

Go Native For the Birds

Birds and plants evolved together to be mutually beneficial, so adding plants native to our area is a great way to attract birds to your garden. Native plants add food and shelter essential to the health of our native birds and other animals. When planning your garden, consider plants that supply food, cover and nesting sites for our native birds. Including plants that supply nectar, seeds, fruits, berries and insects attract a variety of birds from hummingbirds to bluejays. Planning for various heights and brushy areas supplies cover and nesting places for variety, including ground loving Juncos and tree loving robins. A bird friendly garden can be attractive in all seasons.

In spring, the Rufous Hummingbirds arrive in our area on their migration, joining the Anna's that can winter in the lower elevations. Conifers provide nesting sites and insects that hummingbirds need for protein. Conifers also provide seed and cover for other native birds. There are conifers to fit every size garden, including dwarf pines (*Pinus contorta var contorta*) and large Douglas Fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*).

The first flowering natives to provide nectar also are some of the most beautiful small trees and shrubs for the spring flowering garden – the Osoberry (Indian plum, *Oemeleria cerasiformis*) is the first small tree to flower with dangling white blossoms. The Red Flowering Current (*Ribes sanguineum*) display of red blossoms is a standout in any garden.

In summer and fall, leave the seed heads on plants to provide seed for birds. In addition to the beautiful blue spring flowers of the native Larkspur (*Delphinium* species) and Camas (*Cammasia* spp), the summer seeds provide a meal for many seed loving birds. The Osoberrys that supplied nectar in the spring provide small plum-like fruits in summer (and are edible for us too!).

In winter the evergreens of kinnikinnick and conifers provide cover and insect meals for our overwintering bird friends like the chickadees. Remember to leave some seed heads and cover so the birds are not exposed. The Audubon Society has done studies to indicate that feeding birds in your yard year-round does not harm them or make them dependent, so we can supplement our winter native plantings with feeders if we so desire.

Following is a small example of plants that provide food, cover or nesting sites for birds, and also provide beautiful additions to your garden. Consider adding some of these to your landscape. The listed References give many more examples of native plants to add to your garden that also provide bird attractive areas.

Common Name	Latin Name	Food Value	Nest/Cover Value
Farewell-to-Spring	<i>Clarkia amoena</i>	Seeds	No
Columbine	<i>Aquilegia</i> sp	Nectar and Seeds	No
Larkspur	<i>Delphinium</i> sp	Seeds	No
Aster	<i>Aster</i> sp	Seeds	Cover if brushy

Fleabane	<i>Erigeron</i> sp	Seeds	Cover if brushy
Strawberries	<i>Fragaria</i> sp	Fruit and seeds	No
Alumroot	<i>Heuchera</i> sp	Seeds	Cover if brushy
Penstemon	<i>Penstemon</i> sp	Nectar and seeds	Cover if brushy
Kinnickinnick	<i>Arctostaphylos</i> sp	Fruits	Yes
Western Serviceberry	<i>Amelanchior alnifolia</i>	Fuits	Yes
Oregon Grape	<i>Mahonia</i> sp	Fruits	Yes
Deerbrush	<i>Ceanothus</i> sp	Fruits	Yes
Red Osier Dogwood	<i>Cornus stolonifera</i>	Fruits	Yes
Salal	<i>Gaultheria shallon</i>	Fuits	Yes
Ocean Spray	<i>Holodiscus discolor</i>	Seeds	Yes
Honeysuckle	<i>Lonicera</i> sp	Nectar, seeds, fruit	Yes
Current, Gooseberry	<i>Ribes</i> Sp	Nectar, seeds, fruit	Yes
Salmonberry	<i>Rubus spectabilis</i>	Nectar, seeds, fruit	Yes
Elderberry	<i>Sambucus</i> sp	Nectar, seeds, fruit	Yes
Huckleberry	<i>Vaccinium</i> sp	Nectar, seeds, fruit	Yes
Maple	<i>Acer</i> sp	Seeds, insects	Yes
Alders	<i>Alnus</i> sp	Seeds, nuts	Yes
Willows	<i>Salix</i> sp	Seeds	Yes
Firs	<i>Abies</i> sp	Seeds, insects	Yes
Pines	<i>Pinus</i> sp	Seeds, insects	Yes
Cedars	<i>Thuja</i> sp	Seeds, insects	Yes

References

Encyclopedia of Northwest Native Plants for Gardens and Landscapes, Kathleen Robson et al, 2008 Timber Press Inc.

Bringing Nature Home, How Native Plants Sustain Wildlife in Our Gardens, Douglas Tallamy, 2007 Timber Press Inc.

[Native Plants that Provide Seeds and Berries](#), Washington Native Plant Society.