



## **Birdscaping with Native Plants**

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Research has shown that suburban yards landscaped with native plants host 8 times more native birds than those planted with non-native plants. Native plants are also ideally suited to our climate and soils and are adapted to co-exist with our native insects, which are a critical food source for native birds. Over 95% of land birds rely on insects – primarily caterpillars - to feed their chicks. This means ***we need to re-think our attitude towards insects in our gardens.***

### **Native Plants for attracting birds to your garden:**

#### **Trees**

Oak (Quercus macrocarpa/ bicolor/rubra/ x schuettei)

- a) Hosts 532 species of caterpillars of butterflies & moths that birds feed on.
- b) Acorns are an important food source for many types of birds (as well as many native mammals)
- c) Mature trees provide cavity nesting sites

Maple (Acer saccharum/rubrum)

- a) Hosts 297 species of caterpillars
- b) Summer-through-fall seeds eaten by many bird species including robins, vireos, warblers, finches and wrens

Hackberry (Celtis occidentalis)

- a) Fruit is a source of winter food for over 20 species of native birds.
- b) Host to several species of larval butterflies & moths
- c) Provides shelter/cover and nesting sites (thorns)

Musclewood (Carpinus caroliniana)

- a) Host to 66 species of butterflies & moths
- b) Nutlets are eaten by many birds including cardinals and goldfinches

Poplar (Populus tremuloides)

- a) Hosts 365+ species of caterpillars
- b) Mature trees provide cavity nesting sites

Shagbark Hickory (*Carya ovata*)

- a) Hosts 235 species of caterpillars
- b) Sweet flavored nuts are favored by wildlife

Birch (*Betula nigra* / *glandulifera*)

- a) Seeds are favored by many native birds, including Pine Siskin, Fox Sparrows & American Tree Sparrows

Juniper (*Juniperus virginiana*)

- a) Fruit is a source of winter food for over 50 species of native birds. Including Cedar Waxwings, Bluebirds & Finches
- b) Provides shelter/cover in all seasons

Beech (*Fagus grandifolia*)

- a) Small brown nuts (inside prickly outer shell) are an important fall & winter food source for birds, including chickadees, titmice, warblers, nuthatches, woodpeckers and jays

## **Shrubs**

Elderberry (*Sambucus canadensis* / *pubens*)

- a) Fruit is mid-season food source for 100+ bird species (including Robin, Cardinal, Brown Eyed Thrasher, Bluebird & Woodpeckers)
- b) Provides shelter for nesting

Staghorn Sumac (*Rhus typhina*)

- a) Fruit is winter food source for 20+ bird species (Catbird, Robin, Bluebird, Wood Thrush, Red-Eyed Vireo)

Dogwood (*Cornus alternifolia* / *sericea* / *amomum* / *racemosa*)

- a) Fruit eaten by 30+ bird species
- b) Dogwoods host over 118 species of caterpillars of butterflies & moths

Chokeberry (*Aronia macrocarpa*)

- a) Shelter for nesting
- b) Fruit eaten by Cedar Waxwing, Bluebirds & Finches

Ninebark (*Physocarpus opulifolius*)

- a) Dense growth provides excellent nesting sites

Buttonbush (*Cephalanthus occidentalis*)

- a) Late season showy flowers are popular with many pollinators
- b) Flowers attract hummingbirds
- c) Persistent fruit is winter food source for ducks and other waterfowl

## **Native perennials for attracting birds:**

Aster (*Aster azurius* / *ericoides*)

- a) Seeds eaten by Cardinals, Goldfinches, Sparrows, Chickadees, Nuthatches, Towhees and Indigo Bunting.
- b) Hosts 112 species of caterpillars of butterflies & moths
- c) Valuable late season nectar source for beneficial pollinators

Ironweed (*Vernonia fasciculata*)

- a) Hosts 19 species of caterpillars of butterflies & moths
- b) Valuable late season nectar source for beneficial pollinators

Joe Pye Weed (*Eupatorium maculatum*)

- a) Seeds eaten by many bird species
- b) Hosts 42 species of caterpillars of butterflies & moths
- c) Valuable late season nectar source for beneficial pollinators

Aquilegia (*Aquilegia canadensis*)

- a) Funnel shaped red flowers attract hummingbirds

Cup Plant (*Silphium perfoliatum*)

- a) Seed is a favorite food of finches
- b) Leaves cup stem and create natural water reservoir for both birds & insects

Purple Coneflower (*Echinacea pallida*)

- a) Seed is a favorite food source of finches

Gayfeather/Blazing Star (*Liatris pycnostachya*)

- a) Seeds eaten by finches
- b) An important nectar source for native pollinators

Leadplant (*Amorpha canescens*)

- a) Persistent seeds are winter food source
- b) Valuable nectar source for beneficial pollinators

## **Native Grasses:**

All are valuable winter food source for songbirds and provide nesting habitat for ground nesting birds. Host dozens of species of moth & butterfly caterpillars.

- Little Bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*)
- Big Blue Stem (*Andropogon gerardii*)
- Prairie Dropseed (*Sporobolus heterolepis*)
- Northern Sea Oats (*Chasmanthium latifolium*)