



## GREEN SPRING GARDENS

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## USING NATIVE PLANTS TO ATTRACT BIRDS IN THE WASHINGTON, D.C. AREA

Gardening for wildlife is a unique type of gardening that aims to attract and sustain wildlife. Birds make a garden come alive and help nourish our delight in the natural world.

### Growing Native Plants For Birds

Native plants evolved in our region. Native plants greatly benefit birds because native species of plants and animals evolved together, so native plants are much more likely to provide the right mix of foods and support the insect populations that birds need to flourish.

### The Needs Of Birds

1. **Food** - Plants provide food for birds in many forms: nectar, seeds, fruits, nuts, acorns, cones, buds, twigs, leaves, flowers, and sap, as well as harboring tasty animals such as insects and spiders. A landscape with many different plants can support birds with a diversity of appetites.
  - **Insects and Spiders** – Native plants support far more wildlife than non-native species. Most terrestrial bird species eat insects and spiders, and almost all North American birds other than sea birds rear their young with insects and spiders (see *Bringing Nature Home: How You Can Sustain Wildlife With Native Plants* by Douglas Tallamy).
  - **Summer-Fruiting Trees and Shrubs**  
Fruits that ripen from late spring into the summer are often sweet and are eagerly eaten by birds that feed on fruit. These fruits include juneberry (serviceberry), wild cherry, red mulberry, elderberry, blackberry, raspberry, and blueberry.
  - **Fall-Fruiting Trees, Shrubs, and Woody Vines**  
In the fall, fruit with a high fat content is especially helpful to fruit-eating birds because it helps them build up fat reserves. Fruits from dogwood, magnolia, sassafras, sour gum (black gum), spicebush, viburnum, and wild grape are eaten by migrating and overwintering birds in the fall. Some fruits that persist into winter are eaten in the fall as well.
  - **Winter Fruits Into Early Spring – Trees, Shrubs, and Woody Vines**  
Fruits that persist over the winter often have a lower fat content, so they are less likely to turn rancid and rot. This persistent food also may provide sustenance in early spring. Some persistent fruits include chokeberry, sumac, Virginia creeper, American bittersweet, rose hips, hawthorn, bayberry, hackberry, snowberry, American holly, inkberry holly, and winterberry holly. The fleshy cones of eastern red cedar, a type of juniper, are another good winter food.
  - **Oak Acorns and Other Nut-Bearing Trees and Shrubs**  
Nut-bearing plants include oaks, hickories, and hazels. A few birds can crack the shells of large nuts on trees, like woodpeckers, crows, and jays. Large birds like turkeys can consume them when they fall to the ground, and smaller birds can eat them when stray bits of nuts are available. Some smaller and easier to eat nuts are also available, such as American beech and American hophornbeam.
  - **Seeds** – Seeds that are eaten by birds are produced by a wide range of woody and herbaceous plants.

## **2. Water**

- Birds need water for drinking and bathing. They need water to cool themselves in the heat of the summer, and prefer to bathe in shallow puddles and pools. Birds need water in the winter as well.
- Consider garden ponds if there are no natural bodies of water adjacent to the garden. Birds especially like pools with dripping or running water. Garden ponds should have a shallow area so wildlife can easily enter and exit the water to avoid drowning. Pea gravel, logs, or rocks can be used to create this shallow beach area. Add a few fish to gobble up mosquito larvae.

## **3. Cover, Nesting Sites, And Space**

Birds need cover as protection from predators, for nesting sites, to rest, and as shelter from harsh weather. Trees, shrubs, and vines provide cover and nesting sites for many bird species. Other bird species find cover and nesting sites in more open habitats with a greater number of herbaceous plants, such as grasslands, meadows, and marshes.

- **Hedgerows and landscape corridors** – hedgerows are long, dense plantings that combine trees, shrubs, vines, and herbaceous plants into a habitat that is very attractive to birds. They are often used as living fences in large spaces. They can serve as landscape corridors between natural areas, substantially increasing their value to native species. Landscape corridors are thin strips of habitat that connect isolated patches of habitat.
- **Mature trees and standing dead trees** - Dead trees and tree limbs, as well as mature trees with some decay, harbor many insects including beetle larvae and provide insect larvae for birds such as woodpeckers to eat. These trees also provide cavities for nesting sites.
- **Space** - Some bird species need a great deal of space to thrive and are very territorial, while other species need less territory. Developed urban or suburban areas attract different bird species than large tracts of natural areas.

## **Tips For Gardening For Birds**

- **Use pesticides sparingly, if at all** - Pesticides can harm birds directly, and insecticides can indirectly poison insect-eating birds.
- **Limit the size of the lawn** - It doesn't provide much in the way of food or habitat for birds. Manage remaining turf areas in a more ecological fashion.
- **Mimic nature and grow layers of vegetation** - A canopy of tall trees, an understory of smaller trees and shrubs, and a herbaceous layer of varying heights, with the layers intertwined by vines mimics nature and satisfies the needs of many birds. Some bird species like open, sunny areas or forest edges, while others like woodlands.
- **Brush Piles** - Birds and other wildlife use these areas for cover, perching sites, nesting sites, and as a source of insects. Do not make brush piles in low, damp spots or near busy roads.
- **Eco-Friendly Garden Cleanup** - Compost your garden debris and leaves, and leave many native perennials standing throughout the winter to provide seeds and cover for overwintering wildlife.
- **If you have a cat as a pet, keep it indoors** - Free-roaming domestic cats kill as many as 2.4 billion birds each year in the United States. The American Bird Conservancy, the Audubon Society, and the Humane Society of the United States are some organizations with information on this issue.
- **Support hunting programs for white-tailed deer** - Heavy deer feeding degrades the understory layer in woodlands, which reduces nesting and feeding sites for forest songbirds. Nesting in more open forests makes bird eggs and nests easier for predators to spot. Many woody plants are also damaged during the fall breeding season by the antlers of male deer.
- **Remove invasive plants and replace them with native plants** - The Division of Natural Heritage in the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation lists invasive plant species in Virginia (<http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/natural-heritage/invspdflist>).
- **Reduce window collisions** - It is estimated that at least 900 million birds die yearly in the U.S. when they hit glass windows. Turning off unneeded lights at night is a major element in this campaign. Making glass less reflective is another technique being developed to reduce the danger to birds. Place bird feeders far away from glass windows. The American Bird Conservancy and the Audubon Society are organizations with information on this issue.

