UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA
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# Landscaping to Attract Birds in South Florida[1]

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One benefit of Florida living is the enjoyment of plants and wildlife in the landscape through most of the year. By proper plant selection, you can enhance your landscape to attract, feed, and shelter birds for year-round enjoyment. When selecting plants to incorporate into the landscape, keep in mind the need for birds to obtain shelter from inclement weather and from predators. A number of plant species can also attract birds by providing fruits as a source of food. Flowers of some species attract insects, which are in turn eaten by other types of birds. Migratory birds are particularly abundant along the coastal ridges in southern Florida. These birds can be attracted to landscapes by use of plants that provide seeds, fruits or insects during the fall and spring migrations. These food sources can be complemented by one or more bird feeders which must provide high quality seed with regularity. A good bird feeder should be conveniently located for viewing and large enough to hold food for at least 2-3 days, protect the seed from rain, and minimize seed spillage. Many bird guidebooks provide information on the bird species attracted by various seed types. Keep in mind that many of south Florida's songbirds are migrants or winter residents, and will thus require food or cover during the fall, winter, and spring months only.

## Landscape Principles to Attract Birds

Solid design concepts are important in any landscape project, and references on design principles are listed in this fact sheet under the heading of 'Recommended References'. The following are additional considerations to remember when landscaping to attract birds.

- Provide shelter to entice birds into your yard and to protect them from the elements or predators.
- Select a variety of plants which offer a consistent supply of food over an extended period of time.
- Select plants that flower or fruit during the spring migrations and attract insects. Insects, in turn, attract insectivorous birds. In some areas in southern Florida, the flowering gumbo-limbo (*Bursera simaruba*) attracts large numbers of warblers in their spring breeding plumage as they migrate northward.
- Design plantings which offer enough food to meet the needs of the birds.
- Provide a source of water for drinking and bathing. Moving water in a gently sloping basin or trough is particularly attractive to birds.

These criteria can be met by careful planning during the design phase of the landscape project. Select a variety of plants to extend the fruiting period for a year-round supply of food. Group plants together to create habitats attractive to birds. Be sure to include enough plants of each species to provide food in a volume great enough for the dietary needs of the birds attracted to your yard. Table

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1 is designed to assist you in selecting plants which have attributes particularly attractive to birds.

## Recommended References

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**Table 1.** Listing of plants for South Florida which attract birds; noting origin, plant type, plant part of value, season, and bird attracted.

| Scientific Name | Common Name | Origin | Plant Type | Value | Season | Birds Attracted |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Ardisia escalloniodes* | Malberry | native | shrub | fruit | fall; winter | Fruit-eating birds |
| *Asclepias curassavica* | Scarlet Milkweed | exotic | shrubby perennial | flowers | year-round | Hummingbirds |
| *Bauhinia blakeana* | Hong Kong Orchid Tree | exotic | tree | flowers | winter; spring | Hummingbirds, Orioles, Warblers |
| *Bursera simaruba* | Gumbo-limbo | native | tree | fruit | summer | Mockingbirds, Vireos |
| *Calliandra haematocephala* | Powderpuff | exotic | shrub | flowers | winter | Hummingbirds |
| *Callicarpa americana* | Beautyberry | native | shrub | fruit | fall; winter | Mockingbirds, Cardinals, Catbirds, Thrashers |
| *Calyptranthes pallens* | Spicewood | native | shrub | fruit | fall | Fruit-eating Birds |
| *Cestrum* spp. | Day- and night-flowering Jasmines | exotic | shrub | fruit | spring; fall | Mockingbirds, Blue Jays, Cardinals, Woodpeckers |
| *Chrysobalanus icaco* | Cocoplum | native | shrub | fruit | summer | Fruit-eating Birds |
| *Coccoloba diversifolia* | Pigeon Plum | native | tree | fruit | fall; winter | Mockingbirds, Catbirds, Robins, Woodpeckers |
| *Coccoloba uvifera* | Sea-grape | native | shrub; tree | fruit | year-round | Fruit-eating Birds |
| *Coccothrinax* spp. | Silver Palms | native | tree | fruit | summer | Mockingbirds, Blue Jays |
| *Colubrina arborescens* | Coffee Colubrina | native | tree | flowers | spring | Warblers, Gnatcatchers, Vireos, Flycatchers |
| *Dipholis salicifolia* | Willow Bustic | native | tree | fruit | summer | Fruit-eating Birds |
| *Eriobotrya japonica* | Loquat | exotic | tree | fruit | winter | Mockingbirds, Cardinals, Woodpeckers |
| *Eugenia uniflora* | Surinam Cherry | exotic | shrub | fruit | spring | Mockingbirds, Waxwings, Orioles |
| *Ficus* spp. | Figs | native, exotic | tree | fruit; cover | year-round | Mockingbirds, Catbirds, Blue Jays, Waxwings, Woodpeckers, Parrots |
| *Forestiera segregata* | Florida Privet | native | shrub | flowers | spring | Warblers, Vireos |
| *Guapira discolor* | Blolly | native | shrub, tree | fruit | summer | Fruit-eating Birds |
| *Hamelia patens* | Firebrush | native | shrub | flowers | year-round | Hummingbirds |
| *Ilex cassine* | Dahoon Holly | native | tree | fruit | fall; winter | Cardinals, Mockingbirds, Waxwings |

