



# Participant Consultation Guide

Participant(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Consultation Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Participant consultation priorities:

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## What to have on-hand or to bring

- Participant site report
- Certification Determination Form  
*(As your own outline of what to cover or to make notes for the participant)*
- Metro's "Native Plants for Willamette Valley Yards"
- Something for taking notes: phone, paper/pen, etc.
- Backyard Habitat name tag *(if visiting in-person)*
- Backyard Habitat Volunteer Manual
- Metal certification sign *(if visiting in-person, just in case)*

## What to discuss during the consultation:

Below are possible questions for you to ask to help guide the conversation with the participant.

The Certification Determination Form is also a helpful conversational guide as it walks through the elements of certification and can help identify for the participant what would be needed for reaching their certification goals in any of the 5 elements.

### **1. Starting the Conversation: Ask General/Big Picture Questions**

- What are your overall goals or priorities for your yard?  
*In general, not just in terms of certification.*
- What are some of the primary uses of your yard?
- What priorities do you want us to cover today related to creating habitat or achieving your certification goals?  
*It's helpful to frame the conversation in terms of Backyard Habitat. Otherwise you might end up acting as a general garden consultant and spend the whole time discussing hydrangeas 😊*
- Are their specific habitat-related projects you have questions about how to implement?

## 2. Getting into the specifics: Certification-specific questions

Below are some potential questions to ask to guide them through various topic areas.

### Naturescaping with Native Plants

- What part(s) of your yard do you want to naturescape or have you already dedicated to naturescaping?
- Throughout these areas:
  - a. Do you or would you have room for at least 3 canopy layers?
  - b. What percentage is currently planted with locally native plants, if any?
  - c. To reach \_\_\_\_ certification, you'd need \_ sq ft. to be naturescaped with native plants
- What are some of your favorite native plants that you'd like to include or emphasize?
- Are there specific species (such as birds or bees) that you want to support?
- Are there current areas of the yard that you definitely do or don't want to change?
- Are there non-native plants that you definitely don't want to get rid of or move?

### Other Certification Elements

- What Backyard Habitat priority weeds are or were present in your yard? Do you need species-specific information on how to remove these weeds?
- Have you been successful in the past with removing priority weeds? What worked?
- What Wildlife Stewardship or Stormwater Management items have you or do you want to focus on?
- What products, if any, do you use on your yard? Do you need information on how to look up their toxicity or on finding less toxic alternatives?

## 3. Barriers: Bringing the Conversation to a Close

- What barriers have you encountered while working towards certification?
- What types of resources would be most helpful in removing those barriers?
- Do you have any other Backyard Habitat-related questions?

### Helpful Tips You Might Share

- **Naturescaping:** Encourage them to focus on naturescaping 1-2 areas that will achieve the requirements of square footage, percent naturescaped, and canopy levels rather than giving suggestions for the entire yard. If they say they want to naturescape "any" or "all" of it, try to get them to narrow it down to get started. They can always add more!
- Remind participants that just 1-2 items are required in Wildlife Stewardship and Stormwater Management. Nature will love them for doing all of them, but that isn't required for the program.
- Remind them that any steps they take are improving habitat, whether they officially qualify for certification or not.
- Remind them of all the resources and ideas on the program website. Perhaps follow up with an email with a few specific links.