

Four Main Considerations

Proper selection of trees and shrubs, providing food and water, and offering shelter to regional and migrating birds creates a wildlife habitat in your own backyard.

To provide an inviting habitat in your yard for our feathered friends, four things should be considered:

Cover

Cover, found in trees or even a simple dense hedge, offers immediate protection from predators and the elements. It also minimizes snow cover on the ground where fallen seeds may provide food. Diversity is key. An assortment of native and introduced shrubs benefit birds not only with protection, but with winter berries as well. Include evergreen trees or large shrubs as they offer cover all year.

Food

Some birds are attracted to seed while others will feed on fruits and insects. To encourage many types of birds, include both plants and feeders

in your yard. At the end of the growing season, leave the seed heads on your grasses and perennials to encourage more visitors.

The following plants are good food sources for birds.

- Choke cherries
- Raspberries
- Currants
- Gooseberries
- Junipers
- Crabapples
- Peaches
- Plums
- Pears
- Hawthorns
- Nannyberries
- Cotoneaster
- Pyracantha
- Agastache hybrids (for hummingbirds)
- Echinacea (seed heads)

Feeders

Determine what types of birds you would like to attract. Then, pick appropriate feeders for these types of birds. General seed mixtures are popular because they attract a wide-range of birds. (Note: “no-mess” type mixtures are hulled products that will not re-seed in your garden.) However, some birds are more attracted to cer-

tain types of seed (example: goldfinches/nyjer seed, hummingbirds/nectar). In any case follow these additional tips:

- Always keep your feeders clean.
- Discourage squirrels with baffles
- Place feeders in an open area out of predator’s reach.

Water

Providing water is one of the best ways to attract birds. It is very important during both summer and winter, especially if there’s been minimal moisture from Mother Nature.

- Provide a birdbath.
- Put a sloping rock in the middle so smaller birds can reach the water too.
- In the winter keep the water thawed by refilling regularly or by using a water heater to keep it from freezing.

Nesting or roosting areas

Roosting and nesting sites vary for each type of bird. By planting a variety of trees and shrubs in your landscape, you encourage a diverse population. If you want to attract your favorite species, you can put up a roosting or nesting box constructed specifically for that kind of bird.