

National Wildlife Week

National Wildlife Week is not just for the birds...or raccoons, deer or squirrels, for that matter. This week-long celebration provides the perfect forum for promoting your wildlife-related products.

By **Brandi D. McNally**

April 21-27 is National Wildlife Week (NWW). Begun in 1938 by the National Wildlife Federation (NWF), this celebratory week encourages children and adults across the country to learn and experience nature, starting in their own communities. The goal of NWW is to educate participants about wildlife conservation issues so students and adults can learn how to become positive influences on the environment.

What does this mean for you? It means you now have more than one month to prepare a great promotion that will draw customers into your

store to buy products from this category (or just to buy products, period). You can start by ordering free (excluding shipping and handling) 2003 NWW posters to help spread the word throughout your store about the promotion, or order enough to give away as handouts for children. Posters are available from the NWF via its Web site at www.nwf.org/nationalwildlifeweek.

While you probably already have many birding products on hand, from feeders to birdseed to bird-watching books, you also carry at least some of what provides sustenance for most of the wildlife frequenting your customers' backyards — plants. In fact, it's very likely that you already have all or most of the components needed to create a natural habitat in your customers' backyards within your store; you need only pull these products together and cross-merchandise them effectively to make this promotion profitable.

HABITAT COMPONENTS

According to the NWF, wildlife have four basic habitat requirements:

Food. Flowers, shrubs and trees provide seeds, berries leaves, buds and nectar, all of which feed birds, butterflies and other insects, and small mammals. Native plants are both preferred by wildlife and require less care, so do some research on your local area and offer seeds and plants that are native to your community. Refer to the sidebars on page 52 for lists of plants known to attract deer, birds, butterflies and hummingbirds. Single them out from your plant selection or order them, and create special signs or tags indicating which animals they will attract.


Water. A small pond or birdbath will do more than just provide a home for fish and drink for birds. Ponds attract other animals, such as frogs and salamanders, and a birdbath or other basin placed low to the ground will draw squirrels, chipmunks and other small mammals. There aren't many garden centers that don't carry birdbaths and outdoor fountains these days, and offering pond-making materials and supplies is on the rise. NWW presents the perfect opportunity to move these products and feel good about the contribution you are making to the environment.


Shelter. Shrubs and trees offer homes for birds and food for deer. Tall grasses are home to grasshoppers, garter snakes and some ground-nesting birds. Stone piles will attract chipmunks and lizards, and brush and twig piles offer great hideouts for rabbits.

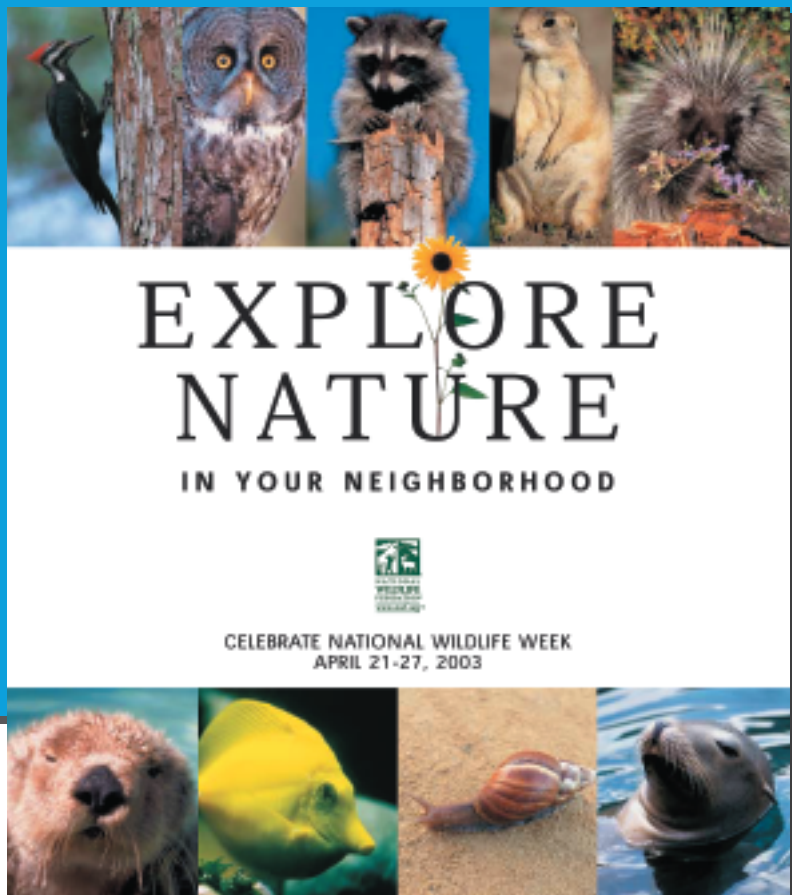
Places to Raise Young. Butterflies require special plants for laying their eggs, and frogs and toads lay eggs only in shallow water. Birds nest in birdhouses as well as shrubs and trees.

USE YOUR RESOURCES

What can you offer that will meet your customers' backyard habitat needs? For more information on NWW, visit www.nwf.org/national-wildlifeweek. If you have an educator on your staff, there is a guide on the NWF site that could be used to help create a class specially designed to teach children about wildlife themes, including wildflower identification.

Most garden center offerings are synonymous with nature, so make NWW's "Explore Nature in your Neighborhood" your own personal promotion. The following products may also give you ideas as to how to augment your current offerings to make this promotion a success. 

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PLANTS THAT ATTRACT WILDLIFE

Following is a listing of plants that attract birds (B), hummingbirds (H) and butterflies (BF).