## Hummingbirds

Hummingbirds are our smallest birds. The ruby-throated hummingbird is the only species that breeds in the eastern United States. The beating of their wings ranges from 40 - 80 beats a second, creating a humming sound. Other species occasionally are seen in the Washington, D.C. area, like the black-chinned hummingbird and the rufous hummingbird. These nectar sippers are pollinating plants as they feast. See <http://www.hummingbirds.net/> for further information.

## Migration

- Most ruby-throated hummingbirds overwinter between southern Mexico and northern Panama.
- When flying north over the Gulf of Mexico, some start the crossing in the last days of February; they migrate as a group over a 2 to 3 month period. They can arrive as early as late March in the Washington, D.C. area. They are sparse at first.
- By mid-September all the resident hummingbirds have left and only migrant birds come through. Most have left the U.S. by late September, although a few overwinter in the U.S. (the Outer Banks of North Carolina, south Florida, and along the Gulf of Mexico).

## Attracting Hummingbirds

- **Nectar** – They hover while feeding. They are especially attracted to red and orange flowers that are tube shaped, such as bee balm, trumpet creeper, and cardinal flower. They are also attracted to other flower colors, such as the pink flowers of ruby spice summersweet. Grow a diversity of plants that bloom at different times of the year.
- They also feed on insects, spiders, and tree sap from sapsucker-drilled holes.
- They nest in trees or large shrubs, and prefer openings in the forest and forest edges. Trees and shrubs are also used for perching and as food sources.
- They love to use soft, fuzzy materials to line their nests: cinnamon fern fuzz, pussy willow, and silk from spider webs are some of their favorite materials.

## Details About Native Plants Listed Below

Most of the plants listed here are growing at Green Spring Gardens and are native to Virginia unless otherwise noted. Plants not native to Virginia are native to the eastern and southeastern United States. Plants solely for wetlands are not covered in this information sheet.

**The following plants have ornamental value and documented value to birds.** Plants that are best for naturalistic use, and not appropriate for use in more formal gardens, are noted. More detailed cultural information about most of these plants is available in **Green Spring's plant information sheets** (under Gardening on Green Spring's website and in the Horticulture Center). If species are listed as having female and male plants (dioecious), a male plant is needed for the female plant to set fruit.

## **A. Native Woody Plants**

### **Medium-Sized To Large Deciduous Trees**

<b>Scientific Name &amp; Common Name of Food Plants For Birds</b>	<b>Bird Food Plants And Other Comments (Excluding Hummingbirds)</b>	<b>Hummingbird Nectar Plants (H)</b>
<i>Acer saccharum</i> (sugar maple) & <i>A. rubrum</i> (red maple; these 2 species are the most ornamental) Naturalistic use: <i>A. negundo</i> (boxelder) & <i>A. saccharinum</i> (silver maple)	Seeds in summer & fall; buds	
<i>Aesculus flava</i> (yellow buckeye)		H - <i>A. pavia</i> is a better plant for H - see under Small Deciduous Trees

<i>Betula nigra</i> (river birch) Note: <i>B. lenta</i> (sweet birch) is uncommonly grown in gardens.	Seeds, sap, & catkins (spike-like flowers: subtle beauty)	
<i>Carpinus caroliniana</i> (American hornbeam or ironwood) <i>Carya</i> species (hickory)	Seeds, buds, & catkins Nut scraps left by squirrels or birds crack nuts themselves	
<i>Celtis occidentalis</i> (northern hackberry) Note: <i>C. tenuifolia</i> (dwarf hackberry) is a less common species.	Fruit in fall & winter	
<i>Diospyros virginiana</i> (American persimmon; usually male & female plants but sometimes have both sexes on the same plant)	Fruit & seeds in fall & winter	
<i>Fagus grandifolia</i> (American beech)	Small nuts, buds, non-showy flowers, & sap	
<i>Fraxinus americana</i> (white ash) <i>F. pennsylvanica</i> (green ash); other species not available in the nursery trade. Now being killed by the emerald ash borer in the Washington, D.C. area, a beetle that is native to Asia. Have to treat with a systemic insecticide if ash trees are going to survive ( <a href="http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpwes/environmental/eab_general.htm">http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpwes/environmental/eab_general.htm</a> ). Research is ongoing on biological control.	Seeds – only female trees fruit	
<i>Halesia tetraptera</i> (common silverbell; <i>H. carolina</i> no longer a valid name) Note: <i>H. diptera</i> (var. <i>magniflora</i> ; two-winged silverbell) is a beautiful species native from South Carolina south.	Dry fruit	
<i>Juglans nigra</i> (black walnut)	Birds eat nut scraps from squirrels & birds may crack nuts themselves	
<i>Liquidambar styraciflua</i> (sweet gum)	Seeds	
<i>Liriodendron tulipifera</i> (tulip tree)	Seeds in fall & winter; sap	H – orioles sometimes sip nectar as well
<i>Magnolia acuminata</i> (cucumbertree magnolia)	Fruit in fall & winter	
<i>Morus rubra</i> (red mulberry; can have male & female plants or both sexes on the same plant; naturalistic use). Many plants likely are hybrids with the non-native <i>M. alba</i> (white mulberry; red mulberry is a taller species).	Fruit in summer	
<i>Nyssa sylvatica</i> (sour gum or black gum)	Fruit in late summer & fall; sap	
<i>Ostrya virginica</i> (American hophornbeam)	Small nuts, catkins, & buds	
<i>Platanus occidentalis</i> (sycamore; naturalistic use)	Seeds in winter	
<i>Prunus serotina</i> (black cherry; high value to wildlife – one of the best trees for birds)	Fruit in summer; sap	
<i>Quercus</i> species (oak; high value to wildlife – one of the best trees for birds)	Acorns, buds, & non-showy flowers	

