

Bird Sanctuary Garden

Licking County Master Gardener Volunteers Learning Center for Gardening



Birds are vital to ecosystem health, acting as nature's pest controllers, pollinators, and seed dispersers. The Bird Sanctuary Garden is designed to demonstrate the three necessities for supporting birds in a home garden; appropriate shelter, natural and supportive food sources, and water.

As adults, birds eat a wide variety of foods, from seeds and fruits to worms and bugs. The cardinal's short tough beak is a great tool for cracking the shells of sunflower seeds. The woodpecker's strong sharp beak is built for drilling holes in tree bark and pulling out insects. The Hummingbird's tube shaped beak and long tongue are perfectly adapted to sipping nectar from flowers. As babies, all birds rely on their parents to feed them. The best baby bird food is soft, squishy caterpillars. Bird parents eat the protein rich caterpillars and regurgitate them into the babies' mouths. The ideal bird sanctuary offers the preferred foods of a variety of bird species, as well as host plants for butterflies and moths, whose caterpillars may become food for hungry young birds. The plants in this garden and the surrounding gardens offer a buffet of berries, seeds, insects and nectar. Shrubs and nearby trees in the woods and beyond provide shelter and a safe place to nest. The young white oak tree planted to commemorate America 250 is considered a keystone species.

WHAT GROWS HERE

Perennials:

Cypress vine

Hostas

Hummingbird Lunch

Common Ragweed

Brown-eyed Susans

Milkweed

Shrubs:

Western Serviceberry

Common Elderberry

Arrowwood Viburnum

HOW WE GROW IT

To maintain a healthy habitat for birds and pollinating insects, we practice minimal use of pesticides, and use physical or biological controls where possible. When the time comes for garden tidying in the fall, we will leave some plant stalks, sunflower heads, and leaf litter to provide homes for overwintering insects as well as a seed source for the birds.

In addition to food, we also provide a birdhouse for nesting, tray feeders, a supply of suet and a bird bath for drinking and bathing. Our birdhouse is dedicated to Lucinda Prince, a steadfast donor and friend to the Licking County Master Gardener Volunteers.

RESOURCES

This article features helpful guides and other information:

<https://u.osu.edu/wildside/2024/04/17/creating-living-landscapes-for-birds-butterflies-bees-and-other-beneficials/>



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