

**Chris Chapman and Vince Schueler** created an organic, low-maintenance landscape for wildlife habitat and to protect the lake that they enjoy. Ten years ago the Native Plant Salvage Project started one of their first residential demonstration gardens in Chris and Vince's front yard. Today, native plants grow thickly together to create excellent wildlife habitat. The lawn goes dormant in the summer and any plant too picky to survive with minimal care is left out of this landscape. A busy family with priorities such as camping, athletics, and swimming in the lake depend on a low-maintenance landscape to keep the yard looking good through the busy summer months. This mostly native landscape is drought tolerant as well as pest and disease-resistant. Vegetable beds and berries encourage the entire family to get involved in garden care. When rewarded with sweet, freshly-picked treats, even teenagers can be encouraged to garden!

**How many hours a week do you spend gardening?** Just about three hours a week. This includes lawn mowing.

**How do you control pests?** The native landscape does a great job of preventing pests and these gardeners' live and let live attitude mean that pests aren't worried about too much. Squirrels eating the bulbs? Well, there's enough for everyone. Slugs are the only pests not tolerated. They are prevented by removing their hiding places such as boards or excess vegetation and killed when found.

**How do you fertilize?** They fertilize the grass with a slow-release, organic lawn mix from Black Lake Organic every other year and use compost to fertilize the vegetable beds every year or so.

**Tell us about your watering strategies.** The only area of the yard that gets watered is the vegetables, berries and flower boxes. They receive water once a week in the driest months for up to two hours at a time for deep watering.

**What approach do you use for controlling diseases?** Disease hasn't been an issue in this mostly native landscape. Unhealthy plants are removed and disposed of in the garbage rather than compost bin, where the rest of the yard and kitchen wastes go. If there was a problem the first solution would be to add ventilation to the diseased area and if that didn't solve the problem, get rid of the plant.

**How do you handle weeds?** Hand weeding often and early is the number one strategy for these gardeners. Vegetable beds are covered in the winter and a landscape barrier is used in landscape areas but that doesn't mean that there isn't plenty of time for "weeding as a spiritual exercise"!

**What are your biggest gardening challenges?** The biggest challenges are keeping up with the steady growth of shrubs and bushes.

**What makes gardening fun or satisfying for you?** The pleasure of being outside to pursue a relaxing effort.