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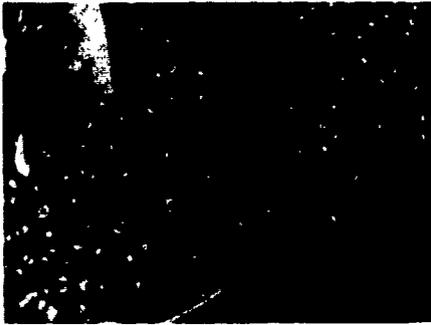
**IDENTIFIERS** \*Birds; United States (Midwest)

**ABSTRACT**

Descriptions of familiar birds of the Midwest and suggestions for attracting them to urban settings are offered in this publication. Plants which serve as food and protection for birds are identified. These plants are described by: the number of bird species that use the plant; the plant's ornamental value; its time in bloom and in fruit; its height; and its adaptations. Practical ideas are outlined for attracting birds to homes and gardens. A model of a conservation landscape design plan is offered and illustrated. Considerations and comments are directed to birds' needs and water areas, living screens, open areas, winter protection, living fences, and food plots. A list of pamphlets on plants, soils, and conservation methods is also provided. (ML)

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## PLANTS FOR BIRDS, BEAUTY, PROTECTION



### AUTUMN-OLIVE *Elaeagnus umbellata*

*Bird use:* 15 species  
*Ornamental values:* Large, spreading shrub with gray-green foliage; fragrant, small, yellowish blooms; abundant red fruits.

*Adaptations:* Moist to dry soil; sun to light shade; Cardinal variety, winter hardy.  
*In bloom:* May-July      *In fruit:* September-December      *Height:* 8-15 ft.  
*Sources:* Commercial nurseries, several state nurseries.



### DOGWOOD *Cornus spp.* Silky dogwood illus.

*Bird use:* 47 species  
*Ornamental values:* Variable forms: small to large shrubs, small trees; leaves strongly veined, red to bronze in fall; small blooms in showy, whitish to yellowish, flat clusters or bunched inside four creamy bracts; fruits bunched or clustered — red, blue, or white.

*Adaptations:* Moist to well-drained soil; sun to shade.      *Height:* shrub, 5-8 ft.; tree, 20-30 ft.  
*In bloom:* April-June      *In fruit:* August-February  
*Sources:* Commercial and state nurseries, wilding transplants, cuttings.



### MOUNTAIN-ASH *Sorbus spp.*

*Bird use:* 20 species  
*Ornamental values:* Medium-size trees with compound leaves; flat, white flower clusters; bright red to orange berry clusters.

*Adaptations:* Moist to dry soil; sun; cool climate.  
*In bloom:* May-June      *In fruit:* August-March  
*Sources:* Commercial nurseries, wilding transplants.

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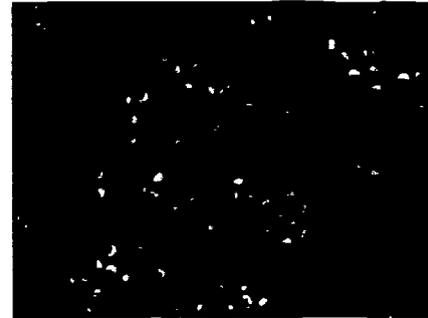
*Height:* 20-40 ft.



### RUSSIAN-OLIVE *Elaeagnus angustifolia*

*Bird use:* 31 species  
*Ornamental values:* Large shrub to small tree; introduced species widely established in dry alkaline sites in West; silvery-yellow to pink fruits persist nearly whole winter; narrow green leaves silvery below.

*Adaptations:* Well-drained to dry soil; sun.  
*In bloom:* June-July      *In fruit:* September-February      *Height:* 15-25 ft.  
*Sources:* Commercial nurseries, wilding transplants.



### FIRETHORN *Pyracantha spp.*

*Bird use:* 17 species  
*Ornamental values:* Medium to large shrubs; white blooms; showy orange to red fruits.

