TREES, SHRUBS & PERENNIALS FOR ATTRACTING BIRDS AND OTHER WILDLIFE

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Creating a backyard oasis that mimics the wilderness is the goal of many wildlife enthusiasts. While others install fences, put out poison baits or chemical deterrents, these people want to attract birds, critters, and even deer to their gardens.

- Our desire to tidy and groom our landscapes, whether spraying the lawn with pesticides, raking up leaf litter, or pruning shrubs and trees to rigid shapes, is not friendly to wildlife.
- A typical yard with lawn, raked flower beds, and specimen shade trees does not provide the diversity needed to attract wildlife. It may be tidy, but it provides habitat for very few native species.
- "Wildscaping", on the other hand, growing a variety of native or adapted plants in a natural arrangement that includes diverse shapes, colors, flowers, and fruits, is a boon to wildlife.
- Start small: choose an area of lawn to replace with a mix of native shrubs, perennial flowers, and wild grasses.
 By selecting plants that provide different heights and forms, foliage, flowers and an assortment of fruits and seeds, you'll add interest both human and wild year round.
- A "wild" garden doesn't have to look sloppy: Arrange the plants to enhance the space they'll occupy, considering their eventual shape, size, and habit of growth and bloom.
- Cluster plants for maximum impact by grouping 3 or 5 plants of the same species. Placing clusters to contrast colors, foliage, and blooming time creates a garden that is more natural in appearance.
- Add structural diversity by mixing tall plants, mid-sized and shorter plants, and ground-hugging plants to allow
 wildlife to move from one part of the wildscape to another. Strips of plants running between different habitat
 areas allow small critters a corridor for safe travel.
- Resist tidiness: leave organic litter in place to mulch the soil, don't cut back dead stalks until spring to leave seeds for food, prune thoughtfully, and avoid using pesticides.
- Dead leaves may hide the cocoons of butterflies; a dense tree provides camouflage and thermal protection for the tiny nests of hummingbirds.
- If you have pest problems, start with the least invasive remedy. Many pesticides kill everything they encounter –
 including beneficial insects.
- Learn what a weed is and what a native plant is. Native plants are important for their established relationships
 with wildlife and other plants. Even if they do not suit our aesthetics, native plants are the backbone of wild
 communities.

Attract Birds to Your Yard and Garden

• It takes more than a feeder and a birdbath to make your yard truly bird friendly. Birds need a complete habitat that provides food, shelter, nesting areas, and singing posts from which to defend their territories.

A Bird Pantry

- Birds get their food not only from the fruits of plants but from their buds, flowers, and nectar. You may want to select plants that provide food in each of these ways.
- Select plants to provide food for birds in every season. Fruits ripen in different seasons. Plants with spring-ripening fruits that feed new parent birds include serviceberries, wild cherries, and mulberries.
- In fall, migrating birds look for the ripening fruits of cotoneaster, mountain ash and buffaloberry. Other plants bear fruits that persist through the winter providing an important source of food. These plants include viburnum, sumac, hawthorn, and crabapple.
- Not all berries are consumed by all bird species. In some cases, fruits may be too large for a bird to swallow. Use a diversity of plant species to attract more birds.

Concentrate on Native Plants

- Emphasize native trees, shrubs, and vines. Native plants and birds have evolved side-by-side over thousands of years. Native plants are more likely to provide the right mix, size, and nutrition that birds in our area require.
- By incorporating native habitats into our landscapes, we create natural corridors for birds to pass back and forth through their natural ranges. This is especially important for areas that have been impacted by development.
- Avoid exotic, invasive species. Some exotic species, like buckthorn or Japanese honeysuckle, provide abundant
 fruit for birds; however, they tend to crowd out native species over time, robbing birds and other animals of the
 diverse mix of plants needed for food and shelter.

Take a Cue from Nature

- Plant in drifts. If you look to nature, you'll discover that in the wild, plants usually occur in groups. This promotes cross-pollination, boosts fertility (and, therefore, fruit yield), and makes it easier for migrating birds to spot ripening fruits.
- Consider vertical layers. Natural areas tend to have vertical layers, each attracting and providing something
 important to different bird species. Some birds prefer the canopy of tall trees. Others perch in the understory
 trees. Many build nests in shrubs, while still others find shelter and nesting materials in vines and ground
 covers. Try to create as many of these layers as possible in your backyard bird refuge.
- Plant at least one grouping of conifers. These plants provide year-round windbreaks, shelter, and nesting sites.

