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Frequently Asked Questions

Q. Does r/nolawns mean no lawn at all?

A. No. r/nolawns is simply a space for discussing alternatives to traditional turf grass lawns, and especially, lawn *reduction*. Many of us here will still choose to keep small sections of lawn in addition to more productive spaces.

Q. Is r/nolawns anti turf grass?

A. No. Many of us still use turf grass in parts of our yard since it's an extremely durable ground cover. But turf grass, like all lawns, is not an ecosystem. There are also many climates where turf grass is inherently impractical. This sub is dedicated to making these spaces more sustainable.

Q. This sub has a lot of clover posts... is a white clover lawn the best option?

A. It's not the *best* option, but it might be a good starting place for some people. There's a lot to say about clover, which is why we gave it its own section here. But it's important to understand that clover is still a lawn plant. This is r/nolawns so we like to steer the conversation to lawn reduction first.

Q. Why plant native?

A. Many native insects only eat one or two species of native plant. Monarch butterflies and their relationship with milkweeds are a great example. Monarchs *require* milkweeds in their larval state. Remove milkweeds from an area and you will not have Monarchs. But this relationship between insect and plant is way more common nature than most people know. The National Wildlife Federation has a great page showing which plants have the biggest impact on their ecosystem; these plants are known as keystone species.

And remember, insects are at the bottom of the food chain. Most songbirds are insectivores, especially when raising their young. So if insect populations drop due to a lack of native plants, song bird populations drop too.

Q. How do I design a yard with more native plants?

A. The Wild Ones garden designs are a great resource for designing a yard with native plant species.

Many local nurseries will work with you for free to come up with a landscape design. (The design is often free as they know you will come to them for the plants.)

Q. Is There a Garden Designing Software so I can do it myself?

A. The only one we have found so far that's free is, SmartDraw. We are not affiliated at all and there could possibly be better options than this. Autodesk Inventor and SketchUp are both great options, but they have a high learning curve. *Some grid paper and a pencil can be just as good for planning!*

Q. How do you make a lawn for kids/pets to play in?

A. There are many many options and they are all dependent on your location. This could include native grasses that don't grow high, clover, violets, etc. You should always double check what is native to your location. And remember, if you still need to have grass for children or pets, that's OK! You can carve out a patch of grass for them and use the rest of the space for native plants, a veggie garden, and other sustainable options. One way to view your yard is that it can be divided into "rooms" e.g. a fire pit area, garden, play area, and native plants in-between. Some examples of what this look like include:

- The Wild Ones garden designs
- *The Living Landscape* by Darke and Tallamy show a bunch of examples of this, like Ricke Darke's "strolling garden" and the Mt. Cuba Center botanical garden
- Ben Vogt's yard in *Prairie Up*
- Urban Wild LTD's designs shown here on instagram.

Q: What ground cover works best for high traffic yards (dogs & kids)?

1. **Turf grass** is usually the best recommendation for high traffic areas. That's why it's used in parks and football fields. White clover can be added to a turf grass lawn to make it slightly more durable. Clover will help the most in areas where turf grass is already growing, but needs help. Read our page on clover to learn more.
2. **Mulch** is the next-best ground cover, necessary for the areas with the highest level of recreation. It's cheap, easy to replace, and not as messy as mud. If you have big dogs or especially active children in a small / shady / wet yard, mulch is usually the answer. Some people have had luck with just making tracks of mulch through the yard where dogs or kids have worn a path.

Q. Where can I buy seeds?

A. You can check our Native Plant Resources by Country or if you're in the US you can view resources by state. There's also this post with some additional information and links to actual seed vendors.

It's important to make sure the seeds you are buying are native to your area. Many seed mixes labeled "wildflowers" contain non-native annuals that look pretty but do little for your ecosystem. The worse case scenario is introducing an invasive or aggressive plant to your yard. Native plants have been growing for hundreds or thousands of years in your area and are already adjusted to your climate and location.

Q. Where do you guys get those cool garden signs that specify this is an intentionally wild yard?

A. There are plenty of places you can get them but if you'd like to you can also certify your lawn with the National Wildlife Federation and get one of their signs. You can also find pre-made signs on places like Etsy and probably even Amazon that do not require a certification or, check your local chapter of the native plant society.

Q. What about No Mow May signs?

A. There's a downloadable one here or you may be able to go to a custom sign website and make your own as well.

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Last update: **2026/07/08 21:56**

