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Keystone Plants

Quoting Doug Tallamy , Keystone native plants support the largest number of different wildlife species. One clue is to count how many caterpillar species a plant supports, transferring the plant’s energy to scores of wildlife species. 96% of terrestrial birds rely on butterfly and moth larvae to feed their young. 90% of the nation’s caterpillars rely on just 14 % of native plant species for food.

Besides caterpillars, animal pollinators, especially bees, are essential to 80% of the world’s flowering plants. 30% of the 4000 bees native to N.A. eat pollen only from a narrow range of plants, so these are essential to plant.

The trees that are Keystone are oaks, willows and cherry.

Oaks provide food for more than 950 species of butterfly & moth caterpillars, more than any other tree in North America. In turn, they provide the food for 96% of songbirds, as well as lots of wildlife that eat the acorns.

The plants that are Keystone are sunflowers, asters, and goldenrods.

“North America’s more than 100 goldenrod species provide a food source at a time of year when many other plants have stopped flowering, “ especially during fall butterfly migration.

Asters are host plants for 100 moth and butterfly species as well as a variety of insects.

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