



www.oaklandnursery.com

Phone 614.268.3511

## Landscaping for Birds

As the suburbs push ever out and wild habitat becomes rooftops and pavement, wildlife is squeezed ever more. You can give some habitat back to wildlife with thoughtful and generous plantings in the home landscape, and other additions that provide the three things they need: Food, Water and Shelter. This fact sheet will give you the essentials in creating a landscape more attractive to birds, bugs and butterflies.

### Essentials to creating Bird Habitat

- Plan your landscape to provide layers of foliage from the ground to low shrubs, high shrubs, small trees to large trees. This variety of plants, heights and density creates great habitat for all kinds of wildlife.
- Reduce the amount of lawn, *and* the lawn you mow. Natural height grass creates habitat for more biological life, i.e. bird food. No pesticides or synthetic fertilizers on the grass!
- “Edge Areas”, that is, the transition between field and trees, flowers and berries, shrubs and trees, are bird magnets. It gives them a lot of different areas to perch, hide, nest, feed, court, and rest.
- Have a source of water available 12 months of the year, whether it is a pond, water garden, fountain, bird bath, or all of the above. Water features are important parts of the garden anyway.
- Plant to provide many kinds of flowers, fruit, vegetables, seeds, nectar plants and cones throughout the season, so as many different kinds of birds can find food at as many times of the year as possible. Avoid at all costs invasive and noxious non-natives plants, and remove existing invaders.
- Try to mix a variety of deciduous and evergreen plants together to get that all important density in the planting area. Keep in mind most evergreens need lots of sun.
- Add a bird feeding station and nest boxes. Birds love a smorgasbord, and nest boxes help attract specific kinds of birds, such as bluebirds. They also provide nesting sights in areas with few large trees, such as new developments or large, empty township yards.
- A Brush pile in an out of the way spot provides shelter in winter, and escape outlets from predators.
- No Chemicals! Ever. Don’t poison the very habitat you’re trying to create. There are plenty of effective organic alternatives available, rather than use petroleum based poisons. There is vast damage being done to the earth by the manufacture and use of synthetic fertilizers and pesticides. When lawn and garden poisons are eliminated, the resulting increase in insect life will attract many more birds.

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- Domestic cats kill an estimated 1,000,000,000 wild birds a year. Cats are domestic animals that have no place roaming the neighborhood killing wildlife for sport. Keep kitty in, especially during nesting season.
- The top cause of death in wild birds is window strikes. It is a sad thing to witness, so in areas where birds frequent (near feeders, bird baths nesting shrubs) put up reflectors, or other repellents to highlight the presence of a solid surface to them.

### **Plants to Attract Birds.**

#### **Perennials**

Purple coneflower, Black-eyed Susan, Joe Pye Weed, Globe Thistle, Amer. Pokeweed, Asters, Bachelor Button, Coreopsis, sedums, Evening Primrose, Goldenrod.

#### **Shrubs and Vines**

Bayberry, Staghorn Sumac, Viburnums, Serviceberry (Shadbush), Elderberry, Blueberry, Chokeberry, Spicebush, Winterberry, Eastern Red Cedar, Juniper, Butterfly Bush, Quince, Blue Spirea, Witchhazel, Smooth Hydrangea, Holly, Blue Arctic Willow.

#### **Small and Fruiting Trees**

Dogwoods, Redbuds, American Plum, American Persimmon, Mulberry, Crabapple, Serviceberry, Red Cedar, Junipers, Ohio Buckeye, American Hornbeam, Hop Hornbeam, Hawthorn, American Holly, Flowering Cherry, most domestic fruit trees, such as apple, pear, peach, cherry.

#### **Large Trees**

Canaan Fir, Spruces, Hemlock, Vanderwolf Pine, Sugar Maple, Red Maple, Beech, Black gum, Tulip Poplar, Oaks, Elms, Willow, Lindens, Kentucky Coffeetree, Hickory.

### **Resources**

There are many resources available online. In addition, professional Landscape Designers are increasingly specializing in Sustainable and naturalized landscaping. Below are a few references to start with.

**Cornell University Lab of Ornithology . Several websites and publications.**

**National Audubon Society**

**Oakland Nursery. Expert advice, wild birding supplies, and books.**

**Ohio Department of Natural Resources. Several excellent birding publications.**