



Creating a Healthy Outdoor Environment for Birds

With a few simple steps, you can create a welcoming environment for wild birds. Birds' basic needs are the same as our own. They need food, water, shelter, and a place to raise their young.

INSTALL BIRD FEEDERS. If you have a yard, you can hang feeders from trees, your porch or use a pole hanging system for one or more feeders. There are many styles and varieties of feeders—ones that use seed or nectar can entice a variety of birds. Remember to use fresh seed and with nectar feeders, change the nectar often. (See our tip sheet for feeding hummingbirds.)

PROVIDE FRESH WATER. Birds need water not only for drinking but also for bathing and maintaining feather health. This is especially important in wintertime as many of their water sources are frozen. Water is the single best attractant for birds. Often birds that you do not see at your feeder will show up at a birdbath.

OFFER SHELTER SPACES. Create shelters for birds to rest (and lay eggs) in by adding birdhouses, roosting boxes or dense shrubs and trees. Even a pile of branches, limbs and leaves will provide for them. It also can give them a safe space to escape the elements and potential predators.

PLANT BIRD FRIENDLY AND NATIVE PLANTS. Your local nursery should be able to help you find plants that will attract birds in your area. If you have a patio or balcony and do not have a yard, just a few plants in a pot can provide for your birds. After summertime, be a lazy gardener and do not deadhead seed plants. Birds love seed heads.

AVOID THE USE OF CHEMICALS AND HARSH FERTILIZERS. Opt for natural or bird-safe gardening practices to ensure the health and safety of the birds visiting your garden. Avoid using pesticides and herbicides that could harm birds or their food sources. Don't use poison mouse traps. Remember the food chain—if an owl eats a poisoned mouse, it too will be poisoned.

Creating a bird-friendly habitat is a rewarding and enjoyable way to contribute to the well-being of local bird populations. By providing the right plants, feeders, water sources, and shelter, you'll not only attract a variety of birds but also create a beautiful and inviting space.

Enjoy the sights and sounds of these wonderful creatures as they make your space their home.

Happy Birding!

