

Planting for Wildlife in Tricky Urban Spaces

*A Bird-friendly Native Plant Primer for Landscaping in Urban
and Suburban Areas in the Southeastern United States*



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About this guide

This guide is designed to make native plant selection easier for homeowners, professional landscapers, and city planners when working in tricky urban and suburban spaces such as sidewalks, medians, traffic circles, or front yards.

The plants recommended in this guide are easy to maintain and beneficial to birds and other wildlife.

Why Native Plants?

Native plants allow wildlife to thrive in ways that non-natives simply cannot: they provide high quality fruit, insects, and habitat at the right times of year.



Best Natives for Partial to Full Sun

Overstory Trees

- Green ash (*Fraxinus pennsylvanica*)
- White ash (*Fraxinus americana*)
- American basswood (*Tilia americana*)
- Black oak (*Quercus velutina*)
- Darlington oak (*Quercus hemisphaerica*)
- Northern red oak (*Quercus rubra*)
- Overcup oak (*Quercus lyrata*)
- Pin oak (*Quercus palustris*)
- Southern red oak (*Quercus falcata*)
- White oak (*Quercus alba*)
- Willow oak (*Quercus phellos*)
- American hophornbeam (*Ostrya virginiana*)
- Bald cypress (*Taxodium distichum*)
- Blackgum (*Nyssa sylvatica*)
- Eastern red cedar (*Juniperus virginiana*)
- Red maple (*Acer rubrum*)
- River birch (*Betula nigra*)
- Sourwood (*Oxydendrum arboreum*)
- Yellowwood (*Cladrastis kentukea*)

Other ways to support wildlife:

- remove non-native invasive species
- plant a variety of native species
- plant with layers in mind
 - canopy
 - understory
 - shrubs
 - vines
 - groundcover
- minimize the amount of turf grass
- add regularly cleaned bird feeders
- provide water sources
- leave some brush piles
- add rock piles/wall
- add nest boxes for birds
- leave standing dead tress (when safe) or at least their trunk
- minimize chemical use
- minimize mowing and leaf blowing

Understory Trees

- Red buckeye (*Aesculus pavia*)
- Flowering dogwood (*Cornus florida*)
- Fringetree (*Chionanthus virginicus*)
- American holly (*Ilex opaca*)
- Sweetbay magnolia (*Magnolia virginiana*)
- Chalk maple (*Acer leucoderme*)
- Pawpaw (*Asimina triloba*)
- Redbud (*Cercis canadensis*)
- Sassafras (*Sassafras albidum*)
- Serviceberry (*Amelanchier arborea*)
- Smoketree (*Cotinus obovatus*)



Best Natives for Partial to Full Shade

- Sweet birch (*Betula lenta*)
 - White ash (*Fraxinus americana*)
 - American hornbeam (*Carpinus caroliniana*)
 - Yellowwood (*Cladrastis kentukea*)
 - American holly (*Ilex opaca*)
 - Pawpaw (*Asimina triloba*)
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Best Shrubs for Yards and Parks

Partial to full sun: Adam's needle (*Yucca filamentosa*), American beautyberry (*Callicarpa americana*), highbush blueberry (*Vaccinium corymbosum*), deciduous holly (*Ilex decidua*), yaupon holly (*Ilex vomitoria*), inkberry holly (*Ilex glabra*), New Jersey tea (*Ceanothus americanus*), ninebark (*Physocarpus opulifolius*), red chokeberry (*Photinia pyrifolia*), fragrant sumac (*Rhus aromatica*), sweet pepperbush (*Clethra alnifolia*), Virginia sweetspire (*Itea virginica*), wax myrtle (*Morella cerifera*), witch alder (*Fothergilla gardenii*), arrowwood viburnum (*Viburnum dentatum*), and witherod viburnum (*Viburnum nudum*).

Partial to full shade: Florida anise (*Illicium floridanum*), oakleaf hydrangea (*Hydrangea quercifolia*), sweetshrub (*Calycanthus floridus*), Virginia sweetspire (*Itea virginica*)

Visit Audubon's Native Plants Database to learn about other native plants for your area: audubon.org/native-plants

When planting, be sure to remember...

- Even with plants suitable for survival in tricky urban spaces, considering soil type, drainage, water availability, space as the plant grows, and when to plant will allow for optimal success.

Native Plant Resources

Web:

- <https://www.audubon.org/plantsforbirds>
- <http://www.missouribotanicalgarden.org/plantfinder/plantfindersearch.aspx>
- <https://plants.sc.gov.usda.gov/java/>

Books:

- *Native Plants of the Southeast* by Mellichamp
- *Bringing Nature Home: How You Can Sustain Wildlife with Native Plants* by Tallamy

Photo Credits:

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