

Birds in the Garden: Creating a Haven for Colorful Birds in Your Yard

Birds bring many benefits to our lives. They fill our gardens with song, bring a spark of color and interest to our winter landscapes, and also eat many garden pests. Attracting birds to your landscape is fun. Their needs are easy to meet and just about everyone can achieve success by providing them with three basic things: shelter, water, and food.

If you have evergreen trees or shrubs, or maybe a tall canopy of shade trees, then you have the element of shelter. Birds need protection during feeding and bathing from cats and other predators. Try to position feeders and birdbaths close enough to natural shelter so that birds can perch safely between trips to the feeder, but yet far enough away so that they don't make an easy target for the neighbor's cat.

Water can be the most alluring aspect of your landscape. The sound of splashing water is relaxing and will also attract colorful birds. Birdbaths and small fountains are great accents for your yard and will provide your new guests with one of their most basic requirements. A shallow water source is all they need.

Consider placing your bird feeder adjacent to your water source. Once you have attracted birds to your yard, you don't want to play hide-and-seek with the food source. Feeders can be hung from tree limbs, mounted on a freestanding pole, or even hung from the shepherd's hook that held a hanging basket in spring. To stock your feeders, use birdseed mixes high in sunflower seed to attract the greatest variety of birds. Cardinals love black oil and striped sunflower as well as safflower seed. Suet cakes are great for woodpeckers, chickadees, titmice, and nuthatches.

Another helpful tip is to scatter some seed on the ground around your feeder. This will attract mourning doves and other ground feeders. It's easy to create a safe haven for birds in your yard. The enjoyment they bring will last a lifetime. Put out your feeder today!