

Gardening for Birds using Florida Native Plants

To attract birds to your yard, think about creating a habitat with food, shelter, and water to meet the needs of both nesting and migratory birds. Building an ecosystem rich with plant and animal life will attract a variety of birds throughout the year.

Migration occurs in spring and fall. Birds need calorie-dense foods, like seeds and berries, as they travel hundreds or thousands of miles.

Nesting birds are those that breed and raise their young locally. Growing babies need huge amounts of protein in the form of insects. Birds can make hundreds of trips back to the nest per day to feed their growing nestlings.

Food

To feed migratory birds, use plants that provide seeds, nuts, or berries. Birds migrate north through Florida late April to early May. Fall migration stretches from August through October. Having a variety of plants that flower and fruit throughout the year ensures migrating birds will find something to eat in your yard. Grasses are an important group of plants for small, seed-eating birds like finches and buntings.

Any flowering plant that attracts pollinators will help support nesting birds. Parent birds will bring the insects found on your plants back to the nest. Be sure to leave some of the "dead" flowers so that seeds can develop to feed birds later in the season.

Oaks are a key group of plants for both migratory and nesting birds. They support nearly 1,000 species of moth and butterfly caterpillars. Those Oak Rollers that hang down and get in your hair? They help make up the base of the food chain that supports birds. Leave the leaf litter below your oak because that is where many caterpillars pupate.



House Wren taking a cricket to the nest

Key	
W	Wildflower
G	Groundcover
V	Vine
Sh	Shrub
Tr	Tree



Blue Jay with acorns



Painted Bunting eating grass seeds

Shelter

In order to feel safe, birds need to be able to retreat from open spaces where they may be foraging or drinking. Providing layers of low groundcovers, grasses, shrubs, and trees will give birds a wide variety of places to hide from predators. Vary the density of plants to add interest to your landscape while supporting the nesting preferences of different types of birds. Some birds, like Catbirds and Carolina Wrens, prefer thick shrubbery. Others, like the Great-crested Flycatcher, need more open branching so they can launch to catch flying insects

Water

Provide at least 2 sources of water in your garden for birds to drink and bathe. Bird baths should be shallow with a textured surface. Add fresh water frequently so the birds know they have a reliable source in your yard. Once they are in the habit of using your baths, birds will often wait nearby for a bath when you get the hose out!

Vines

Plant	Type	Blooms	Height	Width	Water	Sun
Coral Honeysuckle	V	Spring-Fall	12 - 15 ft	4 ft +	Moist-Dry	Shade - Full Sun
Purple Passion Flower	V	Spring-Fall	10 ft +	10 ft +	Average-Dry	Shade - Full Sun
Carolina Jessamine	V	Early Spring	4-10 ft	4-8 ft	Moist-Average	Shade - Full Sun
Snowberry	Sh/V	Year Round	10 ft	10 ft	Average- Very Dry	Part Shade

Wildflowers, Grasses, and Groundcovers

Plant	Type	Blooms	Height	Width	Water	Sun
Tickseed, Lanceleaf	W	Spring-Fall	2 ft	2 ft	Average - Very	Full Sun
Button Rattlesnake Master	W	Spring-Fall	3 ft	18"	Dry-Very Dry	Full Sun
Dune Sunflower	W	Year-round	2 ft	5 ft	Dry-Very Dry	Full Sun
Blazing Star, Spicata	W	Fall	5 ft	1 ft	Moist-Average	Full Sun
Tickseed, Leavenworth	W	Spring-Fall	2 ft	1 ft	Moist-Average	Full Sun
Goldenrod, Seaside	W	Fall	6+ ft	18"	Moist-Very Dry	Full Sun
Bluestem species	GR	Fall	varies	varies	varies	Full Sun
Sea Oxeye Daisy	W	Spring-	2-3 ft	2-3 ft	Wet - Average	Full Sun
Narrow-leaf Sunflower	W	Fall	2-3 ft	5-8 ft	Wet - Moist	Full Sun
Lovegrass	GR	Fall	2 ft	2-3 ft	Average to Dry	Part - Full Sun
Muhly Grass	GR	Fall	3 ft	3-4 ft	Average to Dry	Part - Full Sun
Dotted Horsemint	W	Spring-Fall	3 ft	3-4 ft	Average-Dry	Part - Full Sun
Beach Creeper	GC	Year-round	2-3 ft	2-3 ft	Dry-Very Dry	Part - Full Sun
Goldenrod, Chapman's	W	Fall	2-3 ft	2-3 ft	Moist-Very Dry	Part - Full Sun
Fakahatchee Grass	GR	Spring-Fall	4 ft	4-6 ft	Wet - Average	Part - Full Sun
Tropical Sage	W	Year-round	3 ft	2-3 ft	Moist-Very Dry	Shade - Full Sun
Pineland Snowberry	GC	Year-round	1-2 ft	3-4 ft	Average - Very	Shade - Part Sun

