

## **Gardener's Guideline # 4 Using Native Plants To Attract Birds**

The **Gardener's Guideline Series** provide advice and information in the use of native plants in home gardens. They are available from the society: visit the web site or write for a copy.

*GG #1 Obtaining and Using Native Plants*

*GG #2 Collecting Seeds from Native Plants*

*GG #3 Using Native Plants to Attract Butterflies*

*GG #4 Using Native Plants to Attract Birds*

This series is designed to increase awareness of the diversity of native plants and their value to home gardeners. By offering these guidelines, we can protect Maryland's native flora while still enjoying their many benefits in the garden. These were adapted from guidelines by the Canadian Wildflower Society, now the North American Native Plant Society

### **Maryland Native Plant Society**

The Maryland Native Plant Society uses education, research, and community service to increase awareness and appreciation of native plants and their habitats leading to their conservation and restoration.

Membership is open to all who are interested in Maryland's native plants and their habitats. Preserving Maryland's natural heritage, increasing knowledge about native plants, and helping to further the Society's mission are our goals.

The Maryland Native Plant Society sponsors monthly meetings, workshops, field trips, chapters, and an annual fall conference.

## **References**

Visit the Maryland Native Plant Society web site for an extensive bibliography on native plants.

### **The Complete Birdhouse Book**

Donald and Lillian Stokes

### **Attracting Backyard Birds**

Sandy Cortright and Will Pokriots

### **A Field Guide to the Birds of Eastern and Central North America, Fourth Edition**

[Peterson Field Guide 1]; Roger Tory Peterson;

1980; Houghton Mifflin Company

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*Artwork © Gary Pendleton*

## **Maryland Native Plant Society Gardener's Guideline # 4**



## **Using Native Plants to Attract Birds**

## Gardener's Guideline # 4 Using Native Plants to Attract Birds

Most people garden for pleasure and birds add another dimension to the experience. Native plants are ideal for bird gardening because native plants provide food sources, support a diversity of insects that birds eat, and provide places for birds to nest. Native plants increase the diversity of the plants and animals found in the yard, while supporting the native ecological relationships required for a healthy environment.

1. **Do not disrupt native plant communities**, either in the wild or on your property.
2. Select birds and plants that are native in your immediate bioregion. They are best adapted to the local climate, predators, soil and diseases.
3. Plant true native species. Many cultivars (of both exotic and native plants) are bred for unique flower or leaf characteristics and may not be suitable for wildlife.
4. Obtain nursery-propagated plants. Refer to Gardener's Guideline #1 for more information.
5. Reduce the use of insecticides. Many birds eat insects and other invertebrates which reduces the numbers of those which become pests.
6. Provide nesting areas for birds by planting native trees and shrubs and providing boxes and platforms for cavity nesters.
7. Provide food for birds by planting native plants; many eat seeds, some eat fruit, some eat insects, and others eat a combination.
8. Remember, birds eat fruit and seeds, so provide enough for both the birds and yourself.
9. Provide one or more sources of still or running water for drinking and bathing, e.g., birdbath on the ground or a pedestal, pond with plants for perching, small sprinkler used for short periods during the day, mister for bathing, simulated stream with pump for recirculating water
10. Place some of these features where they can be easily viewed from indoors for your increased enjoyment.

## Food for Backyard Birds

Birds	Main Food(s)		
	Insects	Seed	Berries
Woodpeckers	Y	-	-
Flycatchers, Kingbird, Phoebe	Y	-	-
Purple Martin, Swallows, Swifts	Y	-	-
Chickadees, Tufted Titmouse	Y	Y	Y
Nuthatches	Y	Y	-
Mockingbird, Thrasher, Catbird	Y	-	Y
Bluebird, Robin, Thrushes	Y	-	Y
Tanagers	Y	-	Y
Vireos, Warblers, Wrens	Y	-	-
Blue Jay, Orioles	Y	Y	Y
Cardinal, Finches, Grosbeaks	Y	Y	Y
Buntings, Towhees, Sparrows	Y	Y	Y

### Nectar for Hummingbirds

Trumpet Creeper (*Campsis radicans*), Trumpet Honeysuckle (*Lonicera sempervirens*), Eastern Columbine (*Aquilegia canadensis*), Cardinal Flower (*Lobelia cardinalis*).

### Plants Which Attract Insects

Oaks (*Quercus spp.*), Hackberry (*Celtis spp.*), Slippery Elm (*Ulmus rubra*).

### Plants for Berries and Other Fruit

Red Cedar (*Juniperus virginiana*), Sumacs (*Rhus spp.*), Hollies and Winterberries (*Ilex spp.*), Viburnums (*Viburnum spp.*), Dogwoods (*Cornus spp.*), Persimmon (*Diospyros virginiana*), Huckleberries (*Gaylussacia spp.*), Blueberries (*Vaccinium spp.*), Spicebush (*Lindera benzoin*), Sassafras (*Sassafras albidum*), Sour Gum (*Nyssa sylvatica*), Fringe Tree (*Chionanthus virginicus*), Serviceberries (*Amelanchier spp.*), Cherries (*Prunus spp.*), Blackberries and Raspberries (*Rubus spp.*).

### Plants for Seed

Native Grasses and Sedges, Pines (*Pinus spp.*), Maples (*Acer spp.*), Birches (*Betula spp.*), Ashes (*Fraxinus spp.*), Asters (*Aster spp.*), Bonesets (*Eupatorium spp.*), Sunflowers (*Helianthus spp.*), Coneflowers (*Rudbeckia spp.*), Goldenrods (*Solidago spp.*), Oaks (*Quercus spp.*) and other nuts trees, Partridge Peas and Wild Sennas (*Cassia spp.*), Tick Trefoils (*Desmodium spp.*), Bush Clovers (*Lespedeza spp.*) and other legumes.

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