

the wild

into

For yoga teacher Cyndee Trower, living the principles of *aparigraha* (nongrasping) and *ahimsa* (nonharming) means sharing her Ocean View, Delaware, yard with wildlife. "I really wanted to create a place that was animal-friendly," she says. When building her home, Trower decided against large stretches of lawn in favor of more hospitable plants—like a hedge of native bayberry that provides berries for birds and creates a protected passage where small animals can travel.

At times, Trower has been amazed by the results of her efforts: She's seen box turtles and possums passing through her yard. After she built a tiny pond, a frog moved in. Although rabbits occasionally raid her organic vegetable garden, Trower is happy to split the harvest with them. "It's worth it to see the bunnies and know that they have a place to thrive, she says."

Trower's yard is now certified by the National Wildlife Federation as an official backyard habi-

tat. If you have even a tiny bit of outdoor space, you can do the same—the NWF has even certified a butterfly garden on a Manhattan balcony, according to spokesperson Mary Burnette.

Getting certified requires filling out a simple form explaining how you've provided for wildlife's four basic needs: food, water, shelter, and a place to raise young. The greater the variety of those four elements in your yard, the more diverse your wildlife visitors will be. For more detailed instructions, the NWF has an online habitat-planning guide (www.nwf.org).

Burnette notices that even small efforts can make a difference. "This program is often the first step people take toward environmental stewardship," she says. Trower agrees: Her backyard habitat has inspired her to work with neighbors to raise awareness of how lawn chemicals can harm local wetlands. "If there were no toads here before and there are now," she says, "that's a great contribution." **HILDA J. BRUCKER**

HABITAT