*Adaptations:* Moist to well-drained soil; sun to partial shade.  
*In bloom:* June      *In fruit:* September-March      *Height:* 6-12 ft.  
*Sources:* Commercial nurseries.

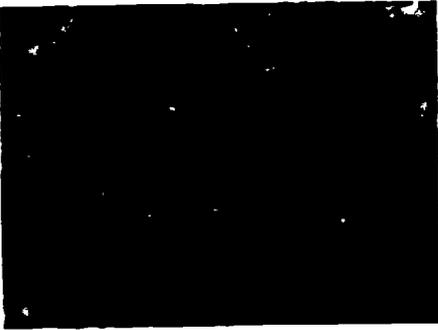


### SUNFLOWER *Helianthus spp.*

*Bird use:* 52 species  
*Ornamental values:* Tall annual plant; has large yellow flowers.

*Adaptations:* Well-drained soil; sun.  
*In bloom:* June-August      *Ripe seed:* August-September      *Height:* 4-8 ft.  
*Sources:* Commercial seed stores.

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## CRABAPPLE

*Malus* spp.

*Bird use:* 29 species

*Ornamental values:* Small to medium-size trees; showy white to pink blooms; fruits are red, purple, orange, or yellow.

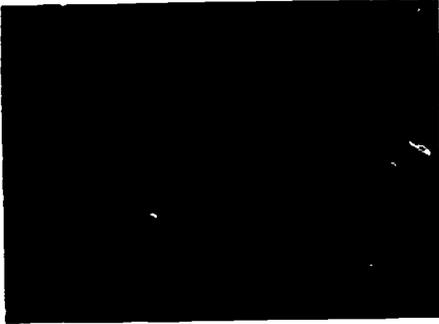
*Adaptations:* Well-drained soil; sun to light shade.

*In bloom:* April-May

*In fruit:* September-April

*Height:* 10-30 ft.

*Sources:* Commercial nurseries, grafting, budding.



## ELDERBERRY

*Sambucus* spp.

American elder illus.

*Bird use:* 50 species

*Ornamental values:* Tall shrubs; blooms in flat, whitish clusters; red to purple-black fruits.

*Adaptations:* Moist to well-drained soil; sun to shade.

*In bloom:* May-July

*In fruit:* July-October

*Height:* 5-8 ft.

*Sources:* Commercial nurseries.



## AMERICAN CRANBERRYBUSH

(highbush cranberry)

*Viburnum trilobum*

*Bird use:* 28 species

*Ornamental values:* Upright, tall shrub; showy flat clusters of whitish flowers; glossy scarlet fruit clusters.

*Adaptations:* Deep, moist to well-drained soil; sun to light shade.

*In bloom:* May-June

*In fruit:* September-May

*Height:* 8-12 ft.

*Sources:* Commercial nurseries, some state nurseries, wilding transplants, cuttings.

## CHERRY

*Prunus* spp.

**Bird use:** 49 species

**Ornamental values:** Variable forms. shrubs, small to large trees; small fine-toothed leaves, yellow in fall; showy white flower clusters or drooping spikes; small bright-red to black fruits.

**Adaptations:** Moist to dry soil; sun to light shade.

**In bloom:** April-June

**In fruit:** Variable with species, June-November.

**Sources:** Commercial nurseries, wilding transplants.

## WILD PLUM

*Prunus americana*

**Bird use:** 16 species

**Ornamental values:** Large shrub to small tree; suited to large yards or fields; spreads by suckers to form clumps; fragrant pink and white flowers; hardy red or yellow fruits.

**Adaptations:** Moist to well-drained loamy soil; sun.

**In bloom:** April-May

**In fruit:** July-October

**Sources:** Commercial nurseries, wilding transplants.

**Height:** 10-30 ft.

## COTONEASTER

*Cotoneaster* spp.

**Bird use:** 6 species

**Ornamental values:** Generally medium-size shrubs; usually planted as a hedge but also as ground cover; dark-green leaves turning red-gold in fall; small pink or white flowers; showy red, orange, or black fruits.

