

Wild About BIRDS 2



American redstart
Setophaga ruticilla
12–14 cm

To attract this striking woodland bird, you will definitely need trees on your property, preferably combined with lots of shrubs. Insects make up the bulk of the American redstart's diet, so don't use pesticides on the trees where it likes to forage. The redstarts themselves will take care of any problem insects, such as leafhoppers or caterpillars. In late summer or fall, the fruits of serviceberry or native barberry are a great attraction. This bird likes to nest in deciduous trees or tall shrubs, such as maple, birch, hawthorn or alder.

Common redpoll
Carduelis flammea
11–15 cm

Plant the common redpoll's favourite food source — alder or birch trees — to attract it to your garden. They love to feast on the tiny seeds of these trees. You can also leave a corner of your garden a bit wild with grasses and weeds. Do not cut back the grass or weed stems in the fall so the redpoll can access the seeds over the winter when you are more likely to see it. If you live in northern areas of the country, you might be able to provide nesting areas by planting trees or shrubs such as willow, alder, spruce or tamarack.



Mountain bluebird
Sialia currucoides
16–19 cm

If you live amidst fields, prairies, farmland or other open areas that are interspersed with some trees, you might be able

to attract bluebirds to your property. These insect eaters require saplings, dead trees or fence posts as elevated perches for spotting prey. You can supplement their diet in times of insect scarcity by planting native fruit-bearing trees and shrubs, such as currant, grape, elderberry, hackberry or sumac. Bluebirds rely on dead or dying trees with abandoned woodpecker holes or other cavities for nesting. They will also use artificial nest boxes if properly designed and located.



Purple finch
Carpodacus purpureus
14–16 cm

The purple finch is associated with coniferous forests but can be enticed into more urban areas that include coniferous trees, shrubs and plentiful food sources. Its favourite foods are the buds, fruits and seeds of various trees, such as elm, maple, ash, red cedar and apple. Shrubs, such as dogwood, sumac or raspberry, and weeds, such as dandelion, can also provide food. The purple finch will occasionally partake of insects, such as aphids and caterpillars, so avoid the use of pesticides. For nesting, it prefers the dense foliage of conifers, such as fir, spruce or pine.



Spotted towhee
Pipilo maculatus
18–20 cm

The spotted towhee requires areas with thickets or dense shrubs, so to welcome it to your garden you will need to plant trees or shrubs such as juniper, willow, madrone, rose or snowberry. These provide shelter and hunting spots for this shy bird that avoids

being out in the open. Be sure to leave an abundance of leaf litter where the spotted towhee likes to hunt for millipedes, sow bugs, beetles and other insects. Outside the breeding season, fruits and seeds are an important part of its diet, so plant blackberry, gooseberry, elderberry, hackberry and other fruiting shrubs. In addition, allow weeds to prosper in a corner of your garden. The spotted towhee also loves acorns, so adding an oak tree to your property will benefit this species. This bird likes to build its nest in the shelter of shrubs, such as rose or sage, or dense herbaceous plants such as vervain, grasses or ferns.



House wren
Tragodytes aedon
11–13 cm

The house wren will frequent suburban areas if provided with trees and shrubs where it can forage for insects, its main food item. It will search out crickets, caterpillars, beetles, spiders and other insects. The house wren is a cavity nester so protect any dead or dying trees that contain abandoned woodpecker holes or

other cavities. It will also use nesting boxes and other convenient cavities.



Gray catbird
Dumetella carolinensis
21–24 cm

To entice this shy bird to your property, you will have to provide it with dense shrubs where it will feel safe and hidden from predators. If you choose species such as dogwood, blackberry, elderberry or other fruiting shrubs and throw in some fruiting vines, such as wild grape or Virginia creeper, you will provide catbirds with both cover and a source of food. The gray catbird may also use the shelter of this dense vegetation to nest. It will reward you for your efforts by consuming problem insects such as ants, grasshoppers and beetles, including Japanese and June beetles.