<i>Robinia pseudoacacia</i> (black locust; suckering habit is a maintenance issue)	Seeds	H - attracts them in the central part of the U.S. - not mentioned for the East Coast
<i>Salix nigra</i> (black willow)	Catkins, twigs, buds, & seeds	
<i>Sassafras albidum</i> (sassafras)	Fruit in late summer & fall	
<i>Taxodium distichum</i> (bald cypress)	Seeds in fall & winter for waterfowl	
<i>Tilia americana</i> (basswood)	Seeds	
<i>Ulmus americana</i> (American elm)	Seeds in late spring; buds & sap	

**Note:** *Populus deltoides* (eastern cottonwood) & other species in this genus can be left in sites where found naturally but generally don't plant (other plants more ornamental) – catkins, buds, twigs, & foliage eaten

### Small To Large Evergreen Trees

<i>Ilex opaca</i> (American holly)	Fruit in winter; sap	
<i>Juniperus virginiana</i> (eastern red cedar; mostly female & male plants but some plants have both sexes)	Fleshy cones in fall & winter	
<i>Magnolia grandiflora</i> (southern magnolia; historically native to NC & south but range has expanded – naturalized in Virginia)	Fruit in fall & winter	
<i>Pinus echinata</i> (shortleaf pine) <i>P. strobus</i> (eastern white pine) <i>P. taeda</i> (loblolly pine) <i>P. virginiana</i> (Virginia pine) Note: <i>P. palustris</i> (longleaf pine) is native to southeastern Virginia but can perform well in our region in some sites.	Seeds, needles, & sap  Needles used in nest construction	
<i>Thuja occidentalis</i> (American arborvitae; smaller tree in cultivation)	Seeds. Most valued for cover & nesting sites.	

**Note:** *Tsuga canadensis* (Canadian hemlock) is a beautiful native tree for cover & food, but the hemlock woolly adelgid is a threat - an introduced insect pest. Several predators known to feed exclusively on adelgids have been imported from China, Japan, and western North America and are slowly becoming established throughout the infested region.

### Small Deciduous Trees

<i>Acer pennsylvanicum</i> (striped maple)	Seeds	
<i>Aesculus pavia</i> (red buckeye; NC native & further south & west) <i>A. sylvatica</i> (painted buckeye; can be a large shrub - naturalistic use)		H – red buckeye is one of their favorites
<i>Amelanchier</i> species that are trees (juneberry, serviceberry, or shadblow): <i>A. arborea</i> <i>A. canadensis</i> (sometimes a shrub) <i>A. laevis</i> <i>A. grandiflora</i>	Fruit in early summer	
<i>Cercis canadensis</i> (eastern redbud)	Seeds (northern bobwhite & a few other birds – likely will not use in home gardens)	H – in some parts of the U.S. at least, like Florida

<i>Chionanthus virginicus</i> (fringetree; separate female & male plants, or plants with perfect flowers)	Fruit in late summer & early fall (plants at Green Spring have not fruited)	
<i>Cornus alternifolia</i> (only one plant at Green Spring so no fruit) (alternate-leaf dogwood) <i>C. florida</i> (flowering dogwood)	Fruit in fall; buds & sap	
<i>Hamamelis virginiana</i> (witch hazel)	Seeds eaten by a few species such as wild turkey & northern bobwhite so not likely in home gardens	
<i>Ilex decidua</i> (possumhaw holly; male plant needed for pollination of female plants)	Fruit in winter on female plants	
<i>Magnolia macrophylla</i> (bigleaf magnolia) <i>M. tripetala</i> (umbrella magnolia) <i>M. virginiana</i> (sweetbay magnolia; our local ecotypes are deciduous to semi-evergreen)	Fruit in fall & winter	
<i>Viburnum prunifolium</i> (blackhaw viburnum)  <i>V. rufidulum</i> (southern blackhaw viburnum)	Fall & winter fruit (viburnums usually not self-fruitful so need 2 or more plants of a given species with different genetic backgrounds)	

