



Audubon



your yard
CAN BEE
the **CHANGE**
#Lawns2Legumes



Simple Bird-Friendly Steps to Create a Native Plant Garden in Your Yard

Like us, birds and other pollinators need food, water, and shelter. You can transform your yard into a bird sanctuary that also saves resources such as water and combats climate change. The secret to success lies in choosing native plants, which brim with nutritious insects, berries, nectar, and seeds to give birds vital food and refuge. Use the steps below to create and maintain a bird-friendly habitat that attracts colorful birds and sweet melodies. If you don't have a yard, you can grow native plants in a community garden plot or in containers on a patio or balcony.

- 1** Select a site that's practical to convert into a garden and allows room to expand. Consider:
 - Do you have full sun? Partial sun? Shade? Is the soil rocky, loamy, sandy, clay, or gravel? Does it drain well? Is your site flat or hilly? Near water? What's the elevation?
 - Learn what's optimal from your local native plant society and plant a variety of species (see sidebar).
- 2** Plant in the spring or fall months and on cooler days.
 - Follow planting instructions carefully and get tips on mulching around plants.
 - Water only as needed when young plants are adapting to their new habitat.
- 3** Prepare your garden well to save headaches later.
 - You may need to dig up lawn, remove invasive plants, and add organic compost to the soil. An easy method is to lay down newspaper at least six sheets deep, with plenty of overlap; wet it down; cover it with 4 to 6 inches of mulch, and let it sit until you are ready to plant. Use deep edging to keep out lawn grass.
- 4** Plan for a variety of shapes, sizes, and kinds of plants to give vertical structure to your garden.
 - Cluster the same plant species together.
 - Design for color palettes and seasonal blooms.
 - Add habitat features like hollowed boulders that catch rainwater for birds to drink and bathe in.
- 5** Steward your native plant garden with tender loving care.
 - Pull up noxious and invasive weeds.
 - Enhance with brush piles that shelter birds and other wildlife, too.
 - Leave dead trees and branches.
- 6** Focus on plants that support high variety and quantity of bird food.
 - Tubular flowers like columbine and bee balm serve nectar for hummingbirds.
 - Native sunflowers, asters, and coneflowers produce seeds for songbirds.
 - Bushes with berries ripen at different times, include a seasonal variety to sustain birds: red-osier dogwood and serviceberry; wild plum, chokecherry.

The Impact of Native Plants

532

Number of butterflies and moths native oak trees support. Non-native ginkgo trees host just five.

Water-wise, drought-tolerant native plants reduce water use, especially critical in drought-stricken, arid parts of our country.

100

U.S. crops that depend on pollinators for reproduction and productivity. These crops include a wide variety of fruits, vegetables, nuts, and spices.

96

Percentage of land birds that feed insects to chicks. Native plants are nature's bounty.

80 million

Number of pounds of pesticides homeowners apply to the 40 million acres of lawns in the U.S. each year. Native plants, on the other hand, support a vibrant balance of predator and prey insects and thrive without pesticides.

Your native garden joins a collective effort to give back to birds and plant hope for their future.

Spend more time with birds and less time with noisy lawn mowers that pollute the air and water.

800 million

Estimated number of gallons of gas Americans burn in lawn mowers annually. This produces significant amounts of CO₂ and other greenhouse gases that drive climate change.

MORE INFORMATION:

Audubon's Plants for Birds Program:
audubon.org/plantsforbirds

Find Local Native Plant Resources:
audubon.org/native-plants-resources

Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources, Lawns to Legumes:
bwsr.state.mn.us/I2I