Attract Critters to Your Yard and Garden

- If you want to attract rabbits, squirrels, chipmunks, and other small critters to your yard, you must provide food, shelter, and water. A water garden or pond will attract many types of wildlife. A short tray of water or ground-level birdbath will do fine as well.
- Birdfeeders will also attract squirrels and chipmunks. Squirrels need a network of tall trees to live in and travel, while chipmunks would prefer some safe hiding spots on the ground.

TREES

Rocky Mountain Maple (Acer glabrum)

- Attractive red stems, birds eat the buds, seeds and flowers. NATIVE
- Mature height 15' and spread 15'
- Outstanding red fall color

Food Quality: Excellent Season: Spring/Fall
 Cover: Good Nesting: Good

Autumn Brilliance Serviceberry (Amelanchier × grandiflora 'Autumn Brilliance')

- White flowers followed by small red fruit that ripen in June; fruit is favored by many species of birds.
- Mature height 15' and spread 12'
- Fall color is orange-red
- Food Quality: Excellent Season: Early Summer
- Cover: Good **Nesting: Good**

Common Hackberry (Celtis occidentalis)

- This tree is generally liked by songbirds; fruit is a small purple-blue berry that persists through winter. NATIVE



- Mature height 15' and spread 15'
- Tolerant of heavy soils and dry conditions.
- Food Quality: Good Season: Fall/Winter
- Cover: Fair **Nesting: Fair**

Washington Hawthorn (Crataegus phaenopyrum)

- Dense tree with long thorns provides good cover for birds.
- Mature height 20' and spread 15'
- Red berries persist through winter.
- Season: Fall/Winter Food Quality: Good
- Cover: Good **Nesting: Good**

Rocky Mountain Juniper (Juniperus scopulorum)

- Birds eat the seeds; dense foliage used as cover. NATIVE
- Mature height 20 to 40' and spread 3 to 15'
- Common cultivars available include Cologreen, Moonglow and Skyrocket.
- Food Quality: Good Season: Fall/Winter Cover: Excellent **Nesting: Excellent**

Flowering Crabapple (Malus spp.)

- Many cultivars are available, all well adapted to the Front Range and relatively drought tolerant.
- Mature height 15 to 25' and spread 10 to 20'
- Newer cultivars have smaller fruit that is ornamental and persistent through the winter months.
- Food Quality: Excellent Season: Summer/Winter
- Cover: Good **Nesting: Good**

Colorado Spruce (Picea pungens)

- Valuable as cover; provides habitat for various bird species. NATIVE
- Mature height 60' and spread 25'
- Color can vary from green to blue to silver, depending on genetics and the cultivar.
- Food Quality: Fair Season: Fall Cover: Good **Nesting: Good**

Ponderosa Pine (Pinus ponderosa)

- Very drought tolerant; seeds are eaten by numerous birds and small mammals, also used for
- cover. NATIVE Mature height 50' and spread 25'
- Difficult to transplant. The current recommendation is to plant trees that are 6' tall or less in height.
- Food Quality: Good Season: Fall





















Cover: Good Nesting: Good

Southwestern White pine (Pinus strobiformis)

• More important as cover for various wildlife; seeds eaten by birds and small mammals.





Mature height 40' and spread 30'

• Tolerant of urban settings, drought, exposure, alkaline soils, salt and heat.

Food Quality: Fair Season: FallCover: Good Nesting: Good

Gambel Oak (Quercus gambellii)

NATIVE

A hardy, xeric tree with a shrubby growth habit, favored by a variety of wildlife. <u>NATIVE</u>





Mature height 15 - 30' and spread 12- 20'

Dark green leaves change in fall to yellow with occasional orange to red to bronze

Food Quality: Good Season: Fall/Winter

Cover: Fair Nesting: Fair

Northern Red Oak (Quercus rubra)

• Leaves are dark green, lustrous and sharply lobed; turn from bronze to wine-red in the fall.



Mature height 50' and spread 30'

Relatively fast growing tree with broad spreading branches. Acorn is liked by numerous birds and animals.

Food Quality: Excellent
 Season: Fall/Winter

Cover: Fair Nesting: Fair

Swedish Whitebeam (Sorbus intermedia)

• Creamy white flowers, showy bright orange berries in fall; hardy and tolerant of alkaline soils.

