduced. Sometimes just letting grass grow a little taller will help. You may want to plant ivy or other ground cover. On slopes,



terraced gardens can also help slow water runoff and reduce erosion.

## *Take A Big Drink*

Drinking water is essential for life. Birds need water for bathing and preening, and amphibians mate and lay eggs in water. Some butterfly species use nutrients found in puddles as a food source. Most backyards lack a natural water source. Consider buying or building a bird bath. Making a backyard pond can be fun weekend project (with proper planning). You'll provide a wet place for your animal friends and your family will enjoy the sounds of the moving water!