

BIRDS IN YOUR BACK YARD

Birds in your back yard are a nice addition to your home. How do you invite them to come? One of the most important things to do is to put water out for drinking and bathing. Keep it fresh and accessible.

Secondly, if you're thinking about plantings, I would make two suggestions: fruiting trees and flowering trees. They attract a host of insects which birds use as food. Birds such as the cat birds, the vireo, and the brown thrashers like dense shrubs, which suggests a safe environment for them. If you plant some cosmos you will enjoy watching gold finch flying around them.

A third area important for birds is the bird feeder. If you are presenting only one seed, make it sunflower seed.

Many birds will come to a feeder that prefer those seeds. Cardinals, will be frequent visitors in this area. They like space so scatter some seeds on the ground so they can have room to spread out.

Chickadees and tufted titmouse will be frequent visitors at your bird restaurant. In fact, they will eat out of your hand if you are quiet and patient. The brown creepers love suet as do many other birds, so keep a nice supply available. A collection of birds love orange halves. Wood thrush, orioles, indigo buntings, rose breasted grosbeaks and even robins love this vitamin. If you like cedar waxwings put out old apples, cherries and berries.

A note to remember, if robins are important to you, do not use toxic weed killers on the grass as robins spend a lot of time on your lawn. Dark eyed juncos like to eat on the ground so toss some food there for them.



Another nice service you can provide for the birds is bird boxes. House wrens want their boxes to be at least 4 feet off the ground. They also sometimes take 2 boxes. The male sometimes goes to the second box for peace and quiet, I think, or perhaps it is to confuse their partner.

One more positive you can provide for your bird friends is to hang a mesh sack with short yarn or string for nest building. The orioles would weave it into a hanging basket, to lay eggs in and raise their young.

With a little effort on your part you could welcome a variety of bird friends to your back yard.



Written & Illustrated by Marjorie Jensen – Friends of Marion Parks