

URBAN MEADOWS FOR BALTIMORE

What are urban meadows?

Urban meadows are **low-impact, self-sustaining communities** of grasses and flowering plants in urban areas that can replace turfgrass lawns with thriving natural ecosystems.

Why are they important?

Grass lawns in the U.S. cover an estimated **63,000 square miles** — that's larger than the state of Georgia. Although some lawns can be useful for recreation, many of the grass areas are not used and also come with large environmental and economic costs. By comparison, urban meadows are a **cost-effective solution** offering a host of **environmental, financial, and aesthetic benefits**.

What are their benefits?



Reduced Maintenance Costs

Turfgrass requires regular mowing and maintenance, but meadows only require mowing once or twice a year. The needs of urban meadows are met by the sun, rain, air, and soil, so they can thrive with little cost or effort.



Improved Stormwater Management

Meadows are much more effective at absorbing stormwater than lawns due to looser soils and the more extensive root systems of native flowers and grasses. They also improve water quality by intercepting pollutants not absorbed by turfgrass.



Reduced Air Pollution

In 2020, gas-powered lawn equipment created large amounts of air pollution and emitted over 30 million tons of CO₂. Urban meadow maintenance creates far less air pollution, and meadow plants remove pollutants from the air more effectively than turfgrass.



Improved Physical & Mental Health

By improving air quality, urban meadows reduce the risk of health complications such as heart disease and asthma. Exposure to nature has also been linked to mental health benefits including reduced stress and anxiety.



Water Conservation

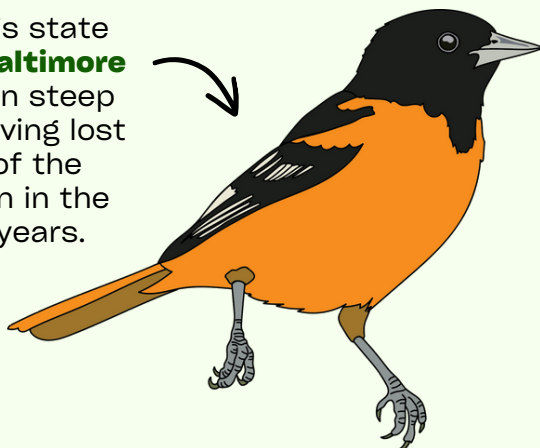
Residential, commercial, and municipal areas across the U.S. require billions of gallons of water per day for landscape irrigation. Meadows can thrive without irrigation, thereby conserving water for other community needs.



Habitat Creation & Beauty

Urban meadows support greater biodiversity than a manicured lawn, with diverse vegetation providing a beautiful habitat for essential pollinators, birds, and butterflies — **including Maryland's very own state bird and insect.**

Maryland's state bird, the **Baltimore Oriole**, is in steep decline, having lost a third of the population in the last 50 years.



Maryland's state insect, the **Baltimore Checkerspot**, is on Maryland's list of "rare, threatened, and endangered species."

