What to Plant for Birds

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Certified Backyard Habitat

a Portland program to remove aggressive weeds, create wildlife habitats and garden responsibly
Mission of Backyard

Before 2009

After-2010
Gold
Certified

Backyard Habitat Certification Program
Backyard Habitat Certification Program
Remove Invasive Plant Species

- 32 weeds on list
  (Portland Nuisance Plant list)

**Silver Level** E. ivy, A. blackberry, Clematis vitalba, pokeweed, Scot’s broom...

**Gold Level** Bindweed, E. holly, Tree of Heaven, Spurge laurel, Lesser Celandine...

**Platinum** Vinca, Reed Canary grass, Policeman’s Helmet...
Naturescape with Native Plants

- Grouping natives
- Canopy layers

**Silver Level** 5% natives

**Gold Level** 15% natives

**Platinum** 50% natives
Wildlife Stewardship

- Food – Native plants, insects, other animals
- Water – streams, ponds, birdbath
- Shelter/Cover – vegetation, hedge rows, snags, brush piles
- Reduce Hazards
Stormwater Management

- Raingardens
- Ecoroofs
- Large trees
- Large trees over impervious pavement
- Stormwater planters
- Integrated Pest Management approach to gardening
Benefits

- Site Visit/Report
- Wholesale prices on
  - Native plants
  - Soil amendment and mulch
  - Gardening tools
- Certification benefits
  - Gift cards, discounts and access to unique resources
  - More goodies as you move up in certification
Portland-Vancouver Metropolitan region lies in the middle of a bird superhighway known as the Pacific flyway.

Millions of birds pass through our region each year on their north and south migrations. For many species our region provides critical nesting and wintering habitat.
25% of our Common Bird Species are in Decline

Common Oregon birds species with greater than 50% population declines during the past 40 years include:

- Barn Swallows
- American Goldfinches
- Rufous Hummingbirds
- Olive-sided Flycatchers
- Orange-crowned Warblers
- Golden-crowned Kinglets
- Killdeer
- Mourning Doves
- House Wrens
- Western Meadowlark

National Audubon Society report of Common Birds in Decline 2007
40% of our urban landscape is in private ownership

North Portland Resident, BHCP Site Visit 2009
Connectivity
BHCP Map of site visits Oct 2010
Platinum Certified yard, 2009
BHCP is a non-regulatory tool to engage and equip homeowners to restore and become stewards of urban wildlife corridors.
What is a native?

- Willamette Valley vegetation
- Species that were in place before European settlement and introduced plants

Resources: Portland Native Plant list and Urbanizing Flora of Portland, Oregon, 1806-2008
What a Natives CAN’T

- “Wild”, unkempt, unmanaged properties provide optimal wildlife habitat
- Low maintenance
- Don’t need to prepare site
- Fulfill the need for dense narrow spaces
Hedge Row

What is ISN’T

What it IS

Google images

Beatty Raingarden 2010
You can increase **vertical diversity** in your landscape by adding more layers of vegetation between the ground and the treetops.

Providing **food and cover year-round** requires a variety of trees, shrubs, and other plants.

**Curves and clusters** are visually appealing to us, and often will be more useful to wildlife than linear or solitary plantings.

Sources of **food, cover, and water** need to be located near each other.
Planting Design

Goal is to mimic features of native plant communities

- Consider plants that are **presently** dominant
- Plant species in groups **NOT** individuals
- Plant natural **COMPANION** species
- Planting companion plants require canopy and upper stories FIRST
- Design away from areas of human disturbance
Types of Plants

- Flower (Honeysuckle vines)
- Berry (Elderberry, Attract insects (specialized and generalists) for insectivorous birds)
- Shelter
- Nesting sites and material
## Best Plants for Songbirds (Western OR)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HERBACEOUS PLANTS</th>
<th>SHRUBS</th>
<th>TREES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Miner’s lettuce (10)</td>
<td>Elderberry (24)</td>
<td>Pine (18)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chickweed (10)</td>
<td>Dogwood (15)</td>
<td>Oregon Oak (18)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strawberry (6)</td>
<td>Serviceberry (15)</td>
<td>Maple (11)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wood sorrel (5)</td>
<td>Snowberry (9)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sunflower (19)</td>
<td>Blueberry (15)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dandelion (7)</td>
<td>Grapes (18)</td>
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</tbody>
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Source: Naturescaping, Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife
What certification level are you?
Thanks!

Thanks to our funders: Metro, EMSWCD, WMSWCD, and the Bullit Foundation

Sign-up for site visit by filling out brochure or online

- [www.audubonportland.org](http://www.audubonportland.org) search “Introduction application”
- [www.columbialandtrust.org](http://www.columbialandtrust.org) BHCP link on homepage