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## Local gardeners honored for use of native plants



*The 2013 Bringing Nature Home Award Winners are, from left, Joan and Larry Murphy, Chesterton; Lydia Miramontes Loyd, Michigan City; Linda Alessi, Valparaiso; Pat Reynolds, Valparaiso, Larry Bamesburger (representing his son and daughter-in-law Fred and Leslie Bamesburger, Valparaiso); and Carole Stodder, Pines.*

HOBART | The Friends of Shirley Heinze presented Bringing Nature Home Awards to six local gardeners recognized for including native plants in their home landscaping. The ceremony, held Saturday in Hobart, was hosted by Shirley Heinze Land Trust as part of the organization's annual Donor Appreciation Day.

Award winners for 2013 are:

Linda Alessi, of Valparaiso. She has created a botanical oasis for people and wildlife, while protecting the natural slopes on her property from erosion.

Fred and Leslie Bamesburger, of Valparaiso. They are establishing a natural prairie, several acres in size, that has brought back rarely-seen grassland birds.

Lydia Miramontes Loyd, of Michigan City. She has included plantings of a wide variety of native flora throughout her yard.

Larry and Joan Murphy, of Chesterton. They have installed two rain gardens and dozens of native grass, sedge, herb and woody species at their home in Coffee Creek Center.

Pat Reynolds, of Valparaiso. She has added natural beauty to her property by installing a native-plant garden, interspersing natives throughout, and almost eliminating her lawn.

Carole Stodder, of Pines. For the past 12 years, she has introduced many species of prairie and woodland plants to her home garden.

The Bringing Nature Home Awards were inaugurated in 2011 to honor home gardeners and institutional landscapers who use native flowers, trees, shrubs, and ferns in their plantings. The name of the awards was adopted from the book of that title by Douglas Tallamy, a University of Delaware professor who advises individual gardeners to entice native fauna "back home" by replacing turf and nonnative plantings with native flora. Once established, natives require little watering, no fertilizer or insecticides, and they can hold their own — with some help — against many weeds. The practice also helps prevent excessive stormwater runoff and soil erosion.

The Friends of Shirley Heinze will present Bringing Nature Home Awards to the 2013 institutional landscaping winners at the Shirley Heinze Land Trust Annual Community Luncheon on Nov. 8 at Briar Ridge Country Club in Schererville.

For more information on the Bringing Nature Home Awards program and the work of Shirley Heinze Land Trust, visit [www.heinzetrust.org](http://www.heinzetrust.org)