Backyard Habitats

Presented by Ellen Powell,
Virginia Dept. of Forestry
Why do we need backyard habitats?
Development → Fragmentation
Loss of green space = Loss of habitat
Dominant green feature? LAWN

More Lawn → Less Biodiversity
What Makes Good Wildlife Habitat?
Food
Water
Cover (Shelter)
Places to raise young
Suitable Arrangement
Backyard habitats – a matter of scale
Which wildlife?
Choose NATIVE plants whenever possible.
Invasive Exotic Plants = Less Biodiversity
Do You Recognize These Invasives?
What about other non-native plants?

“Ornamental aliens now comprise the base of the food web over much of North America.”

Dr. Doug Tallamy, Chair, Dept. of Entomology & Wildlife Ecology, University of Delaware
Caterpillars for young
Plant what insects will eat.

More bugs = more birds
Water
Leave dead trees standing (where safe).

Install boxes for cavity nesters.
Layer plants for vertical structure
Soften your edges
Buffer streams with plants.

Before...
Naturalize steep slopes
Naturalize drainage areas
Rains gardens = habitat + water quality
Front yards work too!
Deer proof?
Please keep cats indoors!
Wildlife habitats can be beautiful!