



Planning a Wildlife Garden

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When you welcome birds and butterflies to your yard, you add colors, movements and sounds that make your garden seem more alive and vibrant. The following tips from the National Audubon Society will help you create a habitat that allows wildlife to flourish.

Plant for food sources. Birds are attracted to seeds, berries, fruits and nectar. Migrating birds such as tanagers, robins, orioles and Cedar Waxwings may stop for several days to feast before they continue on their long flights. Butterflies—essential pollinators in the garden—need flowers that have nectar, such as those in the Aster family.

- Offer a variety of plants for nesting and protection from predators. Bushy shrubs, canopy trees and groundcovers will provide the nooks and crannies birds and other wildlife need to nest and find food. Such plants also provide protection from sun, wind and rain.
- A water source is essential. The single most important thing you can do to attract birds is to provide a source of dripping water. Keep it low to the ground, but make sure it's protected from cats.
- Create a dust bath. Birds use dust baths to clean themselves and get rid of parasites. Try building a small area (about 3 feet square) bordered with attractive rocks or bricks. Fill with loose soil (a mix of sand, ash and loam). The bath will attract native sparrows, thrashers and other ground-dwelling birds.
- Provide nesting materials. Fill a loosely woven net bag with clean dryer lint or scraps of yarn or string. Make sure the holes in the bag are large enough for birds to pull out bits for their nests. Orioles, robins and chickadees will be most appreciative.
- Offer supplemental food. If you live in a cold climate, offer a supplemental food source, such as seeds, suet and fruit, during the winter months for woodpeckers, bluebirds and other species.
- Plan for windbreaks for shelter. If your climate is windy, provide shelter in your wildlife-friendly garden. Plant tall, deciduous trees at the edge of the property, with progressively smaller trees and shrubs as you near the house.
- Provide perches. Although butterflies are attracted to tubular, nectar-bearing flowers, they also need flat flowers where they can rest. A good variety of flowers, shrubs and trees will provide plenty of resting sites. Birds need exposed perching places; dead twigs and small snags are the most beneficial. Thin bamboo poles stuck into the ground will attract resting dragonflies.

- Plant groundcovers and create slopes. Birds such as sparrows, thrashers and thrushes find their food among fallen leaves and groundcovers, where they search for insects. Rosemary, *Lantana*, and creeping juniper are good choices. Creating artificial slopes in the garden provide more nooks and crannies for birds to forage.
- Provide a variety of plants. Birds and butterflies are attracted to colorful, flowering plants that provide food and camouflage. It's important to select plants that produce seeds and fruit in various seasons of the year.