**Table 1.** Listing of plants for South Florida which attract birds; noting origin, plant type, plant part of value, season, and bird attracted.

| Scientific Name | Common Name | Origin | Plant Type | Value | Season | Birds Attracted |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Juniperus silicicola* | Southern Red Cedar | native | shrub; tree | fruit; cover | fall; winter | Tree Sallows, Waxings, Mockingbirds, Flickers, Sapsuckers |
| *Justicia brandegeana* | Shrimp Plant | exotic | shrub | flowers | year-round | Hummingbirds, Orioles, Buntings |
| *Lysiloma* spp. | Wild Tamarind | native | tree | flowers | spring; summer | Warblers, Flycatchers, Gnatcatchers |
| *Malpighia glabra* | Barbados Cherry | exotic | shrub | fruit | year-round | Fruit-eating Birds |
| *Malvaviscus arboreus* | Turk's Cap | exotic | shrub | flowers | year-round | Hummingbirds, Painted Buntings |
| *Morus rubra* | Red Mulberry | native | tree | fruit | spring | Woodpeckers, Kingbirds, Blue Jays, Mockingbirds, and other fruit-eating birds |
| *Murraya paniculata* | Orange-jasmine | exotic | shrub | fruit | summer; fall | Mockingbirds, Cardinals |
| *Myrica cerifera* | Wax Myrtle | native | shrub | fruit | fall; winter | Warblers, Vireos, Tree Swallows, Cardinals, Mockingbirds, Catbirds |
| *Myrsine guianensis* | Florida Myrsine | native | shrub | fruit | fall; winter | Fruit-eating Birds |
| *Parthenocissus quinquefolia* | Virginia Creeper | native | vine | fruit | summer; fall | Mockingbirds, Robins, Thrashers, Woodpeckers, Great-crested Flycatchers |
| *Persea americana* | Avocado | exotic | tree | fruit | summer; fall | Woodpeckers, Blue Jays, Orioles |
| *Psychotria nervosa* | Wild Coffee | native | shrub | fruit | summer; fall | Cardinals, Blue Jays |
| *Ptychosperma elegans* | Solitaire Palm | exotic | tree | fruit | year-round | Mockingbirds, Blue Jays |
| *Pyracantha coccinea* | Firethorn | exotic | shrub | fruit | winter | Mockingbirds, Catbirds, Blue Jays, Waxwings, Woodpeckers |
| *Quercus laurifolia* | Laurel Oak | native | tree | fruit | fall; winter | Woodpeckers, Blue Jays, Warblers, Vireos |
| *Quercus virginiana* | Live Oak | native | tree | fruit | fall; winter | Woodpeckers, Blue Jays, Warblers, Vireos |
| *Roystonea regia* | Royal Palm | native | tree | fruit | fall; winter | Mockingbirds, Robins, Blue Jays |
| *Sabal palmetto* | Sabal Palm | native | tree | fruit | fall; winter | Blackbirds, Blue Jays, Mockingbirds, Robins |
| *Sambucus canadensis* | Elderberry | native | shrub | fruit | summer; fall | Fruit-eating birds |
| *Simarouba glauca* | Paradise Tree | native | tree | fruit | spring | Fruit-eating birds |
| *Sophora tomentosa* | Necklace Pod | native | shrub | flowers | winter; spring | Hummingbirds, Warblers, Vireos |

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| Scientific Name | Common Name | Origin | Plant Type | Value | Season | Birds Attracted |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Tecomaria capensis* | Cape Honeysuckle | exotic | vine | flowers | year-round | Hummingbirds, Catbirds, Orioles |
| *Tetrazygia bicolor* | Florida Tetrazygia | native | shrub | fruit | spring | Mockingbirds and other fruit eating birds |
| *Thrinax* spp. | Thatch Palms | native | tree | fruit | fall | Mockingbirds, Jays, and other fruit-eating birds |
| *Trema micrantha* | Florida Trema | native | shrub | fruit | summer | Fruit-eating birds |

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