

4 Great Ways to Encourage Birds to your Garden

Birds are wonderful visitors to have in your garden – they're relaxing to watch, can help rid your lawn of weeds, are brilliant at eating troublesome pests and can also help with flower pollination.



Set up some bird feeders/table



There are so many varieties of bird feeders in the shops, or you can even make your own. Place in a safe place and where your pet cat is unable to access it easily! Different food types will bring different visitors to your table.

- **Suet balls** - these are perfect for during the winter as they provide birds with the calories they need to keep them going during the long, cold months. They are a favourite with robins, blue tits and long-tailed tits.
- **Sunflower hearts** - these are easy for birds to eat and are rich in protein. They are a popular choice with siskins, house sparrows, robins and finches.
- **Niger seeds** - these tiny black seeds will need to be placed in a specialist feeder as they're so small. They are the food of choice for siskins, greenfinches and goldfinches.
- **Mealworms** - whether you choose dried or live, mealworms are another great addition to your garden restaurant. They are a hit with blackbirds, starlings and robins in particular.
- **Peanuts** - peanuts are full of protein and fat, so are another great option to feed birds. Having peanuts on your feeder is likely to attract tits, finches and siskins.



Provide a supply of fresh water



As with humans, water is of course vital for birds' survival, as they need it for drinking and bathing. So, providing them with a fresh, clean water source is a great way to entice them into your garden.

You could place a bird bath in your garden or even putting a bowl of water out will suffice.

Place it somewhere shaded and where birds can have a good view of potential predators. Water is best kept in a shallow container, no deeper than two inches. Refresh it as often as you can and remove any ice during the winter.

You may have to be patient, but once the birds know you are feeding them, it's highly likely they will return. Ensure you keep it regularly topped up and place it somewhere safe, where birds can spot any immediate signs of danger. This is ideally near to a tall hedge or tree which can provide cover. Avoid low cover as cats can ambush birds this way.

Follow these simple tips and you're sure to have a flurry of feathered friends visiting your garden in no time.

If you have a tree in your garden it's a great option to hang some bird feeders from its branches, or you could even hang a nesting box. Some birds like to feed from the ground, such as blackbirds and chaffinches, so you could provide them with a ground feeding tray too.



Give them somewhere to nest



Adding a few nesting boxes in sheltered areas of your garden, away from potential predators, is the best way to do this. Don't put your nesting box in direct sunlight or where it will be prone to strong winds – somewhere between north- and east-facing is best. There are a few different nesting boxes available, depending on the species of birds you'd like to attract.

- **Open-fronted nest boxes** - these are ideal for robins or wrens, and should be placed low to the ground, hidden by shrubs and other plants.
- **Classic small-holed nest boxes** - these are the traditional nest boxes, featuring a small hole at the top for birds to enter through. They are suitable for a wide variety of small garden birds and should be placed 2-4 metres up a tree or wall.
- **Sparrow terraces** - designed for sparrows who breed in colonies, these nest boxes or 'sparrow terraces' are basically three nest boxes in one. They should be placed high up, under the eaves of the roof.



Bird friendly plants, trees & shrubs



Berry-rich trees and shrubs like rowan, hawthorn, guelder rose and holly are all great natural food sources and also help to provide shelter.

Plants with an abundance of seeds are another great choice, such as teasels or sunflowers. Ivy and honeysuckle are also popular with birds – they provide dense cover, fruits and attract insects for birds to feast on.

Another option is to plant some wildflowers to attract the insects that birds love to feed on. That way you can supply birds with food while filling your garden with gorgeous flower displays.



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Thanks to the Woodland Trust for the information.