

Water in the garden

Water is vital for birds to drink and to bathe. It is best in a shallow container and kept clean, and always use rainwater. Remember to remove any ice in the winter.

A pond in the garden is even better, no matter how small.



Grass in the garden

Leave some areas of grass long, this benefits all wildlife, dandelion seeds provide food for goldfinch.

Short grass areas allows blackbirds, thrush and starlings to search for worms and other invertebrates.

Leave your garden a bit untidy

In spring leave seed heads standing for as long as possible to provide seeds and insects for birds. This will help them to get through the hungry gap of spring when they are building nests and laying eggs. Equally try not to be too tidy and leave some nesting material lying around, fallen leaves, twigs and moss are all important to nest building.

Leave some windfall apples lying around as they will provide a sweet treat for birds.

When you rake the leaves off the lawn leave some piles under bushes where birds will be able to flick through them for insects during the winter.

Gardening for Birds

Gardens can be a valuable refuge for many birds, and in turn watching them brings us joy and boosts our wellbeing. They can help you get rid of weeds in your lawn are great at eating garden pests and can help flowers pollinate.



Plant a tree

A tree provides a safe hideout for birds, nesting site and a high point to sing from, the bark is a home for invertebrates for birds such as nuthatches to feed off. Even in a small garden you can plant a slow growing tree which is easily pruned.

Nest sites

Nest boxes should be in a sheltered area, away from predators, keep out of direct sunlight and strong winds. North and east facing are best. Clean out the boxes when the young have flown, as they can be used as a refuge for birds on cold winter nights.

Different designed nest boxes attract different species.

Plants for birds

Echinacea, Rudbeckia and Cosmos seed heads are food for birds over winter.

An annual wildflower mix area will provide for birds as well as insects.

Dense hedges provides a safe haven for young birds. Delay cutting the hedge until late August when the nesting season is over. Berry hedges, cut one side one year and the other the next, to ensure there are always berries for the birds. A spring trimming needs to be done by March as robins, blackbirds and song thrushes nest early.

Feeding birds

Natural food is best with seed heads and berry rich hedges. Supplementary feed in winter, to help birds get through the cold nights. Feeders need to be cleaned regularly, at least every two weeks, as diseases can linger, especially so in wet weather. Put your feeder somewhere safe, near a tall hedge or from the branch of a tree. Have more than one feeder, with different foods to feed different species. You can use suet balls, sunflowers, niger seeds, mealworms or peanuts.



Avoid using pesticides

Insects that gardeners may consider unwanted visitors are a food supply for birds. Blue tits need a steady supply of caterpillars to feed their chicks through the summer.