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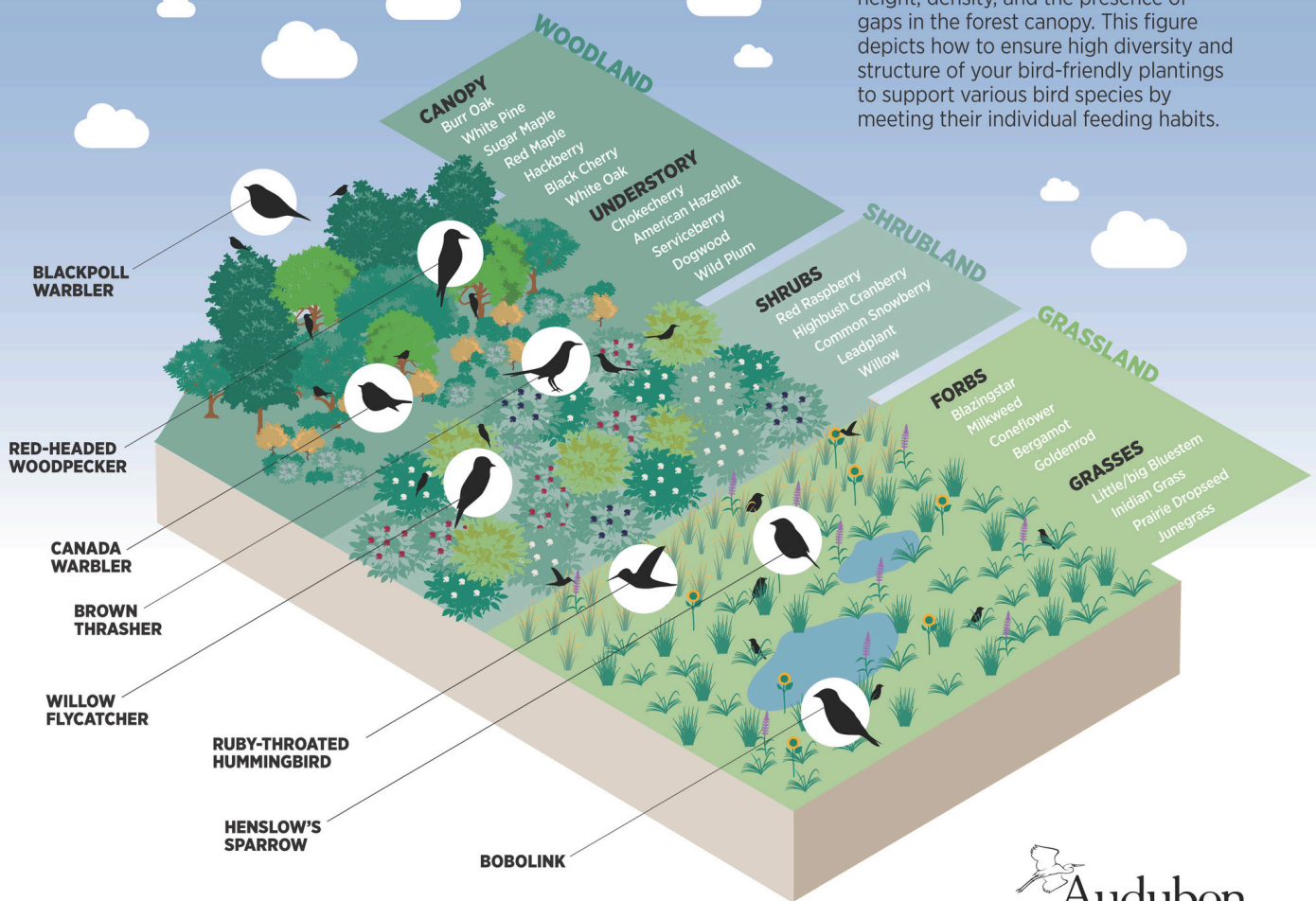
Plants for Birds

Bring Plants to Your Neighborhood with Native Plants

**Good Starts
In The Garden**
Choose native
plants, bird-friendly
and beautiful

DIVERSE HABITAT STRUCTURE

Birds are often sensitive to structural characteristics like tree and shrub height, density, and the presence of gaps in the forest canopy. This figure depicts how to ensure high diversity and structure of your bird-friendly plantings to support various bird species by meeting their individual feeding habits.



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How Else Can You Help Birds?

Twice each year, billions of birds fly between wintering and breeding grounds. Many are drawn off course by lighted structures and can face the threat of injury or death by collisions.

Quick Tips:

- Turn exterior lights off at night
- Create patterns on reflective glass to increase visibility to birds