

Bird Friendly Plantings



Key Points for Creating Bird Friendly Gardens

The most successful bird friendly garden is one that is created with the needs of birds in mind. This means you need to create habitat – a garden that will provide shelter, nesting space, food and water for the birds that live in your area. Include plants that bear fruit or develop nuts and dry seed heads for food. Because native birds recognize native flora it is critical to include a good proportion of native plants in your garden cornucopia - especially for the structure and shelter many of them also provide. Build layers - from tall trees to low groundcovers to attract a variety of birds. Cover the ground with loose wood chips and leaf litter to create spaces for ground feeding birds to join the fun. Provide snags, if safety permits, to encourage cavity nesting birds or place appropriate bird boxes in the garden – ones that can be cleaned each season. Add water features like bird baths that are shallow, have textured surfaces and can also be easily cleaned. And don't be too tidy! Leave some seed heads on fading summer flowers, like sunflowers, *Echinacea*, and *Cosmos*, to attract seed eating birds in for a meal. A diverse and well planted garden will attract a diverse and well fed symphony of birds to your garden all year long!

Websites

Living With Wildlife - Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife wdfw.wa.gov/living/
Native Plant Guide - King County green.kingcounty.gov/GoNative/Index.aspx
Washington Native Plant Society www.wnps.org
Seattle Audubon Society www.seattleaudubon.org
National Wildlife Federation www.nwf.org
American Bird Conservancy – “Cats Indoors” program www.abcbirds.org/cats
Backyard Wildlife Sanctuary Program - www.wdfw.wa.gov/living/backyard
Landscape for Life – www.landscapeforlife.org

Books

'Landscaping for Wildlife in the Pacific Northwest'; Russell Link, U.W. Press
'Plants of the Pacific Northwest Coast'; Pojar and McKinnon, Lone Pine Publishing
'Gardening With Native Plants of the Pacific Northwest'; Art Kruckeberg, U.W. Press
'Birds of Seattle'; Chris C. Fisher, Lone Pine Publishing
'Birds of the Pacific Northwest'; John Shewey and Tim Blount, Timber Press
'National Audubon Society – Field Guide to Birds Western Region'; Miklos D.F. Udvardy and John Farrand, National Audubon Society

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Western Red Cedar – *Thuja plicata* A standard conifer of moist northwest forests. Growing to more than 100 feet tall in the landscape the cedar provides year round shelter and nesting sites for many species of birds. Seeds are eaten by Pine Siskins.



Evergreen Huckleberry – *Vaccinium ovatum* A broadleaf evergreen shrub that grows to 6 feet tall with fresh foliage and stems tinged red in the spring. Growing to six feet, tolerating shade or sun, this beauty provides delicious fruit for both you and the birds in your garden.



Oregon Grape – *Mahonia aquifolium* Shiny and spiny, Oregon Grape does double duty sharing nectar rich bright yellow flowers in the spring for the overwintering Anna's Hummingbirds and succulent blue fruit in the summer for other birds. Good for shelter too. Try making wine from the fruit for a fun northwest treat.



Rose – *Rosa sp.* The wild native roses of the Pacific Northwest not only provide lovely flowers but burst out with juicy and nutritious fruit in the fall, a favorite of birds. Dry some for tea and leave the rest for the birds. Their thicket like growth is a boon for birds seeking safety from predators.



Maple – *Acer sp.* Maples are classic landscape trees, gracing our streets as well as our gardens. For wild birds they provide ample space to build nests and tasty seed heads in their samaras in the fall. The gorgeous range of fall color is a benefit too, brightening up even the gloomiest of October days in the northwest.



Red Stemmed Dogwood – *Cornus alba, C. sanguinea, C. sericea* A variety of species comprise the red (and orange and yellow) stemmed dogwood shrubs, best known for their colorful new growth that glows on winter days. These shrubby deciduous plants bloom in the summer and bear fruit that birds make good use of. The dense growth is good shelter too.



Lichen and Moss – *Various sp.* Lichens and moss come with the territory when you garden in the northwest. Instead of fighting the inevitable learn to embrace their beauty in your garden. Used by many birds to make nests in the spring, lichen, moss and spider-silk can comprise the delicate 1 by 1.5 inch nest of the Anna's Hummingbird nestled into your cedar tree. Some of them make excellent dyes as well



Annual and Perennial Flowers – *Various sp.* The fading of your colorful summer flower display need not make you sad – leave the seed heads to develop as the plants finish their bloom and watch birds flock in to eat them. Favorites of sparrows, finches, towhees and even quail, the autumn pickings from Echinacea, Rudbeckia, Sunflowers, Cosmos, Yarrow, Zinnias, Amaranth and more will make up the most glorious fall feast for your feathered friends.