

Plants for Birdscaping

As you sit by the fire or woodstove on a cold, wintry day huddled over colorful garden catalogs or books, think of the birds outdoors having to fend for food and shelter. Make plans now for this coming season which take into consideration your featured friends.

When choosing and placing plants for the birds, or "birdscaping," provide for their food and shelter year round. Plants for cover include dense ones with many twigs providing nest sites, plants of various heights and groups of conifers for roosting and protection from winter winds. Mounds and thickets, thorned plants, perches and bird observation towers, wild areas, brambles or vines and seed plots all provide attraction and protection for birds.

A favorite, providing both fruits and excellent year-round cover, is the eastern arborvitae. It is often seen near home foundations and windows where birds can be easily viewed. Just

leave plenty of room, as these trees can grow quite large.

The beautiful Northern cardinal is attracted to berries of dogwood, sumac and viburnum. Berries from the eastern red cedar and black cherry are eaten by bluebirds. Cedar waxwings also eat berries from eastern red cedar, as well as viburnum, crabapple and privet.

When choosing plants for birds, keep in mind the season they bear fruits. Plants with summer fruits include several viburnums, raspberry, blueberry and mulberry. For fruits later into the fall consider oaks, crabapples, hawthorn, sumac, spruce and white pine. For winter fruits there are crabapples with their persistent fruits, honeysuckle, birch and spreading cotoneaster.

When birdscaping, choose the proper plants for the proper site to reduce future maintenance and have a good chance of success. Avoid overplanting.

Consider the mature height and spacing for each type of plant and the specific plant requirements for factors such as light, water and soil.

Also choose a mix of plants to provide interest in all seasons. You may use them to screen undesirable sights or to frame good ones.

Do not forget a source of water, such as from water feature, small pond or bird bath. You may want to even install a heated birdbath. There are a couple kinds—those with a heating element built in, and those with a separate element you place in a birdbath. These plug into ordinary outdoor outlets. Just make sure the cords you use and outlets, are the correct ones and safe for outdoor use. Even moving or sprinkling water is good and it may attract more birds than stationary water.

By birdscaping, you may be able to provide food and habitat for many bird species on your land year round.

Source: Dr. Leonard P. Perry, Extension Professor, University of Vermont



Eastern arborvitae

Bill Cook, Michigan State University, Bugwood.org



Dogwood

Paul Wray, Iowa State University, Bugwood.org



Eastern red cedar berries

Vicki Jeddicka, UNL Extension in Lancaster County



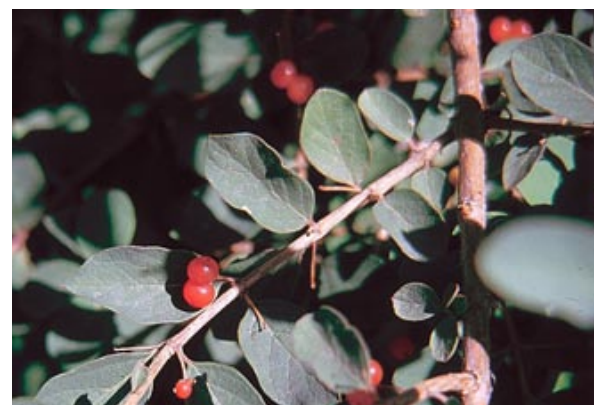
Flowering crabapple

Photo by Soni Cochran, UNL Extension in Lancaster County



Washington hawthorn

The Dow Gardens Archive, Dow Gardens, Bugwood.org



Honeysuckle

USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database / Herman, D.E., et al. 1996. North Dakota tree handbook. USDA-NRCS ND State Office, Bismarck, ND. UNL Extension and Western Area Power Administration, Bismarck.

Garden Guide

THINGS TO DO THIS MONTH
By Mary Jane Frogge, UNL Extension Associate

Prune fruit trees and grapes in late February or early March after the worst of the winter cold is passed but before spring growth begins.

Check any vegetables you have in storage. Dispose of any that show signs of shriveling or rotting.

Late February is a good time to air-layer such house plants as dracaena, dieffenbachia and rubber plant, especially if they have grown too tall and leggy.

Order perennial plants and bulbs now for cut flowers this summer. Particularly good choices are phlox, daisies, coreopsis, asters and lilies.

Check stored bulbs, tubers and corms. Discard any that are soft or diseased.

Order gladiolus corms now for planting later in the spring after all danger of frost has passed. Locate in full sun in well-drained soil.

Branches of forsythia, pussy willow, quince, spirea and dogwood can be forced for indoor bloom. Make long, slanted cuts when collecting the branches and place the stems in a vase of water. Change the water every four days. They should bloom in about 3 weeks.

This year plan to grow at least one new vegetable that you have never grown before; it may be better than what you are already growing. The new dwarf varieties on the market which use less space while producing more food per square foot may be just what you are looking for.

Send off seed orders early this month to take advantage of seasonal discounts. Some companies offer bonus seeds of new varieties to early buyers.

Do not start your vegetable transplants indoors too early. Six weeks ahead of the expected planting date is early enough for the fast-growth species such as tomatoes. Eight weeks allows enough time for the slower-growing types such as peppers.

Check all five growing factors if your house plants are not growing well. Light, temperature, nutrients, moisture and humidity must be favorable to provide good growth.

Repair and paint window boxes, lawn furniture, tools and other items in preparation for outdoor gardening and recreational use.

2008 All-America Rose Selections



Dream Come True

Dream Come True

Dream Come True is a stunning sight of catchy colors, which lures the likes of even non-rose lovers to its side. This rose produces flawlessly formed yellow blossoms, blushed with ruby-red at the tips, all set amongst abundant matte green foliage. The big, bushy vigorous plant yields long-stemmed, long-lived blooms with mild tea fragrance, making it lovely in the landscape and a great choice for bouquets.

Mardi Gras

With flamboyant blooms in a novel blend of pink, orange, yellow and a delightful peppery scent, Mardi Gras creates a festive atmosphere in any setting. Each high-centered, hybrid tea style bloom begins as an apricot-orange bud that slowly spirals open to reveal a four inch bright pink and orange bloom with a yellow base. As an All-America Rose Selections (AARS) winner, this festive floribunda has proven to perform exceptionally well across the country with little-to-no care. The colorful blooms are perfectly framed with dark green, semi-glossy foliage and its upright columnar habit makes Mardi Gras an ideal rose to use as a hedge or in a border with mixed perennials.



Mardi Gras

Source: All-America Rose Selections