Plant	Animal
Beebalm	BF, H
Black-Eyed Susan	B, BF
Blue Lobelia	BF, H
Butterfly Bush	B, BF, H
Butterflyweed	BF, H
Cardinal Flower	BF, H
Columbine	BF, H
Hosta	H
Narrowleaf Coneflower	B, BF
Pincushion Flower	B, BF
Prairie Clover	BF, H
Purple Coneflower	B, BF
Smooth Aster	BF
Stiff Goldenrod	B, BF
Western Sunflower	B, BF, H
Yellow Coneflower	B, BF

Source: The Garden Spot, www.whatalulu.com/wildlife.html.



Bluebird feeder

This bluebird feeder is handmade, constructed of western red cedar, and is built to last. The roof is painted with a non-toxic green stain and features a hinged top for easy access, filling and cleaning. The sides are constructed of coated wire mesh with 1½-inch openings, allowing easy access for bluebirds. Backyard Designs. (877) 874-9072. **Write in 1508**



Decorative cottages

Brookfield English Garden Trough designers Mary and Bill Braswell present a unique series of toad cottages. The roof is removable, making the small cottage fun to use as a lantern, key-keep or repository for a garden trowel. Cottages available in a choice of aged metal or cement roof and include a charming poem to tell the tale. The Brookfield Company. (706) 375-8530. **Write in 1509**

CD-ROM

A Sam's Guide to Enjoying Backyard Birds is designed for anyone interested in learning more about birds in their backyard. This CD-ROM, containing bird photography, video clips and songs, includes information on what and how to feed, gardening for birds and butterflies, habitat development, binoculars, field guide selection, and water and bird baths. This easy-to-use CD works with both PCs and Macintosh. Web Spectrum. (888) 613-9973. **Write in 1507**



Wild bird feed

Cole's top-performing line for non-mass merchants includes Special Feeder, Premium Blend, Finch Friends, Critter Munchies and Hot Meats. Cole's also offers straight seeds such as safflower, whole sunflower meats, oil sunflower, cracked corn, white millet and niger seed, plus raw and whole peanuts. Cole's Wild Bird Products Co. (770) 426-8882. **Write in 1510**



PLANTS THAT ATTRACT DEER

The following list of perennials and annuals/biennials are preferred by deer as sources of food.

Perennials	Annuals and Biennials
Crocus	Hollyhock
Daylily	Impatiens
Hawkweed	Pansy
Hosta	Sunflower
Hyacinth	Violet
Iris	
Lily	
Meadow rue	
Phlox	
Rose	
Sedum	
Strawberry	
Tulip	

Further information, including trees and shrubs preferred by deer, can be found on the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) Northern Prairie Wildlife Research Center. Web site at www.npwrc.usgs.gov/resource/1999/wildback/append.htm.



Nature puzzles

Perfect for developing fine motor and basic identification skills, these richly illustrated, wooden peg puzzles are available individually and as a set of three nature-inspired themes: Bugs, Butterflies and Common Birds. These puzzles introduce children to the ladybug, praying mantis, cardinal, monarch butterfly and many other flying creatures. A wooden storage case provides a convenient and attractive storage solution and turns the set into a great gift. Fun Learning. (866) FUN-LURN. **Write in 1513** ▶



Butterfly house

These butterfly houses provide safe havens and nesting habitats for butterflies and are available individually or boxed. Free display with purchase of 12 or more units. These birdfeeders and wildlife accessories are not sold to big-box retailers at deep discounts, and there are no minimums. Rogers & Kirkwood. (630) 859-9242. **Write in 1511**

Bee lodge

Mason bees are nature's mild-mannered, peaceful pollinators that bring bountiful harvest to gardens and orchards. Tiny, blue-black bees need existing holes to nest in while they effectively pollinate flowers, herbs and fruits in early spring. Bee lodges are elegantly hand-crafted in America from recycled redwood and etched glass. Schrodt Designs. (800) 460-3852. **Write in 1512**



Your products, their project

Since you'll be attracting many children with this promotion, have some projects or games available that they can work with either at your store or at home. Here's a recipe for a homemade bird feeder that you can hand out or place on a display along with the ingredients needed to complete it.

Mix one cup of natural peanut butter with one-fourth cup of honey. (This is the perfect opportunity to support your community by supplying local or organic farmers' honey and natural peanut butter.)

Spread mixture on a pinecone.

Roll the pinecone in birdseed.

Add a piece of yarn, and hang the feeder from a tree.

Source: *The Garden Spot*, www.whatalulu.com/wildlife.html



Wildlife feed

This special Native Wildlife Mix is formulated to provide a nutritional source of feed to a broad cross-section of game birds, small mammals and deer. Each ingredient — corn, buckwheat, millet, grain sorghum, fortified wildlife pellets, sunflower and indigestible bushberry seeds — is chosen to fulfill a specific function. Corn, for example, is the basic grain for most wildlife, and is one of the best sources for energy. Indigestible bushberry seeds pass through the digestive tract and germinate to help re-establish wildlife habitats. Wildwood Farms Inc. (815) 589-3366. **Write in 1516**



Nature house

The Original Nature House features wood construction and smooth plastic molding to hold the screen in place and prevent tearing. This particular Nature House is the largest in the Ento line — its size accommodates the collecting, studying and releasing of many types of insects and unique creatures. Measures 7½ inches long x 5½ inches wide x 6 inches high. Ento, a division of TWC of America Inc. (262) 692-6709. **Write in 1514**

Bat house

Heartwood's bat house features dual compartments for maximum capacity, grooved landing pads and a completely waterproof design. Made from cypress with copper trim and hanging paddle. Available in two colors. Heartwood. (888) 490-9046. **Write in 1515**