#### Deciduous And Evergreen Shrubs (evergreen shrubs noted)

<i>Aesculus parviflora</i> (bottlebrush buckeye; native to Alabama & Georgia)		H
<i>Alnus serrulata</i> (hazel alder; plant by water)	Seeds & buds	
<i>Amelanchier stolonifera</i> (running serviceberry, juneberry)	Fruit in early summer	
<i>Aralia spinosa</i> (Devil's walking stick)	Fruit in fall	
<i>Aronia arbutifolia</i> (red chokeberry) <i>Aronia melanocarpa</i> (black chokeberry) ( <i>Aronia prunifolia</i> is a natural hybrid of the above 2 species - purple chokeberry)	Fruit in winter – don't eat right away because bitter – squirrels will eat earlier than birds; buds	
<i>Callicarpa americana</i> (American beautyberry)	Fruit in fall & into winter	
<i>Cephalanthus occidentalis</i> (buttonbush)	Seeds – waterfowl eat them	H
<i>Clethra alnifolia</i> (summersweet)  Note: <i>C. acuminata</i> is a large shrub & best for naturalistic use in moist woodland areas. Harder to grow than the above – more sensitive to water stress.	Dry fruit	H – <i>C. alnifolia</i> 'Ruby Spice' is one of their favorites locally – pink flowers
<i>Cornus amomum</i> (silky dogwood) <i>C. sericea</i> (redosier dogwood; showiest bark)  Note: <i>C. racemosa</i> (gray dogwood) - can be grown as a small tree.	Fruit in late summer & early fall	
<i>Corylus americana</i> <i>C. cornuta</i> (hazelnut or filbert; naturalistic use; deer love to eat)	Nuts, buds, & catkins	

<p><i>Euonymus americanus</i> (American euonymus or hearts-a-bursting)</p> <p>Note: <i>E. atropurpureus</i> (eastern wahoo) has nice fruit as well – hard to find in nursery trade</p>	<p>Seeds eaten in the fall by a few species like cardinal, wood thrush, &amp; brown thrasher</p>	
<p><i>Hydrangea arborescens</i> (wild hydrangea)</p>	<p>Some species eat seeds such as wild turkey; poisonous compound in the plant, especially in leaves &amp; buds – doesn't stop deer!</p>	
<p><i>Ilex glabra</i> (inkberry holly; evergreen; fruit not as palatable as some species) <i>I. verticillata</i> (winterberry holly)</p> <p>Note: evergreen <i>I. vomitoria</i> (yaupon holly) performs well in southeastern VA (native there), but have tested few cultivars at Green Spring.</p> <p>Male &amp; female plants for all hollies.</p>	<p>Fruit on female plants in late fall &amp; winter; <i>I. verticillata</i> is a good source of winter food – grow the species type, not cultivars, for best wildlife value – fruit will be more palatable to birds since not selected for long retention</p>	
<p><i>Lindera benzoin</i> (spicebush; male &amp; female plants)</p>	<p>Fruit in fall on female plants</p>	
<p><i>Myrica pensylvanica</i> or <i>Morella pensylvanica</i> (northern bayberry; can have male &amp; female plants, or some plants with both sexes on the same plant)</p> <p>Note: <i>M. cerifera</i> is evergreen but often harder to grow in our region.</p>	<p>Fruit in fall &amp; winter</p>	
<p><i>Physocarpus opulifolius</i> (ninebark)</p>	<p>Dry fruit – eaten by some species</p>	
<p><i>Rhododendron</i> species (native azaleas). Some of the species that are easier to grow: <i>R. atlanticum</i> (coast azalea) <i>R. calendulaceum</i> (flame azalea) <i>R. periclymenoides</i> (pinxterbloom azalea) <i>R. prinophyllum</i> (roseshell azalea) <i>R. viscosum</i> (swamp azalea)</p> <p>Note: <i>R. austrinum</i> (orange azalea) is showy - native to AL, GA, FI, &amp; MS.</p>		<p>H - especially <i>R. viscosum</i> according to Brooklyn Botanic Garden</p>
<p><i>Rhododendron maximum</i> (rosebay rhododendron; evergreen)</p>	<p>Cover</p>	<p>H</p>
<p><i>Rhus aromatica</i> (fragrant sumac; male &amp; female plants or sometimes both sexes on the same plant) <i>R. copallina</i> (shining sumac; male &amp; female plants) <i>R. typhina</i> (staghorn sumac; male &amp; female plants)</p>	<p>Fruit in winter</p>	
<p><i>Rosa carolina</i> (Carolina rose) <i>R. palustris</i> (swamp rose) <i>R. virginiana</i> (Virginia rose) - naturalistic use for all species</p>	<p>Fruit – especially in late winter when food is scarce; buds</p>	

<i>Rubus odoratus</i> (flowering raspberry; the showiest member of this genus – other common names of species in this genus are blackberry & dewberry)	Fruit in the summer for the genus  On large properties it is good to leave some of the less ornamental species in out-of-the-way areas: high wildlife value.	
<i>Sambucus nigra</i> subsp. <i>canadensis</i> ( <i>S. canadensis</i> ) (common elderberry; naturalistic use)	Fruit in summer	
<i>Symphoricarpos orbiculatus</i> (coralberry)	Fruit in fall and into winter	May attract H
<i>Vaccinium corymbosum</i> (highbush blueberry; the large-fruited species that people eat) <i>V. stamineum</i> (deerberry; naturalistic use)  Note: <i>V. pallidum</i> is a common species in the wild in MD & VA - preserve it & other species where you find them.	Fruit in early summer to mid summer	
<i>Viburnum acerifolium</i> (mapleleaf viburnum) <i>V. dentatum</i> (some forms now classified as <i>V. dentatum</i> var. <i>lucidum</i> or <i>V. reonitum</i> ; arrowwood viburnum) <i>V. lentago</i> (nannyberry viburnum) <i>V. nudum</i> (possumhaw viburnum)  Note: <i>V. acerifolium</i> & <i>V. lentago</i> are for naturalistic use.	Fruit in fall & winter - tastiest fruit eaten first  Viburnums usually are not self-fruitful so need more than one plant of a given species with different genetic backgrounds.	

