

Plants for Birds

Note: Benefits to birds from plants can be direct (fruit, nuts, seeds) or indirect (caterpillars and other insects the plant attracts that birds rely on to feed themselves or their babies). All plants listed are native species since they are the ones that benefit birds.

Direct benefits, providing seeds, fruit, nuts from trees and shrubs:

Summer and Fall

<i>Amelanchier arborea</i>	Juneberry, serviceberry
<i>A. laevis</i>	Alleghany shadblow
<i>Cornus alternifolia</i>	Alternate-leaved / Pagoda dogwood
<i>C. racemosa</i> *	Gray dogwood
<i>C. stolonifera</i>	Red-osier dogwood
<i>Morus rubra</i>	Red mulberry
<i>Prunus pensylvanica</i>	Pin cherry
<i>P. serotina</i> *	Wild black cherry
<i>P. virginiana</i>	Choke cherry
<i>Rubus allegheniensis</i> *	Common blackberry
<i>R. occidentalis</i> *	Black raspberry
<i>R. odoratus</i> *	Purple flowering raspberry
<i>Smilax ecirrhata</i>	Upright carrion flower
<i>Smilax lasioneura</i>	Common carrion flower
<i>Sambucus canadensis</i>	Elderberry

Winter

<i>Carya cordiformis</i>	Bitternut hickory
<i>C. ovata</i>	Shagbark hickory
<i>Celtis occidentalis</i>	Hackberry
<i>Corylus americana</i>	American hazelnut
<i>Crataegus coccinea</i>	Scarlet hawthorn
<i>C. crus-galli</i>	Cockspur hawthorn
<i>Ilex verticillata</i>	Winterberry
<i>Juniperus virginiana</i>	Red cedar*
<i>Parthenocissus quinquefolia</i> *	Virginia creeper / Woodbine
<i>Quercus alba</i>	White oak
<i>Q. macrocarpa</i>	Bur oak
<i>Q. rubra</i>	Red oak
<i>Q. spp.</i>	Other native oak species
<i>Rhus aromatica</i>	Fragrant sumac
<i>R. glabra</i>	Smooth sumac
<i>R. typhina</i>	Staghorn sumac
<i>Symphoricarpos albus</i>	Snowberry
<i>Viburnum acerifolium</i>	Maple-leaved arrow-wood
<i>V. dentatum</i>	Arrow-wood (native east of NE Illinois)
<i>V. lentago</i>	Nannyberry
<i>V. prunifolium</i>	Black haw
<i>V. trilobum</i>	Highbush cranberry

* Indicates a possibly aggressive species



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Birds eat the seeds of many native flowering plants and grasses. Below are a few of the flowering plants:

<i>Aster azureus</i>	Sky-blue aster
<i>A. laevis</i>	Smooth blue aster
<i>A. linariifolius</i>	Flax-leaved aster
<i>A. novae-angliae</i>	New England aster
<i>A. ptarmicoides</i>	Stiff aster
<i>A. seroceus</i>	Silky aster
<i>Helianthus divaricatus*</i>	Woodland sunflower
<i>H. occidentalis*</i>	Western sunflower
<i>Echinacea pallida</i>	Pale purple coneflower
<i>E. purpurea</i>	Purple coneflower
<i>Eupatorium maculatum*</i>	Spotted Joe Pye weed
<i>E. purpureum*</i>	Purple Joe Pye weed
<i>Monarda fistulosa</i>	Wild bergamot / bee balm
<i>Liatris aspera</i>	Rough blazing star
<i>L. pycnostachya</i>	Prairie blazing star / Gay feather
<i>Rudbeckia hirta</i>	Black-eyed Susan
<i>R. subtomentosa</i>	Sweet black-eyed Susan
<i>R. triloba</i>	Brown-eyed Susan
<i>Solidago nemoralis*</i>	Old-field goldenrod
<i>S. rigida</i>	Stiff goldenrod
<i>S. speciosa</i>	Showy goldenrod
<i>S. ulmifolia*</i>	Elm-leaved goldenrod
<i>Vitis riparia*</i>	Riverbank grape

* Indicates a possibly aggressive species

Indirect benefits:

Woody plants are the most important sources of indirect food. The following species, listed in descending order of importance, provide the most support for birds and nestlings:

<i>Quercus ssp.</i>	Oaks (see species above)
<i>Salix discolor</i>	Pussy willow
<i>S. humilis</i>	Prairie willow
<i>S. nigra</i>	Black willow
<i>Prunus serotina*</i>	Wild black cherry
<i>P. pennsylvanica</i>	Pin cherry
<i>P. virginiana</i>	Choke cherry
<i>P. americana</i>	Wild plum
<i>Betula nigra</i>	River birch
<i>B. populifolia</i>	Gray birch
<i>B. lutea</i>	Yellow birch
<i>Populus grandidentata</i>	Large-toothed aspen
<i>Malus ioensis</i>	Iowa crab
<i>Vaccinium angustifolia</i>	Early low blueberry
<i>V. corymbosum</i>	Highbush blueberry
<i>Acer rubrum*</i>	Red maple
<i>A. saccharum</i>	Sugar maple
<i>A. saccharinum</i>	Silver maple
<i>Pinus strobus</i>	White pine
<i>Carya cordiformis</i>	Bitternut hickory
<i>C. ovata</i>	Shagbark hickory
<i>Crataegus coccinea</i>	Scarlet hawthorn
<i>C. crus-galli</i>	Cockspur hawthorn
<i>Alnus rugosa</i>	Speckled alder
<i>Tilia americana</i>	Basswood / American linden
<i>Corylus americana</i>	American hazelnut
<i>Juglans nigra</i>	Black walnut

