

## Shrubs and Trees for Attracting Birds

Many native trees and shrubs offer nutritious fruits that are attractive to birds. By planting trees and shrubs with berries you will provide food for them throughout the growing season.

Providing fruit year-round is the best way to attract birds to your yard. When you create a smorgasbord for wild birds, you will serve two different groups—winter residents and summer residents. In spring and fall, you will also offer an important food supply for migrant species. You will attract different groups of birds to your garden depending on which shrubs you plant. If possible, plant enough different species to provide food throughout the year.

It's important to choose regionally native shrubs for your bird garden. When birds eat fruits, they distribute the seeds in their droppings. Many exotic pest plants that are encroaching on our gardens and natural areas, such as multiflora rose (*Rosa multiflora*), Oriental bittersweet (*Celastrus orbiculatus*), and Russian olive (*Elaeagnus angustifolia*), were originally planted as food for birds. These omnipresent, invasive species now pose major problems for the survival of many native plants.

Good shrubs with summer berries include juneberries (*Amelanchier* spp.), fringe tree (*Chionanthus virginicus*), elderberries (*Sambucus* spp.), blueberries (*Vaccinium* spp.), brambles (*Rubus* spp.), and gooseberries (*Ribes* spp.). Wild cherry (*Prunus serotina*), and devil's walkingstick (*Aralia spinosa*) are a few less-common garden plants that are also valuable to birds.

To offer autumn and winter food to birds, plant chokeberries (*Aronia* spp.), native *Viburnum* species, dogwoods (*Cornus* spp.), coralberries and snowberries (*Symphoricarpos* spp.), winterberry holly (*Ilex verticillata*), and bayberry (*Myrica pennsylvanica*).

The list of small trees that are also excellent food plants includes mountain ash (*Sorbus americana*), hawthorns (*Crataegus* spp.), crabapples and pagoda dogwood (*Cornus alternifolia*).

If you live in a rural area, with hedgerows and native woods, try to encourage wild plants like sumacs (*Rhus* spp.), catbriers (*Smilax* spp.), and even poison ivy (*Toxicodendron radicans*). Although these plants are not ornamental, they're important sources of winter food for birds as diverse as warblers, bluebirds, and woodpeckers.

By planting some of these fruitful shrubs and trees, you will help to create a habitat that is beneficial to wildlife, as well as being beautiful.