Note: Some plants have more wildlife value in the mountains such as the evergreen *Kalmia latifolia* (mountain laurel). Ruffed grouse feed on buds, foliage, & twigs. Warblers nest in them (bird species mentioned are migrants here – nest in the VA mountains & elsewhere).

### Woody Vines

<i>Bignonia capreolata</i> (crossvine)		H
<i>Campsis radicans</i> (trumpet creeper)		H
<i>Lonicera sempervirens</i> (trumpet honeysuckle)	Fruit in late summer onward	H; sometimes orioles
<i>Parthenocissus quinquefolia</i> (Virginia creeper; naturalistic use – high value to wildlife)	Fruit in fall & winter	
<i>Vitis</i> species (wild grape; naturalistic use – high value to wildlife).  <i>V. vulpina</i> (frost grape) is native to Green Spring	Fruit beginning in late summer & into winter  Birds nest among grapevines & numerous species use grape bark in their nests.	

**Note:** Woody plants that are valuable to birds for food and cover but not planted by humans (on large properties it is good to leave some plants of these species for their high wildlife value):  
*Smilax* species (greenbrier or catbrier) – fruit eaten by many birds & dense cover.  
*Toxicodendron radicans* (poison ivy) – over 60 species of birds eat the fruit  
[https://home.nps.gov/shen/learn/nature/poison\\_ivy.htm](https://home.nps.gov/shen/learn/nature/poison_ivy.htm).

## B. Native Herbaceous Plants

### Herbaceous Perennials

<p><i>Aquilegia canadensis</i> (wild columbine)</p>	<p>Seeds - a few birds such as dark-eyed junco &amp; other sparrows</p>	<p>H</p>
<p><i>Arisaema triphyllum</i> (Jack-in-the-pulpit)</p>	<p>Fruit (poisonous to humans)</p>	
<p><i>Asclepias</i> (milkweed) – the easiest plant to grow that is also well behaved in gardens is <i>A. tuberosa</i> (butterfly weed)</p> <p>Other species for gardeners:  <i>A. exaltata</i> (tall milkweed; likes light shade; harder to purchase &amp; grow than some others)  <i>A. incarnata</i> (swamp milkweed; needs constantly moist to wet sites)  <i>A. purpurascens</i> (purple milkweed; rare in VA. A few native plant nurseries sell propagated plants.)  <i>A. syriaca</i> (common milkweed; best for naturalistic use in larger spaces unless you can weed frequently – spreads by rhizomes. The most important species for monarch butterflies.)</p>	<p>Downy fluff around seeds used to provide nesting material.</p>	<p>H - <i>A. tuberosa</i>. in <i>Illinois Wildflowers</i>  <i>A. incarnata</i> &amp; <i>A. purpurascens</i> are also listed (see website in reference section)</p>
<p><i>Chelone glabra</i> (white turtlehead; consistently moist to wet sites; doesn't like to be crowded)</p>		<p>H</p>
<p><i>Coreopsis verticillata</i> (threadleaf coreopsis) – the best performing cultivars in our area are 'Golden Gain', 'Golden Showers' ('Grandiflora'), &amp; 'Zagreb'.</p> <p><i>C. major</i> (major coreopsis, woodland coreopsis; grown in full sun to light shade at Green Spring).</p> <p>Note: <i>C. tripteris</i> (tall coreopsis) is listed as attracting birds by the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center.</p> <p><i>C. palustris</i> 'Summer Sunshine' was the highest rated <i>Coreopsis</i> in the Mt. Cuba trials (<a href="http://www.mtcubacenter.org/horticultural-research/trial-garden-research/">http://www.mtcubacenter.org/horticultural-research/trial-garden-research/</a>) – the species is native in North Carolina &amp; other states. However the species is not listed as attracting birds by the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center. Many <i>Coreopsis</i> cultivars are hybrids.</p>	<p>Seeds</p>	<p>H (have only observed on <i>C. major</i> at Green Spring)</p>
<p><i>Dicentra eximia</i> (wild bleeding heart)</p>		<p>H</p>
<p><i>Echinacea purpurea</i> (eastern purple coneflower; naturalized in VA). This species has been crossed with other more western species such as <i>E. pallida</i>, <i>E. paradoxa</i>, &amp; <i>E. tennesensis</i> to produce many colorful cultivars.</p> <p>The true VA native is <i>E. laevigata</i> (smooth purple coneflower) is not grown in gardens: it is imperiled in VA, federally endangered, &amp; hard to grow.</p>	<p>Seeds from late summer into the winter</p>	
<p><i>Geranium maculatum</i> (wild geranium)</p>	<p>Seeds</p>	