While adding a bird feeder to your garden may attract some birds into viewing distance, it is important to meet more than just the needs of a few species. Planting is the best way to ensure you meet the needs of a greater variety of birds throughout the seasons. Nurturing a diversity of native trees, shrubs and perennials will provide them with natural food and shelter.

Many birds require insects throughout the breeding season to feed themselves and their young. You can meet their needs for insect food by planting trees, shrubs and flowering plants, especially the small flowering plants from the composite family, such as goldenrod, pearly everlasting, sunflower or aster, which support insects and therefore provide foraging areas. Snags, or standing dead trees, provide another great source of insect food. Be sure to avoid the use of pesticides as they may directly poison birds or destroy their food sources.

Fruits and seeds are another important food source for birds. You will attract species that may not regularly come to feeders by adding fruit- or seed-bearing trees and shrubs to your garden. Choose varieties that are native to your area to better ensure you provide food that attracts local birds. Don't forget to include seed-bearing herbaceous plants and allow an area of your garden to go a bit wild with weeds and grasses, which are a great source of small seeds. Ensure the weeds you leave are not considered noxious or invasive in your area.

Cover in the form of trees, shrubs or dense herbaceous vegetation is also important to all birds as protection from predators and/or shelter for nesting. Evergreen



Western meadowlark
Sturnella neglecta
21–28 cm

The western meadowlark is a bird of open spaces, such as fields, grasslands or pastures. If your property includes or is adjacent to such areas, be sure to avoid the use of pesticides so meadowlarks can find plenty of insects, such as beetles, cutworms, caterpillars and grasshoppers. Allow a corner of your property to go a bit wild so they can also feed on the seeds of weeds and grasses. This bird will also use areas of dense vegetation to locate its ground nest, so avoid mowing, especially in the spring. It is very sensitive to human disturbance when nesting, so be sure to avoid nesting areas during the breeding season.

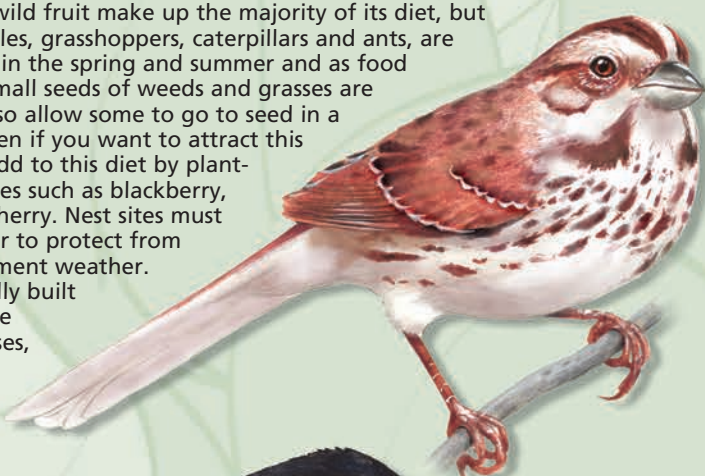
Dark-eyed junco
Junco hyemalis
14–16 cm

The dark-eyed junco likes to forage for insects and seeds on the ground, staying close to cover for a quick escape from predators. If you want it to feel safe in your garden, be sure to add some dense shrubs, especially evergreens like cedar that provide year-round shelter. This bird likes to forage for insects and seeds among fallen leaves and logs, so don't keep your garden too tidy. This should extend to your weeding — leave a wild area of grasses and weeds where the junco can find its favourite seeds. By leaving overturned trees, stumps and brush piles on your property, you may even entice the dark-eyed junco to nest.



