

Bird-Friendly Garden Information

along with General Bird and Plant Resources

OVERVIEW

Installing native plants in your yard can help attract native birds. There are many ways to utilize natives in the landscape. Some gardeners prefer a wild and woolly look, while others prefer a more manicured garden – California natives are at home in any setting. We hope our Conejo Valley Audubon Society (CVAS) “Bird-Friendly Garden Tour” has inspired and encouraged you to consider turning your yard into a bird-friendly habitat.

CREATING A BIRD-FRIENDLY GARDEN

A well-designed, “useful” habitat can become an extremely productive location for insects, pollinators, birds and other wildlife. Even if aren’t planning an entire renovation, adding a few key California Native Plants can be incredibly useful for the birds. Water and shelter complete the circle and add to the productivity of your garden.

California native plants attract our native insects. This is an important point to consider when it comes to our native and migratory birds. To promote healthy brain and body development, most nesting birds feed insects (which are high in protein) to their babies. Therefore, having plants in your garden that attract native insects is a key factor in attracting birds to your garden.

Planning for year-round color does not simply satisfy our visual interest. It layers the sustenance in your garden throughout the entire year. Here are a few examples: *Zauchneria* (now *Epilobium* ~ AKA California Fuchsia) is a showy late summer plant whose beautiful red-orange flowers bloom profusely into the autumn providing sustenance for pollinators when other plants have stopped blooming. *Solidago* (Goldenrod) is also a late summer/fall bloomer. The butterflies will thank you for the blossoms AND the Goldfinches (and other seedeaters) will be thrilled to feast once the the plant has gone to seed! In early Winter, the delicate pink bell-shaped flowers of the *Manzanita* (and also *Ribes*) take over the job of providing nectar for the pollinators. These “bridge species” are important plants to consider for your bird-friendly garden. If you plant it, they will come!

A piece of “Sage” Advice from Seasoned Landscape Designer Trisha Munro

“Any yard renovation can seem daunting, and it can become expensive ~ especially if you are adding hardscape. Don’t be threatened or overwhelmed; simply work in stages. Be sure to have a general plan and map out what you will be doing in each phase so that in the end your yard will all tie together.”



Planting, Design, and Maintenance

Thinking of creating a bird-friendly garden?

- Summer **planning** → Fall **planting** (weather cools off, rain waters plants naturally)

Apply for a CVAS “Lawns to Habitat” Program grant!

Conejo Valley Audubon Society’s mission is to actively promote the enjoyment of our natural habitat, with a special emphasis on birds. Over a decade ago, our Conservation Chair, Dee Lyon, established this grant program in order to counter the loss of habitat that has contributed to the decline in native bird populations. Now, more than ever, our birds need your help.

Each year CVAS offers grants in order to help you turn your “lawn” into valuable habitat.

Grant **recipients** are eligible to receive \$250 in native plant credit at two of our local nurseries.

If you are considering removing your lawn and installing California native plants, this program is for you!

The application window opens on June 1st and closes on July 15th. Visit our website at

<https://wp.conejovalleyaudubon.org/lawns-to-habitat-2025/> to apply for this grant.

More Advice from the Experts

Watering Tips from Martin Fletcher ~ Recently retired native landscape contractor of 40+ years

Planting in late fall (with the first of the rains) is always best when planting California native plants. To help your new plants become well-established, watering on a “regular schedule” is not always the best plan.

When first installed, your newly planted natives will need to be watered with the frequency they were at the nursery. Within a few weeks, it’s best to begin to “wean them” by tapering back on your watering frequency.

If you wait until the plant is thirsty, the plant will have already begun to seek water. As the roots search deeper into the ground, they begin to become more deeply established thus leading to a plant that eventually needs only occasional supplemental water.

Typically, once your plants have made it through their first Winter, they should be beginning to become established. Keep a close eye on your new plants during the Spring. If they begin to wilt, it’s time to water. Deep watering with cool weather is preferable.

Think of it this way: Many of these plants come from environments much harsher than ours, so they are on “easy street” once they come into our gardens!

To learn more about birds

- Conejo Valley Audubon Society: <http://conejovalleyaudubon.org/>
- National Audubon Society: <https://www.audubon.org/>
- Cornell Lab of Ornithology: <https://www.allaboutbirds.org/>
- Western Foundation of Vertebrate Zoology: www.WFVZ.org
- Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History <https://santabarbaraca.com/businesses/santa-barbara-museum-of-natural-history/>
- Ventura Audubon Society: <https://www.venturaaudubon.org/>
- San Fernando Valley Audubon Society: <https://www.sfvaudubon.org/>

To learn more about California native plants and how to avoid invasive exotic plants

- California Native Plant Society (CNPS): <https://www.cnps.org/>
- CALSCAPE: <https://calscape.org/>
- L.A./Santa Monica Mountains Chapter of CNPS: <https://lasmmcnps.org/>
- Channel Islands Chapter of CNPS: <http://www.cnpsci.org/>
- CVAS: <https://wp.conejovalleyaudubon.org/conservation/native-plant-resources/>
- California Gardens: <https://californiagardens.com/>
- Anchor Plant List from CVAS (Document attached in this email)

Learn About “Invasive” Plant Species

Some nurseries market plants which may be attractive, easy to grow, and drought tolerant. HOWEVER, some of these plants are invasive and can actually spread wildly and become so dense that they choke out native plants. Scotch or Spanish Broom is one example. Pretty as it may be, it spreads like wildfire as does Vinca and Pampas Grass. There are costly programs in place to eradicate these plants which have spread into open space areas. Unfortunately, some of the most invasive species are still sold in nurseries across California. The Invasive Plant Council is a great resource. Be sure to check their list before you buy!