<p><i>Helianthus angustifolius</i> (swamp sunflower) – ‘First Light’ is a good performer in gardens (shorter than average) but ‘Gold Lace’ has had few blooms at Green Spring &amp; they are very late.  <i>H. divaricatus</i> (woodland sunflower; spreads quite a bit when happy; sun or light shade)  <i>H. strumosus</i> (roughleaf sunflower, woodland sunflower; shade tolerant)</p> <p>Note: <i>H. tuberosus</i> (Jerusalem artichoke) is best left in naturalistic settings – assertive spreader (unless like to eat lots of tubers).</p> <p><i>Heliopsis</i> is a similar genus in the aster family – <i>Heliopsis helianthoides</i> (false sunflower) performs well in gardens &amp; may attract some birds &amp; hummingbirds</p>	Seeds	
<p><i>Hibiscus moscheutos</i> (hardy hibiscus or rose mallow)</p> <p>Note: <i>H. coccineus</i> &amp; hybrids (red hibiscus) perform well - the species is native to GA &amp; the Deep South but naturalized further north.</p> <p>(The less showy <i>H. laevis</i> not listed as H plant at <a href="http://www.wildflower.org">www.wildflower.org</a>)</p>		H - <i>H. coccineus</i> is the best species to attract H because red-flowered
<p><i>Liatris spicata</i> (liatris, blazing star, or gayfeather) the easiest species to grow).</p> <p><i>L. aspera</i> &amp; <i>L. microcephala</i> (native to NC &amp; other southeastern states) grow well in some dry sites (need excellent drainage). <i>L. squarrosa</i> has not been as persistent.</p>	Seeds	H
<p><i>Lobelia cardinalis</i> (cardinal flower)</p> <p>Note: Hummingbirds sometimes feed on <i>L. siphilitica</i> (great blue lobelia)</p>		H
<p><i>Maianthemum racemosum</i> subsp. <i>racemosum</i> (<i>Smilacina racemosa</i>; false Solomon’s seal)</p> <p><i>M. stellatum</i> (<i>S. stellata</i>; star-flowered false Solomon’s seal)</p>	Fruit	
<p><i>Mertensia virginica</i> (Virginia bluebells)</p>		occasionally H
<p><i>Monarda didyma</i> (bee balm)</p> <p><i>M. fistulosa</i> (wild bergamot)</p> <p>Note: many cultivars are available from the above species, &amp; hybrids with the above &amp; other native species (Mt. Cuba is evaluating cultivars - <a href="http://www.mtcubacenter.org/plant-trials/category/monarda-evaluation-2014-2016/">http://www.mtcubacenter.org/plant-trials/category/monarda-evaluation-2014-2016/</a>)</p>		H – <i>M. didyma</i> & red-flowered forms are some of their favorites. <i>M. fistulosa</i> also attracts them.

<p><i>Mitchella repens</i> (partridgeberry)</p>	<p>Fruit. Leaves eaten by some birds in the wild like ruffed grouse &amp; northern bobwhite (habitat not found in home gardens).</p>	
<p><i>Penstemon digitalis</i> (white penstemon) <i>P. hirsutus</i> (hairy penstemon)</p>		H
<p><i>Phlox divaricata</i> (wild blue phlox)</p> <p>Other species that can perform well in local gardens if sited properly: <i>P. glaberrima</i> (smooth phlox) <i>P. paniculata</i> (garden phlox) <i>P. subulata</i> (moss phlox)</p> <p>Note: <i>P. nivalis</i> (trailing phlox) needs sandy or rocky soil – has done well in the amended soil of the Green Spring Rock Garden.</p> <p><i>P. pilosa</i> (downy phlox) - often a vigorous spreader such as 'Eco Happy Traveler' – showy cultivar but higher maintenance needs.</p> <p><i>P. stolonifera</i> (creeping phlox) can be difficult to grow over time – Green Spring has had the most success with 'Sherwood Purple'.</p>		occasionally H
<p><i>Physostegia virginiana</i> (obedient plant)</p>		occasionally H
<p><i>Rudbeckia fulgida</i> (orange coneflower) <i>R. laciniata</i> (cutleaf coneflower) <i>R. subtomentosa</i> (sweet coneflower; native to TN, NC, &amp; the central U.S.)</p> <p>Shorter lived biennials or short-lived perennials: <i>R. hirta</i> (Black-Eyed Susan). The wild type attracts butterflies (not the large-flowered tetraploid cultivars). <i>R. triloba</i> (three-lobed coneflower) Seeds of both species are eaten, but less so for <i>R. hirta</i> (occasionally eaten by goldfinches - <i>Illinois Wildflowers</i> at <a href="http://www.illinoiswildflowers.info">www.illinoiswildflowers.info</a>)</p>	Seeds	
<p><i>Salvia lyrata</i> (lyreleaf salvia; purple-leaved forms are usually grown in gardens)</p>		H

<p><i>Silphium</i> species:  <i>S. asteriscus</i> &amp;  <i>S. asteriscus</i> var. <i>trifoliatum</i> (formerly classified as <i>S. trifoliatum</i>) (southern rosinweed, whorled rosinweed for var. <i>trifoliatum</i>; <i>S. asteriscus</i> form likes some shade, unlike the others &amp; reseeds the least)  <i>S. laciniatum</i> (compass plant: native to the central U.S. - naturalized in VA; hybridized with <i>S. terebinthinaceum</i> at Green Spring)  <i>S. perfoliatum</i> (cup plant; heavy reseeding in some sites)  <i>S. terebinthinaceum</i> (prairie rosinweed, prairie dock)</p>	<p>Seeds</p> <p><i>S. perfoliatum</i> – cups formed by large leaves hold water. Birds drink the water &amp; eat insects in the water as they drink.</p>	
<p><i>Solidago</i> species (goldenrod) - the best garden plants are listed.  For shady areas:  <i>S. caesia</i> (wreath goldenrod)  <i>S. flexicaulis</i> (zigzag goldenrod)</p> <p>For full sun:  <i>S. rugosa</i> (rough-stemmed goldenrod; 'Fireworks' is commonly grown in gardens)  <i>S. sempervirens</i> (seaside goldenrod) - needs dry soil in full sun or floppy. When happy can reseed heavily.  <i>S. shortii</i> 'Solar Cascade' (species is native to Kentucky &amp; Indiana; reseeds the least)</p> <p>Adaptable To Full Sun or Part Shade (less bloom in part shade):  <i>S. sphacelata</i> 'Golden Fleece' (have not grown the species type)</p> <p>Note: <i>S. simplex</i> var. <i>racemosa</i> (riverside outcrop goldenrod) has performed well in dry areas like slopes &amp; rock gardens but rare in VA (Green Spring propagates some years).</p> <p>Other species for naturalistic use:  <i>S. ulmifolia</i> (elm-leaf goldenrod) has performed well at Green Spring.</p> <p>Two goldenrod species planted in 2016 – <i>S. odora</i> (sweet goldenrod; likes sandier &amp; very dry soils) &amp; <i>S. speciosa</i> (showy goldenrod); trying again.</p> <p>Best not to grow species that spread by long rhizomes since aggressive in gardens, &amp; sometimes even in meadows – an example is <i>S. canadensis</i> (Canadian goldenrod; some have been reclassified as <i>S. altissima</i>). This species readily seeds into gardens.</p>	<p>Seeds</p> <p>In the winter, chickadees &amp; downy woodpeckers tear open galls made by the goldenrod gallfly (from <i>Brooklyn Botanic Garden. Plants and Garden News. Fall 2007/ Winter 2008.</i> "Inviting Wildlife Into Your Winter Garden." Claire Hagen Dole. "To Feed The Birds, First Feed the Bugs." Anne Raver, <i>New York Times</i> - quoting Douglas Tallamy)</p>	
<p><i>Spigelia marilandica</i> (woodland pinkroot or Indian pink; native to SC, TN, KY, &amp; other southeastern states; naturalized in VA; poisonous to humans)</p>		H

