

WILDLIFE AND PLANTS



Providing the desired environment — whether it is deterring or attracting certain wildlife — requires some knowledge on animals' likes and dislikes in plants.

By Ambika Seshadri

One of the many aspects of gardening is the fact that a garden attracts wildlife. Which animals come to a garden depends on its location and the choice of plants made by your customers. In other words, you can help them make deliberate choices to attract — and even repel — particular animals.

The best way to make your customer's garden a gathering place for fauna is to offer native trees, shrubs and grasses that native birds, insects and mammals will find attractive. They can create a natural environment with your plants. Help them to focus away from straight lines and symmetry. Their object should be to make the garden look as natural as possible. Careful planning will allow them to use their space in the most effective way, mixing areas of open grass, shrubby layers and taller trees.

BIRDS & BUTTERFLIES

Start with the trees, making sure to offer a variety of them. Choose plants that flower and bear fruit at different times of the year. Flowering annuals and perennials can be added at any time to attract more birds and butterflies. The key is to maintain a healthy garden with a balance of beneficial organisms like worms, fungi, insects and micro-organisms. This will produce strong, nutritious plants that will attract insects, which, in turn, attract insectivorous wildlife.

The garden you help your customer create should provide a variety of foods all year-round, as well as shelter, water and nesting sites. Animals tend to need different foods at different times of the year, and to keep them coming, you need to cater to their needs. If you offer a variety of cover types, your customers will be able to attract more wildlife. Suggest a combination of trees, bushes, brushpiles and rock piles to get the best results. Dead or dying trees, called "snags," will also help attract animals. The range of wildlife that a garden can attract is quite large. Common visitors will be songbirds, rabbits, frogs, bats, squirrels and butterflies. Depending on your customers' choice of plantlife and yard maintenance, they may also see raccoons, possums, lizards, dragonflies, owls and maybe some white-tailed deer.



Top photo courtesy of the Netherlands Flower Bulb Info Center.

Birdbath

Entice feathered friends with this playful metal birdbath. Bright-colored gerbera daisies and cascading green leaves accent the rust-colored vine, which is wrapped around the top and base. Each of these unique birdbaths is individually handcrafted in the Philippines and measures 30½ x 21 inches. (800) 390-1193. Caffco. **Write in 1493**



Binoculars

The Audubon 7x18 Mini binoculars weigh a mere 6 oz. and measure just 3½ x 2½ inches. They offer crisp and clear images with vibrant color and enhanced durability within their small frame. The Minis feature an extra-wide field of view (488 feet at 1,000 yards) for finding and following wildlife, and an extraordinary close focus of 4 feet lets you observe butterflies at your feet. Comes with a protective case, neck strap and limited lifetime warranty. Sheltered Wings. (800) 426-0048.



Suet

This line of Veggie Suets is a non-beef product made from 100-percent pure vegetable oil and does not contain preservatives, fillers or pellet food. These are meant to target all North American wild bird species that feed on fat and grains from a feeder. This product has shelf appeal with its natural tones for packaging. It is available in four flavors: Hi Energy, Blend o' Bugs Banquet, Ambrosia and Roasted Peanut. Pine Tree Farms, Inc. (800) 554-9360. **Write in 1503**



Bird feeder

Select-a-Seed systems allow different types of seeds in their feeders in order to attract a variety of birds. Select-a-Seed products include The TopFlight Select-a-Seed Bird Feeder, the TopFlight Triple Tube Bird Feeder and the TopFlight Select-a-Seed Bird Feeder. Opus Inc. (508) 966-0470. **Write in 1502**



Bird feeder

This new squirrel-proof bird feeder brings old-time charm to outdoor décor. It features an oversized awning roof, vintage roof sign, 15-lb. seed capacity and mounting pole. Heritage Farms. (800) 845-2473. **Write in 1499** ▶



Variety is very important; a mixture of trees of varying heights and species is more likely to attract a variety of birds, so is providing a variety of foods. The same flowers that will attract nectar-eating birds will attract nectar-eating butterflies and possums. Seed- and fruit-producing plants will feed other birds, such as finches, who are mainly seed-eaters. Attracting insects will also encourage birds, and most flowering plants will attract insects. In other words, a flower garden is ideal for providing food for butterflies, honeybees and hummingbirds. Additionally, unmowed grasses will provide seeds that are food for many birds and small mammals. As mentioned earlier, it is important to provide food for animals in every season. Birds that feed primarily on seeds may switch to insects if they are raising young in the spring. Thistle will attract a wide variety of finches.

