

ATTRACTING BIRDS



All trees and shrubs will provide something of value to birds – nesting sites, insect food, shelter from weather and predators.

There are, without doubt, birds in your garden now. If you wish to encourage more birds and more varieties of birds around your home, you can do so by providing a variety of trees and shrubs, particularly those that provide food in the form of fruit, berries, nuts or seeds.

BIRDS LOVE CHERRIES

If you grow sweet cherries for your own use you will know that they have to be netted to prevent the birds from taking them. Mayday Trees and Shubert's Chokecherry have fruit that we do not find palatable but is enjoyed by birds. Sour Cherries that we use for pies also make a nice ornamental small tree.

MOUNTAIN ASH

The brilliantly coloured berries of Mountain Ash are devoured by Robins, Cedar Waxwings and other birds. Many varieties and forms of Mountain Ash are available and they are highly ornamental trees. (The birds for some reason do not like the fruit of the variety 'Leonard Springer'). If not eaten in the fall they persist on the tree all winter. Their height above snow cover provides food when mid-winter sources are scarce and are used in early spring by the first returning migrants.

RUSSIAN OLIVE

Many trees have desirable fruit for birds, which we hardly notice, however the birds find with ease since the fruit is not highly coloured. Russian Olive is a good example and with its silver foliage and fragrant yellow flowers it makes an excellent choice for gardeners.

WHITE BIRCH

Seed-eating birds such as Redpolls, Pine Siskins and Goldfinch find an abundance of seed on this attractive tree. It is particularly valuable to those birds that stay with us all winter.

MAPLE AND OAKS

If your garden is large enough for these tall trees you will attract Orioles, Tanagers and the Red-eyed Vireo, for they prefer the safety of the high upper-canopy.

CONIFERS

The dense foliage of Spruce, Pine, Fir, Larch and Hemlock provide secure nesting sites for many birds and an ample supply of seeds from their varied cones. Cedar Waxwings love the red fruit of Yew in the early fall.

SHRUBS THAT ATTRACT BIRDS

Small fruits such as currants, raspberries, blackberries and gooseberries will certainly attract birds. Blueberries will have to be netted, they are so desirable.

Among ornamental shrubs there are many with choice fruit. The dark mature fruit of Elderberry is ravenously eaten by many songbirds, including thrushes and warblers.

All viburnums except the double flowered Snowball have berry fruit. The brightly coloured fruit of the High Bush Cranberry is not usually taken by birds, but can be a life-saving source of food in severe winters. Nannyberry fruit is found more palatable and is a favourite of the brown thrasher.

Other shrubs with berries are: Oregon Grape Holly, Flowering Currant, Bush Honeysuckle, Rugosa Rose, Redleaf Rose, all Dogwoods, Serviceberry, Privet, Coralberry, Snowberry and Autumn Olive. The fruit of Cotoneaster and Firethorn is not usually taken by birds.

WEEDS AND GRASSES

If you can provide a "wild" spot in your garden for tall grasses, thistles, goldenrod, and ragweed, you will add greatly to your list of bird visitors – Horned Lark, Meadowlark, Buntings, Bobolink and others.

In a cultivated garden ornamental grasses can be used, leaving them to stand into the winter with their supply of seeds. So too, with many annual and perennial plants which we normally remove or cut down in the fall; if left in place they will provide abundant seed for birds in winter. For example, Sunflowers, Cosmos, Zinnias and Asters.

VIRGINIA CREEPER

A climbing vine with brilliant foliage in fall and a bountiful harvest of shiny black berries that is enjoyed by many birds including Kingbirds, Flycatchers and Bluebirds.

ATTRACTING HUMMINGBIRDS

The preferred flower for the hummingbird is red in colour and tubular in form, and in a massed bed because a hummingbird has to visit about one thousand blooms everyday to meet its needs of sweet nectar. Next to red, they prefer orange and pink, but they also visit flowers of other colours. Other summer flowers that attract are Petunias, Phlox, Snapdragon, Cleome, Sweet William, Nicotiana and Zinnias.

Favourite perennials include Gladioli, Red Hot Poker, Monarda, Bleeding Heart, Columbine and Penstemon, Vining Honeysuckles like Dropmore Scarlet and Heckrot's Goldflame have the correct shape and colouration. Also, Morning Glory, Trumpet Vine and Scarlet Runner Bean. Flowering shrubs include Weigela, Beauty Bush, Butterfly Bush, Coralberry, Flowering Currant and Flowering Quince.

WATER

Hummingbirds need eight times their weight in water everyday. If your property does not include a pond or stream, providing water in a birdbath or large saucer will bring birds to your garden and keep them coming back. Sugar-water dispensers designed to attract Hummingbirds are also available.

BIRD FEEDERS

The larger the menu that you offer, the more types of birds you will attract. Try bread crumbs, dried fruit, peanut butter, suet, cracked corn and Sunflower seeds.

Many birds will feed from an elevated tray, while some will feed only on the ground; for others a seed encrusted ball of suet suspended from a tree is ideal.

BIRDS EAT INSECTS TOO

Enticing birds to your garden with desirable fruit and seeds will help greatly in controlling insect populations as most birds prefer a varied diet. The importance of insect control by birds can hardly be over-rated. Robins may take the "garden-friendly" earthworms but also ants, beetles, cankerworms, caterpillars, cutworms, crickets, flies (pupae and adults), slugs, snails, sowbugs, spiders, termites, wireworms and weevils. Wood Warblers are almost 100% insect eaters.

In bringing birds to your garden you add a new dimension of interest and will be rewarded by their colour, movement and song. The trees and shrubs will enhance your garden as you benefit again.



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