<p><i>Viola canadensis</i> (Canadian violet)  <i>V. pubescens</i> (yellow violet)  <i>V. sororia</i> (common blue violet; seeds into most gardens)  <i>V. striata</i> (striped cream violet)  (naturalistic use for all of the above since spreading habit).</p> <p>Note: Not all native violets are easy to grow in cultivation. <i>V. pedata</i> (bird's foot violet) likes very dry, sunny sites &amp; is short-lived in local gardens. <i>V. palmata</i> (wood violet) has restrained growth &amp; attractive leaves but is hard to find commercially (not very vigorous).</p>	<p>Not a major food source but many plant parts eaten</p>	
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**Note:** Some harder-to-grow hummingbird plants, or hummingbird plants for specialized habitats:  
*Kosteletzkya virginica* (saltmarsh mallow) – likes constantly moist sites in full sun  
*Lilium canadense* & *L. superbum* (native lilies) – loved by deer; needs specialized habitats with moist soil  
*Mimulus ringens* (monkeyflower) – likes constantly moist & wet sites so pops up here and there since most sites at Green Spring.  
*Silene virginica* (fire pink) - hard to grow in cultivation & short-lived (have only had success in the Rock Garden at Green Spring during some years & little success in the Virginia Native Plant Garden; enjoy in the wild).

**Herbaceous Perennials That Are Not Highly Ornamental But Fruit Is Valuable To Birds**

*Fragaria virginiana* (wild strawberry; white-flowered & sweet fruit)  
Wild strawberry is often confused with Indian strawberry (*Duchesnea indica*), an Asian invasive – yellow flowers & fruit is watery & tasteless.  
*Phytolacca americana* (common pokeweed)

**Ferns**

*Osmunda cinnamomea* (*Osmundastrum cinnamomeum*; cinnamon fern; a perennial fern that likes to grow in moist to wet sites) - brown fuzz at the base of the fronds is a favorite hummingbird nesting material.

**Ornamental Grasses**

Grasses provide cover, nesting sites for grassland birds, and seeds for wintering birds. Most of the listed species perform well in gardens; it is noted that some species are best for naturalistic use only.  
*Andropogon glomeratus* (bushy bluestem; constantly moist sites), *A. gerardii* (big bluestem; reseeds too readily in some garden sites & crowds out shorter grasses like little bluestem), & *A. virginicus* (broomsedge bluestem)  
*Chasmanthium latifolium* (river oats; naturalistic use only - reseeds readily)  
*Deschampsia cespitosa* (tufted hair grass)  
*Elymus hystrix* (*Hystrix patula*; bottlebrush grass; the most ornamental of the 2 species) & *E. canadensis* (Canada wild rye; naturalistic use)  
*Panicum virgatum* (switchgrass; reseeds too readily in some gardens & crowds out other shorter grasses like little bluestem) – many cultivars available.  
Seeds of *Dichanthelium clandestinum* (*Panicum clandestinum*; deertongue grass) are also eaten by birds (naturalistic use; often seeds into areas).  
*Schizachyrium scoparium* (little bluestem; the best bluestem for garden use & meadow use. Several cultivars available.)  
*Sorghastrum nutans* (Indian grass; best for naturalistic use - reseeds readily)  
*Sporobolus heterolepis* (prairie dropseed; some forms showier than others)  
*Tridens flavus* (purpletop or redtop; naturalistic use for meadows)  
*Tripsacum dactyloides* (eastern gamagrass; naturalistic use – large plant that needs lots of space & moisture)

Note: *Saccharum brevibarbe* var. *contortum* (bent-awn plume grass or sortbeard plume grass) &

*S. giganteum* (giant plume grass) may be useful to birds according to *The Living Landscape* by Rick Darke & Doug Tallamy (full reference listed at end of information sheet).

*Bouteloua gracilis* is native mostly further west – ‘Blonde Ambition’ is a good performer in gardens.

*Muhlenbergia capillaris* (muhly grass) – no value to birds is listed.

**Ornamental Sedges** – taller species provide cover for birds. One of them is *Carex vulpinoidea* (fox sedge; moist to wet sites) - listed in *The Living Landscape* by Rick Darke & Doug Tallamy (full reference listed at end of information sheet). Sedge species provide food for wintering birds.