DEER

Deer is a sticky issue. Some people love them and can't get enough of them; others consider them dangerous enemies, for the damage they cause. Deer may eat your customers' favorite plants and strip the bark off their trees. Depending on your customer's attitude toward deer, suggest plants that deer like or dislike. While they don't generally like zinnias, black-eyed Susans, foxgloves, ashes, hawthorn, junipers, spruces or bleeding heart, deer love apples, cherries, hemlock, yew, chrysanthemum and tulips. If your customers are concerned with protecting their plants from hungry deer, suggest interplanting vulnerable plants with those that deer do not like, like chives, garlic, onion, lavender, sage, spearmint, rosemary and thyme. Also suggest thorny, prickly or just plain unappetizing plants to plant around entrances to the garden so that the deer stay out in the first place. Calendulas, irises, basil, marigold and fleabane are also effective in keeping deer out and away.

SQUIRRELS

Another animal that will be a probable guest in the garden, whether welcome or otherwise, is the squirrel. Like deer, your customers will either love 'em or hate 'em. These cute little guys love to plunder bird feeders, chew up wooden decorations and dig up bulbs. If your customers are concerned about squirrel damage, suggest some natural deterrents. Squirrels don't like daffodils, so they can be planted amongst tulips and anything else that needs protection. Squirrels also dislike alliums, which are from the onion family. Another way of protecting plants from squirrels is to provide an alternate source of food away from your flower beds. Sunflower seeds are an attractive option, as squirrels will eat them on the spot without trying to bury them in the garden. Lavender and sage are also useful in driving away squirrels.

OTHER WILDLIFE

Brush piles attract cottontail rabbits, white-footed mice, weasels, box turtles and white-throated sparrows. But these animals can cause severe damage to gardens. Mice, like squirrels, will readily eat birdseed. Rabbits, groundhogs and other quadrupeds will eat seedlings, buds and fruit, and also tend to strip bark from trees and graze low-growing plants to the ground. Suggest planting garlic, onion or marigold near the plants your customers wish to protect. Patches of clover or alfalfa can also help to lure these animals away from other plants.

All in all, it comes down to strategic planting. What your customers want to plant will depend on what they want to attract and what they want to keep out. Knowing the right native plants to accomplish both will allow you to better serve your customers' interests.

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Feeder cleaner

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Window decals

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Hummingbird feeder

The Red Bird Hummingbird Feeder is functional with a decorative flare. It has a 12-oz. capacity and is intended for use with non-colored homemade nectar. The feeder features three snap-in, bee-resistant nectar ports; a large mouth; and a snap-apart base for easy cleaning. Bird Company. (800) 269-4450. **Write in 1492**



Feeder

The Songbird Lantern has American handcraft tradition and clean-lined, classical, functional design. Made of hand-turned redwood from the Pacific Northwest and glass, the Songbird Lantern is easy to use and maintain. The perch can be removed for easy cleaning. A pinecone is added to make each feeder a dual-purpose seed and suet feeder. Schrodt Designs. (800) 460-3852. **Write in 1504** ▶





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Wild bird food

Hot Meats squirrel-proof wild bird feed is made with sunflower meats treated with exclusive chili pepper oil guaranteed to repel squirrels. This technology was tested at Cornell University and found to be highly effective in repelling squirrels and other mammals. Available in 5-, 10- and 20-lb. sizes. Cole's Wild Bird Products Co. (770) 426-8882. **Write in 1494**



Wild bird food

Wild Delight Premium Wild Bird Food is now available in trial size bags — containing nearly 1 lb. of feed. Available in three of Wild Delight's most popular flavors: Nut N' Berry, Fruit & Berry and Songbird Food. These formulations ensure consistency and include ingredients such as real cherries, raisins, berries and tree nuts. D&D Commodities. (800) 543-3308. **Write in 1495**



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The All Bird Café measures 9x17 inches, weighs 14 lbs. and has a 3-qt. capacity. Acorn Bird Products. (724) 668-2462. **Write in 1491**



Bird feeder

A new mesh feeder offers two features that are especially attractive to cardinals and certain other songbirds. First, 35 inches of wide open trough provide feeding space in addition to the pyramidal 7-inch-diameter steel mesh. Secondly, the feeder's locking roof, 12 inches in diameter, serves as protective cover for both feed and birds. Sweet Corn Products LLC. (877) 628-6115. **Write in 1500**



Bird feeder

The EasyClean line of bird feeders now includes this Four-Port Classic Tube Feeder. This economy-priced feeder features all-metal fittings and the unique EasyClean Base, which removes for quick, thorough cleaning. Attracts small songbirds such as chickadees and goldfinches. It is 16 inches high and carries a lifetime guarantee. Duncraft. (800) 252-5696. **Write in 1497**



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