Help nature, plant natives!

10 GREAT NATIVE TREES, SHRUBS, AND PLANTS FOR BIRDS

Turn your yard into a year-round feeding station for Wisconsin birds by planting native trees, shrubs and plants. By adding one or more of these bird-friendly natives you’ll attract more birds and give them the food and shelter they need to raise a family, survive a Wisconsin winter or make the long migration south. A win-win for you and the birds!

Examples of native species for birds.

Oak
- Oak trees (Quercus species) support over 530 species of butterflies and moth caterpillars, more than any other woody plant.
- Many migrating and nesting birds rely on these caterpillars for food, including such favorites as warblers, tanagers, and orioles.
- Acorns are eaten by blue jays, red-headed woodpeckers, and other wildlife.
  - white oak (Q. alba)
  - red oak (Q. rubra)
  - bur oak (Q. macrocarpa)

Cherry
- Ranging in size from small shrubs to large trees, cherries (Prunus species) host over 450 species of caterpillars that provide food for birds.
- Fruits attract birds from mid-summer to fall, including red-headed woodpecker, rose-breasted grosbeak, bluebirds, and dozens more.
  - chokecherry (P. virginia)
  - black cherry (P. serotina)
  - pin cherry (P. pensylvanica)

Willow
- Willows (Salix species) host 456 species of caterpillars, second only to oaks.
- Spring flowers attract small insects that provide a critical food source for early spring migrants like kinglets and warblers.
- Dense growth structure of some species forms thickets of cover and offers great nesting sites.
  - pussy willow (S. discolor)
  - black willow (S. nigra)
  - Note: avoid non-natives like weeping willow (S. babylonica)

Viburnum
- Viburnums (Viburnum species) are fruit-bearing shrubs whose dense structure provides excellent cover during migration and nesting.
- Fruits in fall, winter, and early spring attract robins, waxwings, bluebirds, thrushes, catbirds, and more.
  - highbush cranberry (V. trilobum)
  - nannyberry (V. lentago)
  - downy arrowwood (V. rafinesquianum)

Dogwood
- Dogwoods (Cornus species) provide good cover and ample clusters of fruit during fall that attract vireos, thrushes, waxwings, sparrows, and others.
  - pagoda dogwood (C. alternifolia)
  - gray dogwood (C. racemosa)
  - red-osier dogwood (C. sericea)
  - silky dogwood (C. amomum)
Learn more ways to get involved in conserving Wisconsin’s natural heritage. Go to dnr.wi.gov and search “NHC.”

Serviceberries (Amelanchier species) are among the first flowering woody plants in spring and provide fruit by early to mid-summer when few other fruit sources are available.
- In spring and summer, these shrubs and small trees attract bird species such as waxwings, flickers, thrushes, vireos, tanagers, and warblers.
- **alleghany serviceberry** (A. laevis)
- **downy serviceberry** (A. arborea)
- **inland serviceberry** (A. interior)

Flowers for hummingbirds
- Many colorful, native wildflowers attract hummingbirds and other pollinators like bees and butterflies.
- **columbine** (Aquilegia canadensis)
- **butterfly milkweed** (Asclepias tuberosa)
- **cardinal flower** (Lobelia cardinalis)
- **wild bergamot** (Monarda fistulosa)
- **spotted jewelweed** (Impatiens capensis)

Birches (Betula species) host over 400 species of butterfly and moth caterpillars, making them fantastic trees for migrating and resident birds.
- Their seeds are beloved by sparrows and finches, including redpolls and siskins in fall and winter.
- Loose bark hosts insects for woodpeckers, creepers, nuthatches, and chickadees, especially in winter.
- **paper birch** (B. papyrifera)
- **yellow birch** (B. alleghaniensis)
  - in the north
- **river birch** (B. nigra)
  - in the south

Conifers, or evergreen trees, provide year-round shelter for roosting and escape from weather.
- Pine and spruce each host over 150 species of caterpillars, while junipers produce attractive fruits for fall and winter birds.
- Cones supply seeds for nuthatches, jays, and various finches, such as crossbills.
- **red pine** (Pinus resinosa)
- **white pine** (Pinus strobus)
- **N. white cedar** (Thuja occidentalis)
  - in the north
- **Eastern red cedar** (Juniperus virginia)
  - in the south

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PUB-NH-533

Native grasses
- Seeds of native grasses provide food for birds in fall and winter like juncos, sparrows, finches, and turkeys.
- Their structure provides cover and potential nesting sites for ground-dwelling birds, including upland game species, meadowlarks, sparrows, and others.
- **big bluestem** (Andropogon gerardii)
- **little bluestem** (Schizachyrium scoparium)
- **indiangrass** (Sorghastrum nutans)

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