**Adaptations:** Moist to well-drained soil; sun.

**In bloom:** May-June

**In fruit:** September-November

**Height:** 2-10 ft.

**Sources:** Commercial nurseries.

## TATARIAN HONEYSUCKLE

*Lonicera tatarica*

**Bird use:** 18 species

**Ornamental values:** Large shrub; pink to yellow-white blooms; yellow to red fruits.

**Adaptations:** Well-drained to dry soil; sunlight to light shade.

**In bloom:** May-June

**In fruit:** July-September

**Height:** 5-15 ft.

**Sources:** Commercial nurseries.

# FAMILIAR BIRDS and their preferred foods



**BLUE JAY**

acorns, cherry,  
sunflower, wild plum,  
cultivated grains



**BALTIMORE ORIOLE**

apple, cherry, elderberry,  
mountain-ash, various berries



**AMERICAN GOLDFINCH**

mulberry, sunflowers,  
seeds of garden flowers,  
weeds, and conifers

## REDCEDAR

*Juniperus virginiana*

*Bird use:* 25 species

*Ornamental values:* Medium-size coniferous tree (many varieties); dense, green to blue-green needles; small dusty-blue, berrylike cones.

*Adaptations:* Moist to dry soil; sun to light shade.

*In bloom:* April-May

*In fruit:* September-May

*Height:* 15-40 ft.

*Sources:* Commercial nurseries, some state nurseries, wilding transplants.

## BITTERSWEET

*Celastrus scandens*

*Bird use:* 12 species

*Ornamental values:* Twining vine; pale-green flowers; bright-red berries in yellow or orange husks.

*Adaptations:* Well-drained to dry soil; light shade.

*In bloom:* May-June

*In fruit:* September-December

*Height:* climbs to 25 ft.

*Sources:* Commercial nurseries, some state nurseries, cuttings.

## HOLLY

*Ilex spp.*

*Bird use:* 20 species

*Ornamental values:* Variable forms. upright rounded shrubs, small to medium-size trees; many varieties; dark-green foliage, evergreen or deciduous; small whitish blooms; bright-red, black, or yellow fruits (very persistent).

*Adaptations:* Moist to well-drained soil; sun to shade.

*In bloom:* April-June

*In fruit:* September-May

*Height:* shrub, 5-15 ft.;  
tree, 30-50 ft.

*Sources:* Commercial nurseries, wilding transplants, cuttings.

## HAWTHORN

*Crataegus spp.*

*Bird use:* 19 species

*Ornamental values:* Small trees; pale-green toothed leaves; abundant, clustered, white flowers; orange to red fruits (very persistent).

*Adaptations:* Deep, moist to dry soil; sun to shade.

*In bloom:* May-June

*In fruit:* October-March

*Height:* 15-30 ft.

*Sources:* Commercial nurseries.



**RUBY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD**

nectar of columbine, delphinium,  
petunia, trumpet creeper



**CARDINAL**

autumn-olive, corn,  
dogwood, sunflower,  
various berries



**MOCKINGBIRD**

autumn-olive, elderberry,  
firethorn, highbush  
cranberry, holly

## SLATE-COLORED JUNCO

sunflowers, wheat, and  
seeds of grasses,  
weeds, and  
conifers



**ROBIN**

cherry, cotoneaster,  
dogwood, Russian-olive,  
various berries



**EASTERN BLUEBIRD**

dogwood, honeysuckle,  
mountain-ash, redcedar,  
various berries



Birds are good neighbors. Their songs, colors, and lively activities add much to the joys of suburban or near-suburban living. They also help us control insects that attack flowers, lawns, gardens, and people.

You know about manmade bird attractors—feeders, birdbaths, birdhouses, nesting shelves, and the like. Let's consider some natural attractors—trees, shrubs, and vines—you can grow to invite birds to your home and garden.

Plantings can beautify your land as well as attract birds. Birds often feed on berries, and many of their favorites are bright-hued and decorative. Hedges and other dense shrubbery provide shelter and fit handsomely in the background scene. Trees for nesting and singing offer shade and beauty to the householder. Sunflowers and other colorful annuals are seed producers. A small wildlife pool is an attractive addition.