Song sparrow
Melospiza melodia
15–17 cm

This widespread bird can be found in a great variety of habitat types, but its shy nature requires the cover of shrubs or other brushy vegetation. Seeds and wild fruit make up the majority of its diet, but insects, such as beetles, grasshoppers, caterpillars and ants, are also very important in the spring and summer and as food for its young. The small seeds of weeds and grasses are its favourite foods, so allow some to go to seed in a corner of your garden if you want to attract this songster. You can add to this diet by planting some fruit sources such as blackberry, elderberry or wild cherry. Nest sites must provide good shelter to protect from predators and inclement weather. Early nests are usually built on the ground in the cover of dense grasses, flowering plants or shrubs. Later nests may be found higher up in shrubs or small trees.



Baltimore oriole
Icterus galbula
18–22 cm

This beautiful songbird has adapted to urban areas and might be enticed to your property if you have some large and preferably deciduous shade trees, such as elm, maple, poplar, cottonwood or birch. These trees provide nesting sites and

foraging areas for the Baltimore oriole's favourite insect prey — caterpillars. Add to your garden's appeal by planting fruiting trees, such as serviceberries, cherries, blackberries and elderberries that supplement its diet. To complete the appeal, add some plants that provide nest-building material such as milkweed, willows, grasses or wild grapes.



Red-eyed vireo
Vireo olivaceus
13–16 cm

If your property boasts large trees and an abundance of shrubs, you may be rewarded

with a red-eyed vireo visitor. It will search your trees for insects, especially caterpillars like gypsy moths and fall webworms. The red-eyed vireo will also take advantage of any fruiting trees or shrubs you have planted, especially in late summer and fall when it must build up fat reserves for migration. Choose species such as blackberry, dogwood, Virginia creeper and elderberry. The red-eyed vireo nests in trees or shrubs, such as maple, oak, beech or hackberry, where its nest can be concealed from above by foliage.

White-crowned sparrow
Zonotrichia leucophrys
16–19 cm

The white-crowned sparrow likes open areas with thick shrubs and will frequent such sites even in urban areas. The seeds of weeds and grasses, such as panic grass, comprise the bulk of its diet, so be sure to let these prosper in a corner of your property. You can supplement this bird's diet by adding fruiting shrubs such as elderberries and blackberries. The white-crowned sparrow also likes to forage along open soil and among plants for insects such as beetles, caterpillars and ants. It likes to nest near water, usually in a shrub or dense vegetation, such as sumac, monkeyflower or blackberry, or in northern areas on the ground concealed by Labrador tea, dwarf birch, willow, spruce, crowberry or other vegetation. It has also been known to use brush piles.



Yellow warbler
Dendroica petechia
12–13 cm

If you live along a shoreline or another wet area that sports patches of shrubs, especially willows, you might be lucky enough to attract this brilliant warbler. The yellow warbler lives on an almost exclusive insect diet that includes caterpillars, beetles, midges and aphids. This bird will search among the foliage of trees and shrubs for these delicacies, so be sure to provide

them with plenty of hunting spots and make them pesticide-free. The yellow warbler nests in thickets and hedgerows of trees and shrubs, especially willows, but also alder, hawthorn, cedar, raspberry, cottonwood or dogwood. You can provide it with nesting material by growing plants that produce downy materials, such as cottonwood, dandelion, cattail and willow.

Pine siskin
Carduelis pinus
11–13 cm

The pine siskin likes to live in coniferous or mixed forests but will take advantage of coniferous trees planted in more urban areas. It feeds on the seeds of coniferous trees, such as Canada hemlock, spruce, northern white cedar, tamarack and pines. It also eats the seeds of deciduous trees, especially alder and birch. The pine siskin's appetite further extends to the seeds of grasses and weeds, such as dandelion, so allow a corner of your garden to go a bit wild and leave seed heads intact throughout the winter. You can also plant coneflowers, rudbeckia and goldenrod. Lastly, you should plant conifers, such as pine, hemlock, fir, redwood, spruce or cedar if you are hoping to entice pine siskins to nest on your property. If you attract these birds, they will reward you by consuming weevils, aphids, caterpillars and other potentially harmful insects.

