

Best Native Plants for Birds

Large Deciduous Trees

Species	Food	Butterfly/Moth Host Plant	Notes
Oaks <i>Quercus species</i>	Insects in spring, Fall/winter acorns	Yes 550+ species	<i>Hosts more Lepidopteran species than any other North American plant.</i>
Wild/Black Cherry <i>Prunus serotina</i>	Late summer to fall fruits	Yes 450+ species	
Willows <i>Salix species</i>		Yes 450+ species	
River Birch <i>Betula nigra</i>	Late winter seeds	Yes 400+ species	
Poplars <i>Populus species</i>		Yes 360+ species	
Maples <i>Acer species</i>	Fall seeds	Yes 290+ species	
Hickories <i>Carya species</i>	Fall to winter nuts	Yes 200+ species	
Elms <i>Ulmus species</i>		Yes 210+ species	
Hackberry <i>Celtis occidentalis</i>	Late summer fruits	Yes 40+ species	<i>Early spring blooms produce nectar and pollen.</i>
Black Gum / Tupelo <i>Nyssa sylvatica</i>	Late summer to fall berries	Yes 20+ species	<i>Trees that are predominantly female have more berries than those that are predominantly male.</i>
American Linden / Basswood		Yes 140+ species	
Black Walnut	Fall nuts	Yes 120+ species	
American Beech	Fall nuts	Yes 120+ species	

Small / Medium Deciduous Trees

Species	Food	Butterfly/Moth Host Plant	Notes
Wild / American Plum <i>Prunus americana</i>	Fruit	Yes 450+ species	
Choke Cherry <i>Prunus virginiana</i>	Late summer fruit	Yes 450+ species	
Pin Cherry <i>Prunus pennsylvanica</i>	Summer fruit	Yes 450+ species	
Crabapple <i>Malus coronaria</i>	Winter fruit	Yes 300+ species	<i>Fruit of some cultivars is not attractive to birds.</i>
Hawthorns <i>Crataegus species</i>	Fall/winter fruit	Yes 160+ species	
Flowering Dogwood <i>Cornus florida</i>	Late summer/early fall fruit	Yes 110+ species	
Alternate Leaf / Pagoda Dogwood <i>Cornus alternifolia</i>	Late summer fruit	Yes 110+ species	
Sweet Bay Magnolia <i>Magnolia virginiana</i>	Fall fruits	Yes 20+ species	
Sassafras <i>Sassafras albidum</i>	Fall fruits on female trees	Yes 30+ species	<i>Fruits have high fat content.</i>

Evergreen Trees

Species	Food	Butterfly/Moth Host Plant	Notes
American Holly <i>Ilex opaca</i>	Fall/winter berries (Female plants only)	Yes 30+ species	<i>Berries not favored by birds but can be important food source in late winter.</i>
Eastern Red Cedar <i>Juniperus virginiana</i>	Winter berries	Yes 40+ species	<i>Berries a favorite of many birds. Also provides winter cover.</i>
Eastern White Pine <i>Pinus strobus</i>	Winter seeds	Yes 200+ species	<i>Provides winter cover.</i>

Shrubs

Species	Food	Butterfly/Moth Host Plant	Notes
Smooth Alder <i>Alnus serrulata</i>	Seeds	Yes 100+ species	
Downy Serviceberry / Shadblow <i>Amelanchier arborea</i> Allegheny Serviceberry <i>Amelanchier laevis</i>	Late spring/early summer berries	Yes 120+ species	<i>Serviceberries are an important source of early spring nectar and produce berries early in growing season (June) when other food sources are scarce.</i>
Black Chokeberry <i>Aronia melanocarpa</i> Red Chokeberry <i>Aronia arbutifolia</i>	Early fall/winter berries	Yes 20+ species	<i>Berries not favored by birds but can be important food source in late winter.</i>
New Jersey Tea <i>Ceanothus americanus</i>	Summer nectar	Yes 45 species	<i>Attracts hummingbirds.</i>
Buttonbush <i>Cephalanthus occidentalis</i>	Summer nectar; Fall/winter fruits	Yes 19 species	<i>Attracts hummingbirds.</i>
Gray Dogwood <i>Cornus racemosa</i>	Late summer/fall berries	Yes	<i>High-fat berries important food source for migratory and wintering birds.</i>
Silky Dogwood <i>Cornus amonium</i>	Late summer/fall berries	Yes	<i>High-fat berries important food source for migratory and wintering birds.</i>
Redosier Dogwood <i>Cornus sericea</i>	Late summer berries	Yes	
American Filbert / Hazelnut <i>Corylus americana</i>	Fall nuts	Yes 130+ species	<i>Nuts eaten by woodpeckers</i>
Winterberry <i>Ilex verticillata</i>	Fall/winter berries (Female plants only)		
Inkberry <i>Ilex glabra</i>	Fall/winter berries (Female plants only)		