### Meet the Birds' Needs

Birds have simple needs—they look for places to feed, sing, court, nest, rest, and hide. As you do your landscaping, you can provide these places with mixtures of trees, shrubs, vines, and other plants. Even in small yards, the right choice of plantings can meet many of these needs.

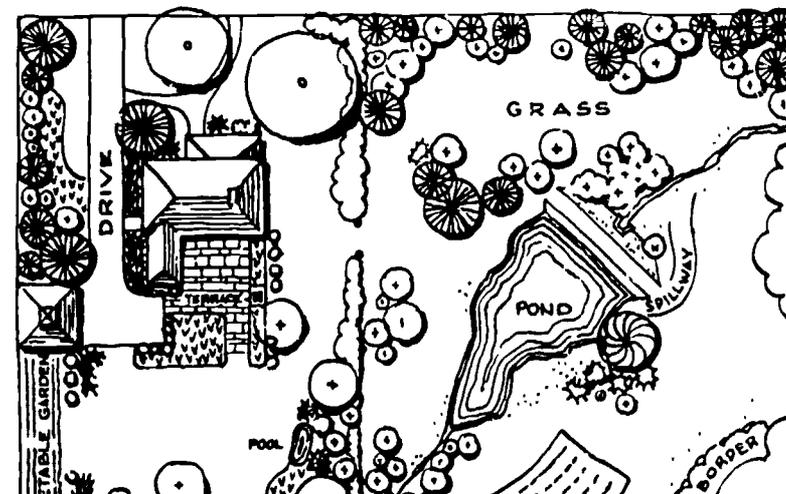
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### Create a Landscape Design

You have endless choices of combinations to consider in creating a conservation landscape design: hardwoods and conifers; vines, shrubs, and trees; grasses; flowers; even weeds. If your yard is small, you may be limited to single specimens of different plants. With much larger grounds, you can use hedges, clumps, food plots, and other massed plantings. If you have a wooded area, a small clearing within it can create more edges for birds and lend variety to the landscape.

The upper left part of this design suggests plantings and their arrangement for a moderately large suburban house and lot. The rest of the design shows features that could be added for a larger tract. Your choice in species and their arrangement and placing will depend on your space.

Be sure your landscaping allows you to see the birds. Put the plants where they can be seen from a window, patio, or terrace. For best results, choose the kinds of plants reported to have high bird use. Careful attention to periods of bloom and the availability of choice foods makes it possible to have a succession of floral displays and bird foods throughout the year.



**Living Screens.**—Hedges and rows of trees screen off unpleasant views and reduce noise from highways. In crowded neighborhoods they offer privacy for your backyard activities. And they attract birds to your place year after year. Conifers, autumn-olive, dogwood, cotoneaster, or a combination of these make good living screens.

**Open Areas.**—Meadowlarks, bobolinks, and several kinds of sparrows favor open stretches of lawn and fields with few if any trees or shrubs. In seldom-mowed open areas, try planting a variety of native grasses. They protect the soil, and birds and mammals like the variety of foods.

**Winter Protection.**—A windbreak of cedars, spruce, or pines with a crabapple tree tucked in on the sheltered side gives birds a warm, safe place to rest when the snow is deep. A food plot or feeder nearby helps keep the birds with you through the snowy months.

**Living Fences.**—Hedges or rows of honeysuckle, dogwood, or autumn-olive can replace a wire fence between fields, can divide up fields, and can protect the house area. Cardinals, brown thrashers, and mockingbirds find living fences ideal.

## Harmonize with Manmade Structures

Try to blend your plantings with your house, walkways, and rock walls into a total landscape design. Put the permanent trees and shrubs in places where their roots will not interfere with masonry structures. Use annual species to provide more kinds of bird feeds, to balance landscape spacing, and to fill in along manmade structures. Planting on the contour adds natural beauty in pleasing patterns and helps control soil erosion and water runoff.

