

National Wildlife Federation and Scotts Miracle Gro: Perfect Together?

by Ecosystem Gardener | Personal Blog



Imagine my dismay when I saw a press release yesterday from Scotts Miracle Gro proudly announcing their partnership with the National Wildlife Federation.

Really? WHY????

You wouldn't think that the National Wildlife Federation (NWF) and Scotts Miracle Gro have anything in common would you? I mean, NWF is a very well respected wildlife advocacy and conservation organization, and Scotts has a VERY bad reputation for creating lots of nasty chemicals that kill wildlife, pollute our waterways, kill all the beneficial organisms in our soil, while reaping billions of dollars in profits for doing so.

Well, needless to say, I was disturbed and extremely saddened by this news. Was the National Wildlife Federation selling out to a corporation with no environmental conscience?

So, I wrote about it over at my team blog, Native Plants and Wildlife Gardens.

My team members were similarly upset by this marriage, and they began to tweet my article, share it on facebook, and leave comments at the [National Wildlife Federations facebook page](#) (make sure you click the tab that says Everyone under the photo bar).

Within a few hours, my article had been shared over 100 times to other peoples facebook pages. It was being tweeted and retweeted all over twitter and shared on Google+. People were understandably upset.

Not long after this I received a comment from an NWF spokesperson attempting to explain that this really would be a beneficial arrangement. (In the interest of full disclosure I have been friends with David Mizejewski on facebook and twitter for several years now. I have always been an admirer of his work and respected his passion for wildlife conservation.)

Ill let Davids comment speak for itself:

Hi Folks – I'm one of Carole's online friends and admirers, and I'm also naturalist with NWF. This is an important conversation so I want to share some of what this NWF-Scotts partnership is about.

NWF and Scotts share a common goal of reaching as many Americans as possible with messages that inspire people to connect to nature and the outdoors. Through education and activities such as gardening, birding, camping and natural play areas, our mutual goal is to make more families aware of the benefits of outdoor time and to inspire people to protect wildlife.

This cooperative agreement benefits wildlife because it enables NWF to reach many millions more people than we currently reach. With the Save the Songbirds campaign alone we are going to be educating millions of new people about the decline in songbirds and about how they can create wildlife-friendly gardens to help reverse that trend. Specifically, our goal with the campaign is to create 50,000 acres of new songbird habitat and save one million songbirds in 2012.

And let's face it, if we're really going to make a difference with the wildlife gardening concept, we in conservation need to be reaching those millions of people out there that we currently aren't on our own, the people who've never heard of a native plant, those who offer no habitat for wildlife in their yards. Those folks might not be as knowledgeable as you or me, or willing to take the concept as far as us, but we need to meet them where they are and help them along. We all know what happens when someone who has only ever had a lawn and a few exotic plants in their yard takes the first steps and puts in a birdbath or a plants a native and then the wildlife actually shows up: they get hooked. They want to take the next step, plant more natives, go organic, convert more of their yards into habitat. Some even become die-hards like us. That's what this is all about for both NWF and Scotts.

Another key aspect of this partnership is NWF's ability to help Scotts with its sustainability initiatives. They are already doing a lot on their own in terms of developing more sustainable products and practices. With this agreement, NWF is now working with them directly to advance important sustainability and conservation issues and promoting ways to help reduce the impact of lawn and garden products on wildlife and wild places such as ponds, lakes, and streams. In this case, we believe that by working together, we can make more progress more quickly on improving the environment.

At NWF we respect our members' opinions, even critical or skeptical ones. So thanks Carole for sparking the discussion! We believe this partnership aligns well with our mission to inspire Americans to protect wildlife for our children's future.

Now, if you're like me, this comment raises a whole lot more questions than it answers, right? Do you understand why NWF would make this deal with the devil?

Im not quite clear on that. So, I contacted David Mizejewski and asked him if he would like to be interviewed so that he could clear up all of our questions, and he has graciously agreed to do so. Ill be talking to him later this afternoon (Tuesday 1/24).

Id be very interested in knowing what you'd like me to ask him. What questions do you have for the National Wildlife Federation regarding their partnership with Scotts Miracle Gro? Do you have any message for me to pass along to him? Please enter your questions below in the comments. Ill ask David as many as we have time for.

And remember: Alone we are small, but together we are mighty!!!

If you'd like to tell NWF your thoughts on this subject you can do it here:

- Post your thoughts on [NWFs facebook page](#) (make sure you click the tab that says Everyone under the photo bar)
- Tweet your message to NWF on twitter, including @NWF in your message
- Call NWF: 1-800-822-9919 ; M-F 8 a.m to 8 p.m. EST
- [Leave a comment on their website](#)

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