



## How to create a bird paradise on your property!

Attracting birds to your backyard is a lot simpler than many believe it to be. Most birds will find their way into your yard regardless of how you use it, provided there is adequate cover (such as trees or bushes) or food. To help attract birds to your backyard, we've put together some simple steps you can follow to make your backyard a bird paradise.

**Food** – Birds are attracted to areas with excess food to either supplement their wild diet or to help them when food is scarce elsewhere. An easy way to provide food for birds and attract them to your yard is by putting bird feeders up. Different birds will be attracted to different styles of feeders and food.

- **Mixed Birdseed/Sunflower Seeds:** These food types are best utilized in hopper or tube-style feeders and will attract a variety of sparrows, finches, nuthatches and blackbirds. Feeders should be cleaned every few weeks with a mixed bleach or vinegar solution to avoid disease spread.
- **Nectar/Citrusy Fruits:** Birds like Hummingbirds and Orioles will be attracted to nectar all throughout the year, but citrusy fruits should be removed in early June to promote nesting birds to return to eating wild food. Nectar and Citrusy fruits should be replaced every few days to avoid mold and decay which can harm birds that eat them. Planting nectar producing wildflowers and shrubs will both help attract nectar eating birds, but also provide habitat for birds to hide and nest in.
- **Berries:** Although not typically used in feeders, planting shrubs, trees and bushes that produce berries, nuts and fruits will attract birds to your yard for both their food and habitat use!
- **Insects:** While most people don't want to promote insects on their property, having an insect-positive habitat will help produce birds that aren't necessarily attracted to feeders (Such as Warblers and Flycatchers). Leaving leaf litter for longer in the spring, having a compost pile, as well as reducing night-lighting are all ways to increase the amount of insects on your property and consequently insect-eating birds.

**Water** – While most birds are able to find water on their own, or are able to get water through their food, installing a bird bath or natural water source will help attract birds. If you have a pond on your property, keeping the pond edge natural and the water clean will promote bird use. Bird baths, while providing both bathing areas and drinking opportunities, should be monitored as they can also be a source of disease spread. Refreshing the water every few days,

while also cleaning the bath itself every couple weeks will help reduce the spread of infectious diseases.

**Habitat** – Despite having the best smorgasbord of food on your property, you may not see many birds if there isn't adequate hiding or nesting areas for them. Most birds will find trees or bushes sufficient for habitat, so leaving trees standing or planting additional bushes will help attract birds. As well, these bushes and trees will supply additional food and nesting areas for birds. Keeping your yard more naturalized will also help attract birds by leaving more areas to nest/hide in, as well as attracting insects and other prey foods. Trees, shrubs and wildflowers are great ways to attract birds to your backyard!

**Nesting Areas** – Depending on the bird species you'd like to attract, it's possible to attract birds with the use of nest boxes and nesting areas. Standing nest boxes (such as those on poles) will attract birds such as Wrens, Chickadees and Swallows. Nest boxes attached to buildings or on the side of a wall will help attract Chickadees, Flycatchers, Woodpeckers, and other cavity nesters. Providing ledges and flat areas on buildings will promote nesting birds that need flat areas, such as American Robins, Eastern Phoebes and Mourning Doves. In general, nesting boxes are a great way to attract more birds to your backyard. Just be sure to clean them out every year or two to promote their use in subsequent years!