

EMBRACING NATURAL BEAUTY: STEWARDING YOUR PROPERTY IN DUNE ACRES

Dune Acres has a century-old legacy of environmental stewardship and harmonious coexistence with nature. It is truly a unique gem along the southern shore of Lake Michigan. Our town's rich history, dating back to its founding in 1923, is intricately woven with a commitment to preserving the natural beauty that first drew scientists and nature enthusiasts to this land.

As you become more familiar with our town's values and ethos, you'll come to understand the significance of our native vegetation, the thriving ecosystems that have evolved over time, and the precious balance we've maintained between human habitation and the natural environment.

Many newcomers are eager to beautify their properties through conventional landscaping practices. While these approaches might be common in other settings, I'd like to take a moment to share a perspective that is unique to Dune Acres.

Our town embraces a philosophy of stewardship. Instead of traditional landscaping, we invite you to consider the beauty of preserving and nurturing the natural flora that has thrived here for generations. This is not just a matter of aesthetics; it's a commitment to honor the ecological heritage that makes our town so exceptional.

We understand this concept might be different from what you've encountered elsewhere, but it's a key part of what sets Dune Acres apart. Our ordinances reflect our dedication to safeguarding our environment. We strictly prohibit the introduction of invasive plant species, including some that are frequently recommended by landscape designers. We also strongly discourage the use of lawn grass, non-native plants, and the cultivated varieties of native plants—commonly called “nativars.”

If you decide to collaborate with a landscape designer or architect or wish to introduce “traditional” landscaping to your property, the following suggestions could be valuable:

- Embrace the guiding principle of “building within nature’s envelope”—introduce plants only in immediate proximity to structures, allowing the remaining property to blend harmoniously with the natural surroundings.
- Engage an ecologist to conduct a “floristic survey” to identify the existing plants on your property. This will guide your decisions regarding plant removal and protection during construction.
- Prioritize the preservation of existing vegetation during construction, which will yield substantial long-term cost savings.
- Retain removed topsoil; it is irreplaceable and vital to our ecosystem.
- Strategize restoration for disturbed areas, often commencing with native ground cover like Pennsylvania sedge.
- Avoid excessive landscaping; the removal of invasive species alone can unveil dormant native plants.
- Exercise patience before significant landscaping. Plants that may seem unremarkable in one season could reveal themselves as blooming marvels in another.

Thank you for making Dune Acres your home. We cordially invite you to join us in preserving our shared natural heritage for generations to come.