



**FORSYTH AUDUBON**

# Native Plants for Birds

NORTH CAROLINA PIEDMONT REGION



American Beautyberry



Brown-headed Nuthatch



## Native Plants For Birds

Your yard matters! As land is increasingly developed in our area, we are destroying much of the native habitat on which birds and other wildlife depend. Typical developments include large areas of lawn and non-native plants, some of which are high threat invasives.

**What are native plants?** Native plants are those that occur naturally in our area having been here prior to European settlement. North Carolina has amazing native plants which are the basis for all food webs.

**Why natives?** Insects are critical for birds to survive. Our local vegetation evolved with insects, birds, and other animals to create complex food webs. Wildlife consumes fruits, nuts, and seeds for sustenance, while helping to propagate the regional vegetation. Native plants, especially trees like oaks and other keystone species, are also host to a large variety of insects, which in turn are eaten by birds and other animals. Young nestlings must consume large numbers of insects (especially caterpillars) in their first weeks of life to grow and survive.

**For more information about keystone species and the full lists of native plants for the Piedmont of North Carolina, go to [ForsythAudubon.org](https://ForsythAudubon.org)**

## What are invasive plants?

Invasive plants are non-native species introduced to a particular region where they displace the plants native to that ecosystem. Exotic plants from faraway lands may be beautiful, but there is no way to stop the invasive ones from escaping the confines of your garden through dispersion of seeds or by creeping, underground rhizomes.

## Are non-native plants bad for birds?

Non-native plants, even those that are not invasive, do not offer much value for wildlife, especially since they do not host the insects that are an essential part of an intact and bird-friendly ecosystem. The berries produced by non-native plants are full of sugar and don't support birds like native berries do, which typically have more fat. When invasive non-native plants escape your yard, they invade local ecosystems (and your yard!) displacing the native plants that are essential for birds and other wildlife to thrive.

For complete lists of invasive plants, their threat levels and how to remove them, go to [ForsythAudubon.org](https://ForsythAudubon.org)

Here's a selection of plants that will provide multiple sources of food for birds and grow well in the Piedmont. These are taken from a much longer list on our website that contains information about size, growing conditions, and deer and drought resistance.

### Trees BENEFIT

Oaks (White, Willow, Red, Scarlet, Shumard, Water)	LH, SE
Black Cherry	LH, BE, NE
Plums (Wild, Chickasaw)	LH, BE, NE
River Birch	LH, SE
Maples (Red, Southern Sugar, Chalk)	LH, SE, NE
Flowering Crabapple	LH, BE, NE
Hickories	LH, SE
Pines (Shortleaf, Virginia)	LH, SE
Dogwoods (Flowering, Silky)	LH, BE, NE
Eastern Redbud	LH, SE, NE
Serviceberry (Eastern, Downy)	LE, BE, NE

### Shrubs BENEFIT

Blueberries (Rabbiteye, Deerberry, Sparkleberry, Smooth Highbush)	LH, BE, NE
Viburnums (Blackhaw, Southern Arrowwood, Maple-leaf, Possumhaw, Downy Arrowwood)	LH, BE, NE
Serviceberries (Eastern, Downy)	LH, BE, NE
Sweet Pepperbush	LH, SE, NE
Hollies (Winterberry, Inkberry, Yaupon)	LH, BE, NE
Spicebush	LH, BE, NE
American Beautyberry	LH, BE, NE
Buttonbush	LH, SE, NE

LH - Act as Larval Hosts	SE - Produce Seeds or Nuts
BE - Produce Berries or Fruit	NE - Provide Nectar

### Perennial Flowers BENEFIT

Goldenrods (Rough, Wreath)	LH, SE, NE
Sunflowers (Appalachian, Woodland, Swamp)	LH, SE, NE
Crimson-eyed Rose-mallow	LH, NE, SE
Ironweed	LH, NE, SE
Wild Indigos	LH, NE, SE
Southern Sundrops	LH, SE, NE
Black-eyed Susan	LH, SE, NE
Milkweeds (Swamp, Butterflyweed, Common)	LH, SE, NE
Beebalm (Wild Bergamot, Scarlet, Spotted Horsemint)	LH, NE, SE
Asters (Eastern Aromatic, Smooth Blue, White Wood)	LH, SE, NE
Wild Columbine	LH, SE, NE
Coreopsis (Threadleaf, Mouse-ear, Star Tickseed, Greater Tickseed)	LH, SE, NE
Cardinal Flower	LH, SE, NE
Joe-Pye Weed	LH, SE, NE
Purple Coneflower	LH, SE, NE

### Vines BENEFIT

Coral Honeysuckle	LH, BE, NE
Virginia Creeper	LH, BE, NE
Passionflower (Purple, Yellow)	LH, BE, NE

### Grasses BENEFIT

Switchgrass	LH, SE
Little Bluestem	LH, SE
River Oats	LH, SE
Sedges (native species)	LH, SE

### Invasive Plants – Remove these!

These are some of the high threat invasive plants most often seen in yards in our area. See our website for lists of all the invasive plants.

#### Trees

- Bradford Pear
- Mimosa
- Princess Tree
- Tree of Heaven

#### Herbs & Grasses

- Asiatic Hawk's Beard
- Chinese Silver Grass
- Exotic Bamboo
- Fig Buttercup
- Creeping Charlie
- Japanese Stiltgrass
- Mulberry Weed
- Sericea Lespedeza

#### Shrubs

- Autumn & Thorny Olive
- Burning Bush
- Chinese & Japanese Privet
- Exotic Honeysuckle
- Japanese Barberry
- Japanese Spiraea
- Leatherleaf Mahonia
- Multiflora Rose
- Nandina

#### Vines

- English Ivy
- Exotic Wisteria
- Japanese Honeysuckle
- Kudzu
- Oriental Bittersweet
- Periwinkle, Vinca
- Porcelain Berry
- Sweet Autumn Clematis
- Winter Creeper



**Forsyth Audubon**  
[ForsythAudubon.org](http://ForsythAudubon.org)

Your local chapter of National Audubon  
 for Forsyth County, North Carolina

Forsyth Audubon North Carolina thanks  
 New Hope Audubon and Audubon North Carolina  
 for the original inspiration for this brochure.