- Invasive Plants: <https://www.cal-ipc.org/solutions/prevention/landscaping/dpp/?region=socal>

Local Native Botanical Gardens

Visiting a botanic garden is a great way to help you plan your California native plant landscape. Viewing plants in these gardens will give you an idea of scale and arrangement.

- Conejo Valley Botanic Garden: <http://conejogarden.org/>
- Ventura Botanical Gardens <https://venturabotanicalgardens.com/>
- Santa Barbara Botanic Garden and Nursery: <https://www.sbbg.org/>
- California Botanic Garden and Nursery (Claremont): <https://www.rsabg.org/>

California Native Nurseries and Plant Sale Opportunities

The following nurseries and organizations have great selections of California native plants. Many of them have excellent websites and also offer educational opportunities.

- Matilija Nursery (Moorpark; offering 15% discount coupon!): <http://www.matilijanursery.com/>
- Growing Works (Wholesale Plant Nursery) <https://turningpointfoundation.org/growingworks.html>
- California Native Plant Society (Plant sales 2X per year!)
<https://chapters.cnps.org/channelislands/plant-sales/>
- Theodore Payne Foundation (Sunland): <http://theodorepayne.org/>
- Las Pilitas Nursery (Santa Margarita; ships plants): <https://www.laspilitas.com/>
- Tree of Life Nursery (San Juan Capistrano) <https://californianativeplants.com/plants/>

California Native Landscape Designers and California Native Plant Maintenance

It's not always easy to find designers and gardeners who specialize in natives. On our 2025 Bird-Friendly Garden Tour, you have seen their ability to maximize the use of natives in the garden.

- **Trisha Munro** ~ *Trisha's Garden Designs* (40 years of experience in native plants, restoration and landscaping projects ~ Creator of the Rock Wren Garden) ~ 805-620-7073 ~
- **Sergio Robles** ~ *Sergio Robles Gardening* (Native landscape maintenance – Stewardship of the Band-Tailed Pigeon Garden) ~ srgardenservice@gmail.com ~ 805-861-9098 ~
- **Leann Guzik** ~ *Plant Marks* (Native landscape maintenance and design – Creator of the Junco Garden) <https://www.plantmarks.com/> ~ 951-294-2893 ~

Bird-Friendly Tree and Shrub Trimming Guides

Timing is EVERYTHING when it comes to tree and shrub trimming. Check out these guides to help your garden stay “bird-friendly”!

- file:///C:/Users/jdlt/Downloads/CVAS-Tree-Trimming-2016_04_13.pdf
- <http://www.seaandsageaudubon.org/Conservation/TreeTrimming/TreeTrimmingPacket.html>

Suggested Reading and a MUST-SEE video presentation

California Native Landscape by Greg Rubin & Lucy Warren

California Native Plants for the Garden by Carol Bornstein, David Fross & Bart O'Brien

Nature's Best Hope by Douglas Tallamy

Doug Tallamy's eye-opening You Tube video presentation will help you understand why it is so important to consider adding California native plants to your garden. You will learn about the symbiotic relationship between native insects, native plants and resident and migratory native birds. As Dee Lyon says, *“Insects are paramount since all our birds feed their babies insects.”*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PKe0UzqazuU>



[Doug Tallamy: How Gardening with Native Plants Helps Wildlife, CA Focus](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PKe0UzqazuU)

Renowned ecologist and entomologist Doug Tallamy explains why native plants are critical to sustaining wildlife and how home gardeners can halt extinction and species loss when they choose native plants, particularly caterpillar host plants. Tallamy was the keynote speaker of the 2020 online Bringing Back the Natives Garden Tour, featuring ...

www.youtube.com

Wildlife Habitat Certification

If your garden provides Food, Water, Cover, Places to Raise Young, and Sustainable Practices, you may be able to Certify it as Wildlife Habitat! Discover more at:

- National Wildlife Federation: <https://www.nwf.org/Garden-For-Wildlife/Create.aspx>

LOCAL FIELD TRIP OPPORTUNITIES, INFORMATIVE LECTURES and AWSOME NATURE EVENTS

We hope you will consider joining both the Conejo Valley Audubon Society and the California Native Plant Society ~ Channel Islands Chapter.

Both clubs offer wonderful field trips and interesting and informative meetings. We encourage your membership and welcome your participation!

CVAS

Conejo Valley Audubon Society

Weekly field trips to different locations ~ Monthly newsletter ~ Monthly meetings at the Western Foundation of Vertebrate Zoology ~ Educational events, and more!

<https://wp.conejovalleyaudubon.org/membership/>

<https://wp.conejovalleyaudubon.org/>

CNPS

California Native Plant Society ~ Channel Islands Chapter

Monthly field trips ~ Monthly meetings ~ TWO plant sales per year (Spring and Fall) ~ Workdays ~ Restoration projects, and more!

<https://chapters.cnps.org/channelislands/>

WILD ROOTZ ~ A Naturalist Experience in the Field

For a FUN experience, book a hike or a class with Naturalist Laura Pasetta. Laura is master gardener, herbalist, “whole food cook”, photographer, passionate equestrian. Explore her website to find a variety of classes on how to identify California native plants, animals and insects, meditation in nature, cooking delicious seasonal foods, and how to make your own herbal remedies! <https://www.wild-rootz.com/>