

Birds and Native Plants, Part II

by Joanne Gergle, Master Gardener Volunteer

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Native plants are crucial to protect bird populations, in that they offer natural food sources, shelter, and nesting materials for residents and migratory birds; and include:

Oaks and maples, which host hundreds of insects, deliver acorns and seeds, and provide shelter and nesting habitats for bluebirds, cardinals, chickadees, finches, jays, nuthatches, robins, woodpeckers, and other birds. Oaks are a primary source of food for baby birds' survival. Maples contain residual sap for hummingbirds in late winter and early spring.

Dogwoods supply nutritious berries and host insects for bluebirds, cardinals, robins, thrushes, waxwings, warblers, and other bird species.

Persimmons yield fruits for jays, robins, woodpeckers, warblers, and other songbirds.

Elderberry clusters are bluebirds, cardinals, finches, robins, and 40+ other species of birds' delights, especially during migration.

Holly berries are nutritious, high-fat food sources for bluebirds, cardinals, goldfinches, mockingbirds, robins, thrushes, woodpeckers, and thirty-five other feathered friends. Hollies also shelter birds from the weather and predators.

Female Sumac produces fuzzy, red fruit clusters rich in fat that birds eat, including bluebirds, chickadees, cardinals, robins, sparrows, woodpeckers, and 300 other species.

Black-Eyed Susans, asters, coneflowers, joe-pye weed, and goldenrod attract seeds and host insects for chickadees, cardinals, finches, juncos, nuthatches, titmice, sparrows, wrens, and others, especially those leftovers in the fall and winter.

Coral honeysuckle bears nutritive berries, nectar, and insects that attract birds such as finches, goldfinches, hummingbirds, robins, thrushes, waxwings, and quail.

Switchgrass and Little bluestem provide seeds, serve as hosts for insects, and offer shelter for cardinals, finches, juncos, quail, sparrows, wild turkeys, and other birds.



Virginia Cardinal in Dogwood Tree, Adobe Licensed Photo

References:

VA Dept of Wildlife: <https://dwr.virginia.gov/wp-content/uploads/media/Habitat-at-Home.pdf>

Virginia Native Plant Guides at <https://vnps.org/virginia-native-plant-guides/>

Plant VA Natives at <https://www.plantvirginianatives.org/>