Mature height 15' and spread 12'

• This tree is originally from Scandinavia and the Baltics. It is commonly found in Europe, used in parks and as a street tree.

Food Quality: Excellent Season: FallCover: Good Nesting: Good

SHRUBS

Four Wing Saltbush (Atriplex canescens)

• Upright spreading habit; a four-winged fruit appears in late summer on female plants, may become rose-tinted in fall. Seeds eaten by birds. NATIVE



Mature height and spread 5'

Native Americans of the Southwest harvested the leaves and seeds for food.

Food Quality: Good Season: Fall
 Cover: Good Nesting: Good

Butterfly Bush (Buddleia davidii)

 Tubular flowers are attractive to hummingbirds as well as butterflies; available in blue, pink, purple, red and white.



Mature height 6' and spread 5'

Tops can die back during cold winters, but will bloom on new wood every year.

Food Quality: Good Season: Summer
 Cover: Good Nesting: Good

Peking Cotoneaster (Cotoneaster acutifolius)

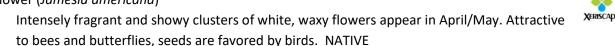
Fruit favored by Robins, Cardinals and Blue Jays. Small pink blossoms turn to black fruit; orange-red fall color.



- Mature height 10' and spread 5'
- An erect shrub with slender spreading branches; best used as a hedge or in groupings.

Food Quality: Good Season: Fall/Winter Cover: Excellent **Nesting: Good**

Waxflower (Jamesia americana)



- Mature height 5' and spread 4'
- A 2003 Plant Select® introduction, this native shrub is excellent for dry shade.

Food Quality: Excellent Season: Fall Cover: Good **Nesting: Good**

Boulder Raspberry (*Oreobatus deliciosus*)

Very hardy, tolerant of dry, sandy soils; arching growth habit with exfoliating cinnamoncolored bark. Large, showy, white single flowers appear in late spring. NATIVE





- Mature height and spread 6'
- The flowers produce fuzzy, coarse and seedy raspberries that are attractive to birds and other wildlife.

Food Quality: Good Season: Summer/Fall

Cover: Good **Nesting: Fair**

Nanking Cherry (Prunus tomentosa)

Features showy, pink-white flowers in spring and fine-flavored red fruits that are favored by over 80 species of birds.



- Mature height and spread 10'
- The fruit of this shrub is commonly used in pies and jellies; an excellent choice for wildlife plantings and windbreaks.

Food Quality: Good Season: Summer Cover: Good **Nesting: Good**

Chokecherry (*Prunus virginiana*)

Chokecherry fruit is eaten by more than 70 bird species. Aggressive growth habit! NATIVE



- Mature height 25' and spread 20'
- Fruits are technically edible, but are astringent (hence the common name). Fruits can be harvested for processing into jams, jellies, pies and sauces.

Food Quality: Good Season: Summer Cover: Good Nesting: Fair

Fragrant Sumac (Rhus aromatica)

Excellent orange-red fall color, small red berries used by a variety of birds. NATIVE





- Mature height 6' and spread 5'
- A dense, low-growing, rambling shrub which spreads by root suckers to form thickets in the wild. Tiny yellow flowers bloom in early spring before the foliage.

Food Quality: Fair Season: Winter Cover: Good **Nesting: Good**



Wood's Rose (Rosa woodsii)

NATIVE

• This fast growing shrub suckers freely. The bright red hips persist throughout the winter.



- Mature height and spread 4'
- The flowers are 2-2 ½" wide, ranging in color from light to dark pink with a sweet and strong fragrance.

• Food Quality: Excellent Season: Fall/Spring

Cover: Good Nesting: Poor

Buffaloberry (Shepherdia argentea)

Robins, Sparrows, Red-Winged Blackbirds and many other birds usually eat the fruit when it
is yellow or light orange in July and early August. <u>NATIVE</u>





- Mature height 8' and spread 6'
- Native Americans would have these berries when they ate buffalo, hence the name.

Food Quality: Good Season: SummerCover: Good Nesting: Good

Coralberry (Symphoricarpos orbiculatus)

• Attractive in winter, full of fruit, this Colorado native is used by birds and small mammals. NATIVE



 Whitish pink flowers in June are followed by clusters of bright pink fruit maturing in September and October.