Bird houses, baths, and feeders can supplement the plantings to make your yard even more inviting. Select the kinds that blend in with your landscaping; the more simple and natural they look, the better they are. Feeders with fruits and grains are food sources in late winter after fruits from your plantings have been depleted. Certain kinds of nesting houses and shelves attract certain kinds of birds. The houses to select depend on what species nest nearby. But equally important is how urbanized your area is—some birds like city life but others do not.

PA-982

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December 1971

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### FOR HELP

You can get further information on plants, soils, and conservation methods at your local soil and water conservation district office. The Soil Conservation Service, as part of its assistance to conservation districts, helps people apply many conservation practices that increase wildlife. County agents, commercial nurserymen, landscape architects, and bird societies can also help.

U.S. Department of Agriculture pamphlets that may be helpful are:

Autumn Olive (L-458)

Gardening on the Contour (H&G-179)

Making Land Produce Useful Wildlife (FB-2035)

More Wildlife Through Soil and Water Conservation (AIB-175)

Ponds and Marshes for Wild Ducks on Farms and Ranches in the Northern Plains (FB-2234)

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Windbreaks for Conservation (AIB-339)

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bird attractors—feeders, birdbaths, and the like. Let's consider some shrubs, and vines—you can grow to invite

as well as attract birds. Many of their favorites are shrubs and other dense shrubbery in the background scene. The shade and beauty to the colorful annuals are seed in an attractive addition.

### Needs

Look for places to feed, sing, and nest. In your landscaping, you can use a variety of trees, shrubs, vines, and flowers. The right choice of plantings

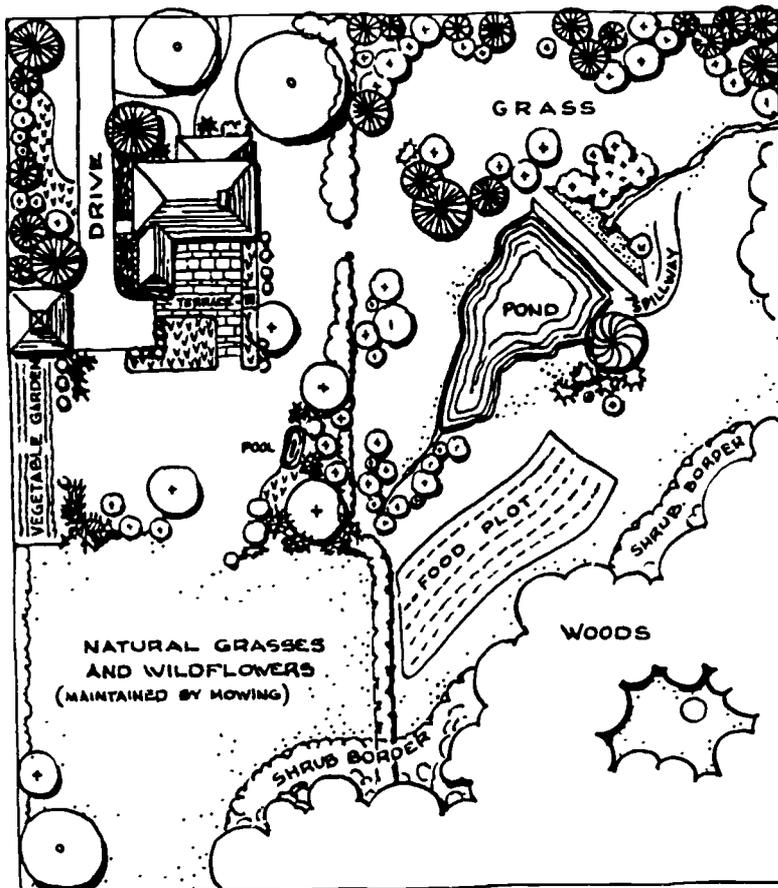
### Plants

When deciding what plants to use in your landscaping. Create a variety of species, sizes, and colors for their activities—from flowering flowers and grasses. Use plants that provide seeds, nuts, fruits, berries, and other bird foods. Combine these plant foods with shrubs, and spiders.