Shrubs and Trees

Plant	Type	Blooms	Height	Width	Water	Sun
Bloodberry	Sh	Year-round	3-4 ft	6-8 ft	Average - Very	Full Sun
Horizontal Cocoplum	Sh	Spring-Fall	6 ft	6 ft	Average - Very	Full Sun
Red-tipped Cocoplum	Sh	Spring-Fall	10-15 ft	10 ft	Average - Very	Full Sun
Rusty Lyonia	Sh	Late winter	10-15 ft	5-8 ft	Average - Very	Full Sun
Fiddlewood	Sh	Spring-Fall	8-18 ft	5-12 ft	Dry - Very Dry	Full Sun
Florida Privet	Sh	Spring	5-15 ft	5-10 ft	Average - Dry	Part - Full Sun
Buttonsage	Sh	Year-round	4 ft	4 ft	Average - Very	Part - Full Sun
Firebush	Sh	Spring-Fall	10 ft	10 ft	Average - Very	Part - Full Sun
Walter's Viburnum	Sh	Early Spring	varies	varies	Moist - Dry	Part - Full Sun
Yaupon Holly	Sh	Spring-Summer	20 ft	15 ft	Moist - Dry	Part - Full Sun
Simpson's Stopper	Sh	Year-round	10-15 ft	8-10 ft	Moist-Average	Part - Full Sun
Scrub Blueberry	Sh	Spring	3 ft	3 ft	Average - Very	Part Shade-Full Sun
Fetterbush	Sh	Late winter	4-6 ft	4-6 ft	Moist - Average	Part Shade-Full Sun
Palmetto species	Sh	Spring-Summer	varies	varies	Average - Dry	Shade - Full Sun
Coral Bean	Sh	Spring	5-15 ft	3-10 ft	Average - Dry	Shade - Full Sun
Coffee, Dwarf Shiny	Sh	Spring-Summer	3 ft	3 ft	Moist - Average	Shade - Part Sun
Coffee, Shiny	Sh	Spring-Summer	4-6 ft	4-6 ft	Moist - Average	Shade - Part Sun
Coffee, Softleaf	Sh	Spring-Summer	3-5 ft	3-5 ft	Moist - Average	Shade - Part Sun
Rouge Plant	Sh	Year round	3 ft	3 ft	Moist - Very Dry	Shade - Part Sun
Weeping Yaupon Holly	Sh/Tr	Spring-Summer	20 ft	15 ft	Moist - Dry	Part - Full Sun
Dahoon Holly	Tr	Spring-Summer	20-25 ft	10-15 ft	Moist - Average	Part - Full Sun
Hercule's Club	Tr	Spring	1-25 ft	10-25 ft	Moist - Dry	Part - Full Sun
Slash Pine	Tr	Spring	50-80 ft	30-50 ft	Moist - Very Dry	Part - Full Sun
Sabal Palm	Tr	Spring-Summer	100 ft	10-20 ft	Average - Dry	Shade - Full Sun