Spicebush <i>Lindera benzoin</i>	Late summer/fall berries (<i>Female plants only</i>)	Yes 10+ species	<i>High fat content berries important food source for migrating birds.</i>
Northern Bayberry <i>Myrica pensylvanica</i>	Fall/winter berries (<i>Female plants only</i>)	Yes 100+ species	<i>Highest fat content of any berries. Important food source for migrating and wintering birds.</i>
Raspberries <i>Rubus species</i>	Early to late summer berries		
Allegheny Blackberry <i>Rubus allegheniensis</i>	Fall berries		
American Elderberry <i>Sambucus canadensis</i>	Late summer/early fall berries	Yes 40+ species	<i>Berries rich in proteins and carbohydrates. Important for migrating birds.</i>
Sumacs <i>Rhus species</i>	Late summer/fall berries (<i>Female plants only</i>)	Yes 50+ species	
Swamp Azalea <i>Rhodendron viscosum</i>	Spring nectar		<i>Attracts hummingbirds.</i>
Highbush Blueberry <i>Vaccinium corymbosum</i>	Summer berries	Yes 290+ species	
Lowbush Blueberry <i>Vaccinium angustifolium</i>	Summer berries	Yes 290+ species	
Viburnums <i>Viburnum species</i> Arrowwood Viburnum <i>Viburnum dentatum</i> Maple-leaf Viburnum <i>Viburnum acerfolium</i> Blackhaw Viburnum <i>Viburnum prunifolium</i> American Cranberry Bush <i>Viburnum americanum</i> Nannyberry <i>Viburnum lentago</i> Possumhaw Viburnum <i>Viburnum nudum</i>	Late summer/fall berries	Yes 100+ species	<i>Berries of Arrowwood viburnum have second-highest fat content of any berries (only Bayberry berries have a higher fat content)</i>

Groundcover

Species	Food	Butterfly/Moth Host Plant	Notes
Bearberry <i>Arctostaphylos uva-ursi</i>	Late summer/fall berries	Yes 17 species	

Vines

Species	Food	Butterfly/Moth Host Plant	Notes
Trumpet Vine <i>Campsis radicans</i>	Summer nectar		<i>Attracts hummingbirds, but often spreads aggressively.</i>
Trumpet/Coral Honeysuckle <i>Lonicera sempervirens</i>	Spring /summer nectar	Yes	<i>Attracts hummingbirds.</i>
Virginia Creeper <i>Parthenocissus quinifolia</i>	Fall berries	Yes 30+ species	

Grasses

Species	Food	Butterfly/Moth Host Plant	Notes
Big / Little Bluestems <i>Andropogon gerardii</i> / <i>Schizachynium scoparium</i>	Fall/winter seeds	Yes 6 species	
Switch Grass <i>Panicum virgatum</i>	Fall/winter seeds	Yes	
Indian Grass <i>Sorghastrum nutans</i>	Fall/winter seeds	Yes	
Prairie Dropseed <i>Sporobolus heterolepis</i>	Fall/winter seeds		

Perennials

Species	Food	Butterfly/Moth Host Plant	Notes
Milkweeds / Butterfly Weed <i>Asclepias species</i>		Yes 12 species	
Asters <i>Aster species</i>	Fall/winter seeds	Yes 112 species	
Tickseed <i>Coreopsis species</i>	Summer seeds		
Coneflowers <i>Echinacea and Rudbeckia species</i>	Summer/fall seeds	Yes 17 species	
Joe Pye Weed / Boneset Eupatorium species		Yes 42 species	
Sunflowers <i>Helianthus species</i>	Summer seeds	Yes 73 species	
False Sunflower <i>Heliopsis helianthoides</i>	Summer/fall seeds		
Goldenrods <i>Solidago species</i>	Fall/winter seeds	Yes 115 species	
Wild Columbine <i>Aquilegia canadensis</i>	Nectar in spring		<i>Attracts hummingbirds.</i>
Blazing Star <i>Liatris species</i>	Nectar in summer		<i>Attracts hummingbirds.</i>
Blue Lobelia <i>Lobelia siphilitica</i>	Nectar in summer	Yes	<i>Attracts hummingbirds.</i>
Cardinal Flower <i>Lobelia cardinalis</i>	Nectar in summer	Yes 4 species	<i>Attracts hummingbirds.</i>
Bee Balm / Wild Bergamot <i>Monarda didyma / Monarda fistulosa</i>	Nectar in summer	Yes 7 species	<i>Attracts hummingbirds.</i>
Beardtongue <i>Penstemon species</i>	Nectar in summer	Yes 8 species	<i>Attracts hummingbirds.</i>