### Wildlife Value

When you have plants you now have, you will bring a diversity of plant life to your yard. Use trees and landscape shrubs, and shrubs. Autumn-olive, cherry, or other colorful additions. Yards and gardens with trees and shrubs can be attractive to birds, yews, and other evergreens for birds.

and useful in the Midwest and the Dakotas and Kansas.



### LEGEND

- |   |                             |   |   |
|---|-----------------------------|---|---|
|  | Pool or birdbath            |  | Trees for birds                           |
|  | Flowerbed                   |  | Shrub hedge                               |
|  | Shade tree                  |  | Weeping willow                            |
|  | Large conifer               |  | Woodland clearing                         |
|  | Low conifer                 |  | Natural or planted hedgerow               |
|  | Ornamental or garden shrubs |  | Conifer screen with planted shrub borders |
|  | Shrubs for birds            |   |   |

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# WAYS of attracting birds



**Food Plots.**—“Seed eaters,” such as goldfinches, cardinals, juncos, and sparrows, come to food plots of millets, grain sorghum, corn, or sunflowers; all are good bird foods to plant. Wild bristlegrasses and ragweeds also attract many birds. Plots can be small, perhaps several short rows, or large if you have the space.

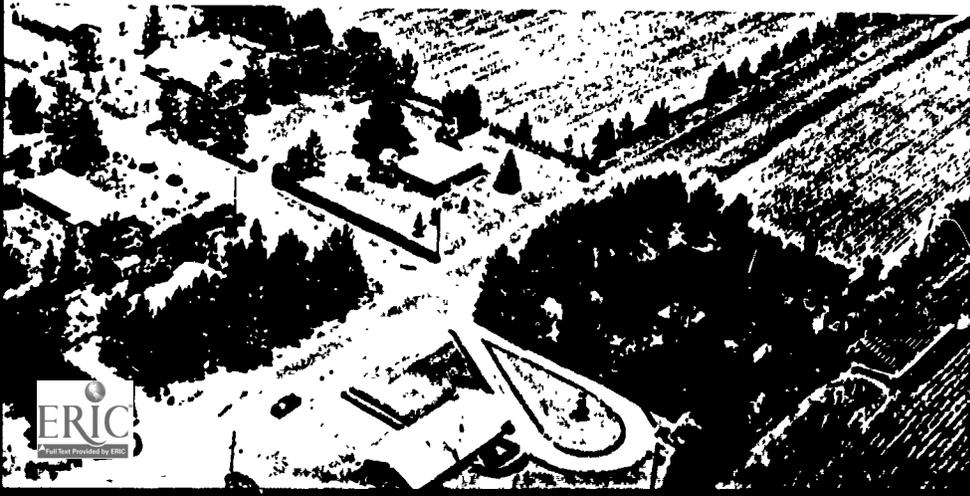
**Water Areas.**—Most birds need open water of some kind. A small pool with stones in the shallow edges draws birds to drink and bathe. They use the dry tops of the rocks for preening sites after bathing. A pond may attract some water birds at all seasons but most often during spring and fall migrations. Landscape the pond area with conifers, clumps of shrubs, and hedges for resting, nesting, and feeding. Encourage some aquatic growth along part of the shoreline but control its spread.

## The Basic Resources—Soil and Water

When planting for birds, you need to consider such things as soil, slope, drainage, exposure aspects, and climate as well as your personal wishes. Added benefits occur where plantings help provide shade, stabilize soil, and control potentially damaging water runoff.

In general, trees and shrubs that attract birds grow satisfactorily on well-drained, fairly fertile, somewhat loamy soils not particularly suited for vegetables and flowers. The ideal soil has a loose, loamy upper layer 18 inches or more deep. A neutral or slightly acid reaction is preferred.

When your house, street, sidewalk, and driveway were built, the normal pattern of water flow was changed and likely the runoff rate increased. Careful landscape planning can handle the extra water and check soil erosion. Plants described in this pamphlet that attract birds also help control soil erosion and water runoff.



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