

Lexington Wild Ones 2026 Garden Grant

Overview

Wild Ones Lexington is sponsoring four Garden Grants to encourage the planting of native plants.

Four grants of \$300 each will be awarded, unless suitable applications are not received.

Grant funds can be used to create a new garden or expand an existing garden. The garden location can be a front yard, the median between the sidewalk and the street, or on property that is open to the public such as a park, public greenspace, school, library, church, the public area of a homeowners association, or a not-for-profit institution or business with publicly accessible grounds. The location can be on private or public property, as long as the garden is visible to the public.

Grants are awarded based on the proposal's suitability to the site and long-term sustainability. Note that a sketched outline will need to be included with each application. If no suitable or sustainable projects are proposed, grants will not be awarded this year.

Suitability of the location is strictly at the discretion of the Wild Ones Grant Committee.

This is a reimbursement grant and receipts for purchases will be required before funds are distributed.

Guidelines and Restrictions

If your garden is planned for an easement or government right-of-way property, city guidelines apply, and in some cases HOA rules may be a factor. Please note that the grant applicant alone is responsible for ensuring that the planting does not violate city guidelines or HOA rules.

These guidelines include:

- Plants must not block visibility of the street for cars pulling in and out of a driveway.
- Plants must be maintained at or below 2 ½ feet height.
- Plantings must be maintained so that plants do not block the sidewalk.
- Consideration must be given to people exiting vehicles on the street, trash cart placement, etc.
- Allow for 10 feet of clearance around fire hydrants for accessibility.
- Call 811 to have utility lines marked before digging. In many cases, the lines aren't buried deeply.

The list above is not intended as inclusive of everything that should be considered before planting.

If the applicant is not the legal owner of the planned garden location, the application must include a written project approval from the location's owner.

The existing garden must contain roughly 75% native plants (the more the better). Although non-native plants may currently reside in the garden, funds will not be provided for the purchase of non-native plants.

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Eligible Applicants

The applicant must be a Wild Ones Lexington chapter member, or must become a member before the grant will be awarded.

A chapter member may apply on behalf of a group, if they plan to provide guidance and oversight throughout the project. In this case, the Wild Ones member will be responsible for ensuring that the grant goals are achieved, and will serve as the grant point of contact.

Eligible Expenses

Grant funds may be used for native plants or native plant seeds only. Grant funds are not to be used for labor costs or materials such as mulch, stone, garden edging, etc.

Timeline

Applications Due	April 17, 2026
Grant Recipient Announcement Date	May 18, 2026
Final Receipt Due Date	Dec. 18, 2026

Ideally, planting should be completed within the calendar year. If there are unforeseen circumstances and an extension is needed, the applicant should contact the Grant Committee Chair (Dale Epperson), at dale@gardener.com

Resources

The Wild Ones Lexington Chapter holds a native plant exchange on the first Thursday in May, and this is an excellent source for native plants. The Chapter website also features a list of local native plant providers / nurseries.

The city of Lexington supports pollinator-friendly landscaping. Visit the "Plant by Numbers" website to find design suggestions, yard preparation steps, and much more. Access it here: <https://www.lexingtonky.gov/PlantByNumbers>

In 2026, the Fayette County Extension Office is focusing some of their "Gardener's Toolbox" classes on native plants. Visit: <https://fayette.mgcafe.uky.edu/horticulture>

The National Wildlife Federation (www.nwf.org) has a native plant finder and a link to purchase bundles of native plants.

The Kentucky Native Plant Society (www.knps.org) is also a good resource for native plant information.

Additionally, many local gardeners are willing to share native plant divisions, cultivation tips, and other resources. Ask around at our monthly Lexington Wild Ones meetings.

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Outcome Reporting and Distribution of Funds

A hand-drawn design outline must be provided with the application that details the scope of the work. This plan should include a labeled sketch which lists all of the intended plants. It must also take into consideration the prevailing site conditions: the amount of available sun and moisture, the mature size of the chosen plants, and proper spacing at the time of planting. Moderate variation from the submitted design outline (based on local plant availability) is not uncommon and will not impact fund disbursement.

We also ask for three dated photo sets of the planting site, all submitted during the grant year. The photos should represent the following stages: Before planting (or sowing), during the planting project, and several weeks after planting (after the plants have bulked up a bit and become more established). Planting pictures should be submitted with receipts, which will be applied towards reimbursement.

Before grant funds can be distributed, pictures and receipts for purchases must be submitted. Receipts will be reviewed to make sure that funds were spent as specified.

Receipts and pictures should be sent to Dale Epperson, via either text message (to 859-644-9122), email in .pdf format (to dale@gardener.com), or physical mail sent to 121 Saint Margaret Drive #6, Lexington, KY 40502.

If receipts are not received by December 18th of the grant award year, the grant will be considered void. Funds will not be distributed for receipts received after December 18th of the grant year.

Pictures will become the property of Wild Ones Lexington chapter and will be used to inspire future grantees.

Note that members of the Board are prepared to offer advice (if needed), both prior to submission and throughout the project period.

Awardees may be asked to speak about their grant experience at a future Wild Ones meeting, on a completely volunteer basis. The purpose of the presentation would be to inspire the membership to apply for a grant, or to consider undertaking new native gardening projects on their own.

If you have any questions, please email Dale Epperson (dale@gardener.com).

Lexington Wild Ones 2026 Garden Grant Application Form

I. Applicant Information

1. Name (must be a Wild Ones member):
2. Phone:
3. Email:
4. Group or organization involved (if any):

II. Project Description

Please provide the following information:

- A. Address and location of the garden on the property:
- B. Site preparation plan / requirements (if any):

III. Future Garden Management

Name the person and/or organization that will take responsibility for garden upkeep:

IV. Attach the following:

1. A picture of the project location as it currently exists.
2. A hand-drawn design sketch, with site-appropriate plants labeled.
3. Written approval from the location's owner (if the applicant is not the owner).

Submit Your Proposal

Submit your proposal one of two ways:

1. Send a .pdf document via email to dale@gardener.com. You will receive a confirmation email, which will complete your submission.
2. Send a paper copy (with all necessary attachments) to Dale Epperson, at 121 Saint Margaret Drive #6, Lexington, KY 40502. In this case, confirmation will arrive via phone or email.

Submissions must be received by the Grant Committee Chair (Dale Epperson) by April 17, 2026.