Food Quality: Good Season: Fall/Winter

Cover: Good Nesting: Fair

Arrowwood (*Viburnum dentatum*)

 Fruit is eaten by songbirds; flat white flower clusters in June followed by blue-black berries; orange-red-purple fall color.



- Mature height 12' and spread 9'
- Native Americans reportedly used the straight stems of this species for arrow shafts, hence the common name.

Food Quality: Good Season: Fall/WinterCover: Good Nesting: Good

PERENNIALS

Hyssop (*Agastache* spp.)

 Very attractive to hummingbirds. Many cultivars available, all with extraordinary scented foliage and blooms.





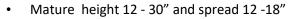
- Mature height 18 -36" and spread 14-30"
- Also known as Hummingbird Mint, this plant is essential to a pollinator friendly garden.

Food Quality: Good Season: Summer/Fall

Cover: Fair Nesting: Poor

Coreopsis (*Coreopsis* spp.)

Attractive to hummingbirds; sparrows and finches also feed on the seeds.







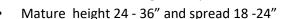
 Their ruggedness and profuse blooms have made them popular with plant breeders, with over 100 types available.

Food Quality: Good Season: FallCover: Fair Nesting: Poor



Coneflower (Echinacea spp.)

Attractive to hummingbirds; sparrows and finches also feed on the seeds.







Showy, daisy-like purple flowers (up to 5" diameter) bloom throughout the summer on top of stiff stems. Many colorful cultivars are available.

Food Quality: Good Season: Summer/Fall

Cover: Fair **Nesting: Poor**

Blanket flower (Gaillardia aristata)

Daisy-like flowers are produced from early summer to fall in shades of red, orange, yellow and peach. NATIVE





Mature height 14 - 24" and spread 18 -24"

The petals of some varieties are frilled, while others have a unique, tubular shape.

Food Quality: Good Season: Fall Cover: Fair **Nesting: Poor**

Coral Bells (*Heuchera* spp.)

Attractive to hummingbirds; sparrows and finches also feed on the seeds.

Mature height 10 - 18" and spread 12 -18"

Offering a dazzling array of foliage color, texture and shapes, their bright foliage can brighten a bed like a flower.

Food Quality: Good Season: Summer Cover: Fair **Nesting: Poor**

Bee Balm (Monarda didyma)

Attractive to hummingbirds. Grows well in any soil; foliage emits a spicy mint fragrance.

Mature height 36" and spread 18 -36"

Available in red, pink, blue, light purple and white cultivars. Blooms early to midsummer.

Food Quality: Good Season: Summer Cover: Fair **Nesting: Poor**

Switch Grass (Panicum virgatum)

Seeds are eaten by songbirds; very good cover for birds and small mammals. Fall color ranges from deep yellow to orange. NATIVE





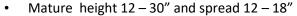
Mature height and spread 3 – 4'

Use this plant in borders or as a low screen. The upright erect growth habit will not fall over in a heavy rain.

Food Quality: Good Season: Winter Cover: Good **Nesting: Poor**

Penstemon (Penstemon spp.)

Attractive to hummingbirds; sparrows and finches also feed on the seeds. NATIVE



Beautiful tubular flowers in colors of red, pink, yellow, blue and purple.

Season: Summer/Fall Food Quality: Good

Cover: Fair **Nesting: Poor**

Prairie Coneflower (Ratibida columnifera)

This drought tolerant plant is easy to establish, naturalizes readily. Flowers attract bees and butterflies; seed heads are attractive to finches. NATIVE





Mature height and spread 18 – 24"

The mature seed head has a pleasant odor when crushed that is similar to anise or licorice.

Food Quality: Good Season: Summer/Fall

Cover: Fair Nesting: Fair











May Night Salvia (Salvia sylvestris × 'Mainacht')

• Attractive to hummingbirds; sparrows and finches also feed on the seeds. Gray-green leaves persist throughout winter; blooms all summer long.





Mature height 24" and spread 12 – 18"

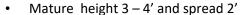
• Deep violet-blue flowers rise above the foliage to a height of up to 2 feet.

• Food Quality: Good Season: Summer/Fall

Cover – Fair Nesting - Poor

Little Bluestem (Schizachyrium scoparium)

• Blue-gray foliage turns red to orange in the fall. Great winter seed source for birds. NATIVE







 Little Bluestem is a bunch grass that is native to 45 of the 50 states, making it the most abundant of native grasses.

Food Quality: Good Season: WinterCover: Fair Nesting: Poor