



Neighborhood Habitat Challenge Frequently Asked Questions

1) What is the timeframe of the Habitat Challenge?

- The Challenge begins **April 15th** and ends **November 14th 2012**. All online and paper habitat certification applications must arrive by November 14, 2012.

2) What is required to win the Habitat Challenge?

All participating neighborhoods must complete the following activities as part of the challenge. The top three neighborhoods that certify the most habitats within their boundaries and complete all of the challenge requirements will be recognized by the city and eligible for prizes.

- Certify the most number of wildlife habitats as possible within the neighborhood boundaries with the National Wildlife Federation (NWF) **by November 14, 2012**.
- As a neighborhood group, participate in a community habitat related project such as removing invasive plants as part of an ongoing project, planting trees in a common area, restoring a creek area or planting a neighborhood butterfly garden. Contact Wildlife Austin for more information and/or project ideas.
- Publish an article about the Habitat Challenge and gardening for wildlife in neighborhood newsletter and/or website.
- Provide summary and documentation of challenge experience and community habitat project by November 14th 2012 deadline. More details on format and content to be provided upon registration.

3) How can my neighborhood participate in the Habitat Challenge?

The first step is for a neighborhood to register for the challenge by completing the registration form found on the website or requesting a form from Wildlife Austin. A main contact person should be selected for all participating neighborhoods. Their role is to register the neighborhood, engage the neighborhood in the challenge and community project, and answer questions.

Registered neighborhoods must complete all of the challenge requirements by **November 14, 2012**.

Participation is limited to Neighborhood Associations/Groups registered with City of Austin Community Registry: <http://www.austintexas.gov/department/community-registry>.

4) How do I find out if my neighborhood is participating in the Habitat Challenge?

Contact your neighborhood association leaders. If your neighborhood is not a participant then encourage your association to take on this community-building activity!

You may also contact the Wildlife Austin program to see if your neighborhood is registered.

5) How do I get my property certified as a wildlife habitat with the National Wildlife Federation?

You can create a wildlife habitat by providing **food, water, cover, and places to raise young** for songbirds, butterflies and other wildlife and then certify your property with the National Wildlife Federation (NWF). Visit www.nwf.org/backyard/certify.cfm for certification details.

You may also certify your property with NWF with a City of Austin pre-paid habitat certification application which must be requested directly from the Wildlife Austin program.

6) How do I learn about more about gardening for wildlife and how to create a wildlife habitat?

Austin is a wonderful place to learn about creating habitat for butterflies and songbirds! There are plenty of seminars on butterfly gardening, attracting birds, native plants and gardening for wildlife offered by local nurseries, non-profits, garden clubs, government agencies and other groups. Be on the look out for postings in local newspapers, calendars, email list serves, and websites. You may also contact the Wildlife Austin program for more information.

Below are some informative websites to get you started:

National Wildlife Federation Certified Wildlife Habitat Program

<http://www.nwf.org/gardenforwildlife>

National Audubon Society- Audubon At Home

http://www.audubon.org/bird/at_home/index.html

Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center

<http://www.wildflower.org/>

Texas Parks and Wildlife Department- Texas Wildscapes program

<http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/huntwild/wild/wildscapes/>

Travis Audubon Society

<http://www.travisaudubon.org/>

Austin Butterfly Forum

<http://www.austinbutterflies.org/>

7) I heard that the City has a limited quantity of pre-paid habitat certification applications available. Is there normally a fee associated with certifying a yard as a wildlife habitat with NWF?

Yes, the NWF certification processing fee is \$20.00. The City is making a limited number of pre-paid habitat certification applications available to Austin residents on a first come first serve basis. To request a pre-paid application please contact the Wildlife Austin Program at wildlife@austintexas.gov or 512-978-2606.

8) I live in “_____” neighborhood and my yard was certified two years ago by the National Wildlife Federation as a wildlife habitat. Does it count towards the 2012 Habitat Challenge?

Unfortunately, your certified habitat will not count towards your neighborhood's overall habitat count for the 2012 challenge. Only new habitats certified between April 15th and November 14th 2012 will count.

However, your certified wildlife habitat has already been counted towards Austin's total number of certified habitats. Austin needed a minimum of 600 certified homes to achieve the habitat goal for Community Wildlife Habitat certification with NWF. This goal was achieved in November 2008.

Now that you have done your part to provide habitat in your own backyard please consider reaching out to neighbors about transforming their yards into homes for hummingbirds and butterflies too. Share the challenge information with neighborhood association leaders to generate interest in taking this fun challenge.

9) How does the neighborhood demonstrate it participated in a community habitat project and published an article about the challenge and gardening for wildlife in the neighborhood newsletter and/or website?

Upon completing all of the requirements the neighborhood contact will include photos of the community habitat project workday and copies of the newsletter/website article(s) that will be included as part of a summary report due by the November 14th 2012 deadline. More details on the format and content to be provided upon registration. This will demonstrate that the neighborhood has completed these two requirements in addition to certifying the most number of wildlife habitats as possible during the challenge period.

I0) Are prizes awarded to winning neighborhoods?

Yes! First, second and third place prizes will be awarded to the top three neighborhood associations/groups based on completion of challenge requirements and number of properties certified within neighborhood's boundaries during the contest period. All prizes are awarded at the discretion of the City of Austin.

All winning neighborhoods will receive Council Proclamation, website recognition, and a certificate of merit in addition to a prize for the entire neighborhood. Previous year's prizes included a neighborhood picnic, Designing for Wildlife Workshop, individual tree give-aways, and a canoe trip on Lady Bird Lake for challenge participants. This year we might also include a free guided bird walk by Travis Audubon!

I1) Whom can I contact for more information?

Contact the Wildlife Austin program:

City of Austin Parks and Recreation Department

919 W. 28th 1/2 Street

Austin, Texas 78705

512-978-2605

wildlife@austintexas.gov

