

SAWS Coupon

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Have you been thinking about creating a hummingbird and butterfly garden in your landscape? If you are a SAWS customer, it would be relatively easy to produce a 200 sq. ft garden and have most of the costs covered by their current water conservation Coupon Program.

Here's how you could start. Identify a 200 sq. ft patch of lawn in full sun that is now watered with sprinkler irrigation and make a planting plan for the garden. The plan could be based on an actual garden like the Milberger's Certified Butterfly Garden or be an adaption of a plan from a resource book such as in Geyata Ajilvsgi's "Butterfly Gardening for the South". The Milberger Garden is approximately 200 sq. ft. as it now exists. Geyata's plan for the Hill Country Garden starts out larger than 200 sq. ft. but it would be easy to adjust the size. There are lots of other garden plans available on the internet.

The only thing magic about the 200 sq. ft. is that it is the amount of lawn that you must convert to a more water efficient situation to receive the \$100 coupon for plants from participating nurseries. The conversion can be larger if you are content with the \$100. No, that is not true, you can actually receive up to 8 of the 200 sq. ft. conversions if you fulfill SAWS requirements over the designated time frame. Check the specifications of the Coupon Program on their Gardenstyle.com website.

The lawn grass must be replaced by at least 15 plants from a list of 100 choices offered. Many of the plants are butterfly and hummingbird nectar sources and or butterfly egg-laying site species. Of course, the list includes all the native milkweeds and the Mexican milkweed. Milkweeds are the only plant Genus on which Monarch and their cousins the Queen butterflies will lay their eggs. Texas Gold esperanza is the egg-laying site for the Gray Hairstreak and a nectar source for hummingbirds, it is on the list. Other desirable butterfly and hummingbird plants on the list include flame acanthus, all the salvias and lantanas, pride of Barbados, shrimp plant, plumbago, Mexican honeysuckle, frogfruit, Mexican olive, Turks cap, mint marigold, firebush, and the mistflowers. They are not on the 100-plant list but there is nothing in the program that says you couldn't plant a passion vine, dill, and citrus tree to provide egg-laying sites for even more butterfly species.

The 200 sq. ft. of grass must be removed. You can dig up the lawn grass, but it is also acceptable to kill it with a contact herbicide for grass and then plant the new garden right into the killed sod. In addition to replacing the lawn grass, you will have to disconnect the sprinkler irrigation in the coupon area.

To participate in the 2019 Coupon Program, SAWS customers must apply to the gardenstyle.com website by October 15. If you register, you will receive an email describing the photos of your landscape needed to be submitted for the program monitoring. You have until Nov 17 to purchase the plants. A special \$50 mulch bonus is also available for participants that apply for it by December 15.

In addition to Milberger's, Fanicks, both Rainbow Gardens, and the Garden Center Nurseries are participating in the SAWS Coupon Program.

It is time to plant your fall vegetable garden. Join me this morning (Sept 21) for a free program sponsored by the Dreamhill Estates neighborhood at 6802 Dorothy Louise Dr in the Medical Center area (410 to w on Babcock and S on Dorothy Louise). The program will run from 9:30 through 11:00 am.

Attendees will receive a broccoli transplant and an information handout. For more information call 210-382 4455.