### **Annuals And Biennials**

*Campanula americana* (*Campanulastrum americanum*; American bellflower or campanula) - winter annual or biennial – possibly hummingbirds

*Impatiens capensis* (jewelweed; naturalistic use) – annual; a hummingbird favorite

### **C. Importance Of Natural Areas To Birds**

Many birds have very specific habitat requirements, or are found in specific areas of Virginia at certain times of the year (most birds are migratory). Most bird species will not be attracted to gardens, especially if there are no large natural areas or bodies of water nearby, and can only be enjoyed and preserved in their native habitats. The Prince William Conservation Alliance has photos of some common backyard birds in the suburbs of Northern Virginia (<http://pwconserve.org/wildlife/birds/lists/backyard.html>).

### **D. Bird References**

#### **Bird Guidebooks**

- *The Sibley Guide to Birds*. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. David Sibley.
- *The Sibley Guide to Bird Life and Behavior*. David Sibley.
- *The Sibley Field Guide to Birds of Eastern North America*. David Sibley and Rick Cech.
- Other good guidebooks as well such as Kaufman, National Audubon Society, National Geographic, and Peterson field guides.

#### **U.S. Geological Survey Websites (Part Of The U.S. Department Of The Interior)**

- Patuxent Bird Identification InfoCenter - photographs, identification tips, distribution maps, life history information, songs, and videos about North American birds (<http://www.mbr-pwrc.usgs.gov/infocenter/infocenter.html>)

#### **Organizations**

- American Bird Conservancy (<https://abcbirds.org/>)
- Cornell Lab of Ornithology (<http://www.birds.cornell.edu/Page.aspx?pid=1478>)
- National Audubon Society (<http://www.audubon.org/>) – also see **How to Make Your Yard Bird-Friendly** (<http://www.audubon.org/news/bird-friendly-yard>) & **North Carolina – Bird Friendly Native Plants** (<http://nc.audubon.org/conservation/bird-friendly-communities/bird-friendly-native-plants>)
- National Wildlife Federation – in addition to their magazines, see the **Garden for Wildlife** website (<http://www.nwf.org/Garden-For-Wildlife.aspx>)
- The Virginia Society of Ornithology (<http://www.virginiabirds.org>) - local chapters are the Audubon Society of Northern Virginia (<http://audubonva.org/>) & the Northern Virginia Bird Club (<http://www.nvabc.org/>)

#### **Bird Gardening References**

- *Bringing Nature Home: How You Can Sustain Wildlife With Native Plants*. Douglas Tallamy.
- *Gardening For The Birds. How to Create A Bird-Friendly Backyard*. George Adams.
- *Habitat At Home*. Carol Heiser. Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (<http://www.dgif.virginia.gov/wp-content/uploads/habitat-at-home.pdf>)

- *Hummingbirds and Butterflies*. Bill Thompson III and Connie Toops. Published by Bird Watcher's Digest.
- *The Living Landscape: Designing for Beauty and Biodiversity in the Home Garden*. Rick Darke & Doug Tallamy.
- *HabiChat* quarterly newsletter. Maryland Department of Natural Resources (<http://dnr2.maryland.gov/wildlife/Pages/habitat/habichat.aspx>)
- *Welcome to Subirdia. Sharing Our Neighborhoods with Wrens, Robins, Woodpeckers, and Other Wildlife*. John Marzluff.

### **Brooklyn Botanic Garden All-Region Guides With Bird Gardening Information**

- *Bird Gardens. Welcoming Wild Birds to Your Yard*. Stephen Kress, Guest Editor.
- *Hummingbirds and Butterflies. Backyard Bird Guides*. Bill Thompson and Connie Toops.
- *Hummingbird Gardens. Turning Your Yard into a Hummingbird Heaven*. Stephen Kress, Guest Editor.

## **E. Plant References**

### **Scientific Names Of Plants - Current Names Are From:**

- **Encyclopedia of Life** (<http://eol.org/>) – institutional partners include Harvard University, the Missouri Botanical Garden, the Smithsonian Institution, and The Field Museum.
- **Tropicos** from the Missouri Botanical Garden (<http://tropicos.org/>)

If a second scientific name is given, it is usually an old name that is still seen in some references or used by some nurseries. However, the above databases do not always agree on names.

### **Other References:**

***Flora of Virginia***. Alan Weakley, J. Christopher Ludwig, and John Townsend. 2012. BRIT Press. Botanical Research Institute of Texas.

The **Kemper Center for Home Gardening Plantfinder** at the Missouri Botanical Garden is an excellent reference for plant names, gardening information, and photographs (<http://www.missouribotanicalgarden.org/plantfinder/plantfindersearch.aspx>). It features plants in their Kemper Center display gardens and is an excellent website about ornamental plants.

### ***Landscaping With Native Plants. Maryland Native Plant Society.***

(<http://www.mdflora.org/resources/Publications/GardenersGuidelines/Landscaping-Natives.pdf>).

This booklet is also available in print form.

The Lady Bird Wildflower Center at the University of Texas in Austin has developed the **Native Plant Information Network** for native plants (<http://www.wildflower.org/explore/>).

***Native Plants for Northern Virginia*** (<http://www.plantnovanatives.org/>). This booklet is also available in print form. It is a publication of the Plant NoVA Natives initiative, which includes the Virginia Native Plant Society.

**USDA PLANTS Database** (<http://plants.usda.gov/java/>) - this database focuses on plants native to the U.S. and to U.S. Territories and Protectorates, as well as naturalized non-natives and invasives. It is also used to determine distribution within Virginia by county.

*Developed by Brenda Skarphol, Curatorial Horticulturist  
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