



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

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ORNAMENTAL WOODY PLANTS AROUND HOME ATTRACT VARIETY OF BIRDS

Many ornamental woody plants around a home not only add to the beauty of the land but attract a variety of birds, according to the Fish and Wildlife Service, United States Department of the Interior. Specific recommendations for increasing bird populations near residences by using ornamental woody plants were made in a recent report to Secretary of the Interior Harold L. Ickes.

More than 55 kinds of plants are discussed in the report, which was issued as a mimeographed leaflet, BS-156, entitled "Ornamental Woody Plants Attractive to Birds." The leaflet, written by Myer Katz, of the Section of Food Habits, Division of Wildlife Research, is available to the public upon request.

Man's steady encroachment upon the natural haunts of wild birds has forced many of them to seek food and shelter elsewhere, Katz declares. Planting shrubs, trees, and vines that offer an abundance of food and cover throughout the year will do more to attract birds to lawns, yards, and homes than will any other effort in their behalf.

Birds help to pay their way, Katz points out, because they not only are beautiful in themselves but help to maintain the beauty of ornamental shrubs, trees, and vines by feeding on destructive insects.

The selection of plants to attract birds should be made carefully, Katz declares. It must be remembered that birds invariably frequent areas where ample

food is available throughout the year and where there is sufficient cover for nesting and for protection from enemies.

Evergreens, for example, are almost indispensable in attracting birds in winter as they offer food, to some extent, as well as protection from wind and cold. As safeguards against enemies, mass plantings of shrubbery are invaluable. A thick, thorny hedge assures birds of certain protection from their natural enemies and also provides many nesting places.

On the basis of studies conducted by investigators of the Fish and Wildlife Service, it is known that alder attracts at least 23 kinds of birds. Forty-four kinds of birds are known to feed on apple trees, while wild sarsaparilla is utilized by more than 18 of the feathered creatures.

The fruits of the ornamental dogwoods, which persist through winter, possess great value as a bird attractant. No less than 98 kinds of birds have been found feeding on dogwood, including such well-liked songsters as the robin, evening grosbeak, cardinal, bluebird, red-eyed vireo, flicker, and kingbird.

Oak trees, being producers of great quantities of mast, are also a food source for many birds. In all, 62 kinds of birds have fed on the oak, especially the brown thrasher, red-eyed towhee, and most of the woodpeckers.

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