

FORSYTH AUDUBON

Bird Friendly Habitat Certification Program

The Forsyth Audubon Society has developed a certification program to recognize your efforts in providing habitat where birds and wildlife can thrive. To be certified, you will need to: use native plants at all vegetative layers from the tree canopy down to perennials and ground cover; remove invasive plants; and take other steps to improve wildlife habitat.



Why natives? 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 tree species like oaks and other keystone species, are also host to a large variety of insects (especially caterpillars), which in turn are eaten by birds and other animals. Young nestlings, in particular, must consume large numbers of caterpillars in their first weeks of life.

Non-native vegetation can provide some fruits, nuts, and seeds, but it does not host the insects that are vital to birds and the web of life. As their seeds are spread by wildlife, many non-native plants become “invasive” by outcompeting local vegetation and disrupting the local ecology.

Visit our website for complete information on:

- How to sign up for the Bird Friendly Habitat Certification program
- Why native plants are important
- Recommended native plants for the Piedmont
- Where to buy native plants in the local area
- Local native plant landscapers
- Identifying and removing invasive plant species
- Leave your leaves!
- How to reduce bird-window collisions
- Other ways to improve wildlife habitat

Our certification program information is available on the website: www.ForsythAudubon.org/habitat-certification-program/

There is a one time application fee of \$50 for the certification program.

Questions? Contact us at forsythaudubon@gmail.com.



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



PHOTO CREDITS

Gray Catbird and Brown-headed Nuthatch by Will Stuart



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Other Wildlife Habitat Improvements

In addition to adding native plants and removing invasive plants, here are some more ways to make your property more friendly to birds and pollinators.

Note: The list is not ordered by importance.

- Wildlife water feature such as a pond or well-maintained bird bath (heated in winter).
- No cats or cats kept indoors and in outdoor enclosures such as catios.
- Windows protected with method to reduce bird-window collisions.
- Nest boxes for brown-headed nuthatches and/or bluebirds.
- Outdoor security lighting either on motion sensors or turned off when not needed – not left on all night.
- Lawn area with non-native turfgrass reduced to minimum needed.
- Variety of nectar and host plants blooming throughout growing season to support pollinators.
- Pollinator and beneficial insect nesting habitats.
- Snags and/or nurse logs are left when possible.
- Minimal use of nonorganic fertilizers
- Electric-powered mowers, blowers, and string trimmers instead of gas.

Note: See webpage for details and explanations for each item:

www.ForsythAudubon.org/safe-and-friendly-habitat



Bird Friendly Habitat Under Construction

- Property does not qualify yet for certification.
- Property owner plans to add enough native plants to achieve certification.
- Property owner plans to remove enough invasive plants to achieve certification.
- All vegetative layers including trees, shrubs, and the herbaceous layer are present or are in the planning stage as the size of property permits.
- Leaves are left at the ground layer all year long where possible.
- Use of herbicides and insecticides is minimized, and rodenticides are not used.
- At least three other wildlife habitat improvements are present (see list on other side).
- An “Under Construction” sign will be given.



Certified Bird Friendly Habitat

- Property has at least 50% coverage of native plants including some keystone species, and property owner plans to continue to add species.
- High threat invasive plants cannot cover more than 15% of property, and property owner plans to keep them under control or to remove.
- All vegetative layers including trees, shrubs, and the herbaceous layer are present or are in the planning stage as the size of property permits.
- Leaves are left at the ground layer all year long where possible.
- Use of herbicides and insecticides is minimized, and rodenticides are not used.
- At least five other wildlife habitat improvements are present (see list on other side).
- A “Certified” sign will be given.

High Threat Invasive plants

All invasives ranked as Severe or Significant Threat by the NC-Plant Council and the NC Native Plant Society count toward the percent of invasive plants allowed.

<https://ncwildflower.org/invasive-exotic-species-list/>

Please refer to our website for information on invasive plants:
www.ForsythAudubon.org/removing-invasive-plants

Typically seen high threat invasives:

- **Trees:** Bradford Pear, Mimosa, Princess Tree, Tree of Heaven
- **Shrubs:** Autumn & Thorny Olive, Burning Bush, Chinese & Japanese Privet, Japanese Barberry, Japanese Spiraea, Leatherleaf Mahonia, Multiflora Rose, Nandina, Sweet Breath of Spring (Fragrant Honeysuckle) & other Exotic Honeysuckles

- **Herbs & Grasses:** Asiatic Hawk’s Beard, Chinese Silver Grass (Miscanthus), Exotic Bamboo, Fig Buttercup, Creeping Charlie, Japanese Stiltgrass, Mulberry Weed, Sericea Lespedeza (Bush Clover)
- **Vines:** English Ivy, Chinese & Japanese Wisteria, Japanese Honeysuckle, Kudzu, Oriental (Asian) Bittersweet, Vinca (Periwinkle), Porcelain Berry, Sweet Autumn Clematis, Winter Creeper