

# Backyard Bird Habitat!

Do you see birds in your backyard? There are lots of ways you can make your yard attractive to birds. Here are a few:

**Bird feeders** – include seed feeders, suet feeders and hummingbird feeders. Add some corn for the squirrels and wild turkey.

**Safe cover**--Tree limbs and shrubs give birds a safe place to hide if a cat or hawk comes around.

**Native wildflowers** that produce seeds for finches and sparrows – these are also great for native pollinators like Bumble bees!



**Water** – Birds drink lots of water and they LOVE to take baths every day if they can! You could have a simple bird bath or an elaborate water garden. Either way, the birds will relish it!



**Brush piles** – Don't worry about hauling away piles of branches and woody debris. This could provide great escape cover for many species and nesting cover for birds like wrens. Snakes and rodents also like brush piles!

*What else could you do for the birds around you?*

## “DRINK Your teaaaaa!”

We've all heard birds singing. But what are they saying? What does it mean?

Believe it or not, one of the best ways to learn how to identify birds is to learn their vocalizations. Just think: You can know which bird is singing, even if you can't see it! This is very useful, especially during the summer months when small birds are easily hidden in the leafy vegetation. Imagine walking into a forest and being able to call out each bird by name, just by what they're saying! You CAN!

Why do birds sing? In the songbird world, the male is usually the one who does the singing, and he's trying to attract mates and defend his territory. Sometimes birds make other noises, like short chips and chirps. These are called 'call notes,' and are used by birds to communicate between individuals or to warn of predators.

So how do you learn who sings what? Many birders learn songs by associating them with fun phrases. Here are a few:

- **Eastern Towhee** - “Drink your teaaaaa!”
- **Carolina Wren** - “Tea kettle, tea kettle - or Cheeseburger, Cheeseburger”
- **Tufted Titmouse** - “Peter, Peter, Peter”
- **Red-eyed Vireo** - “Here I am, where are you? Look up, in the tree...”
- **American Robin** - “Cheerio Cheerilee”

Go outside and listen to the birds around you. What are they saying? Come up with your own helpful phrases to learn who's who.

Here is one online resource to help you learn bird songs:

**[www.allaboutbirds.org](http://www.allaboutbirds.org)** – Just type in a bird's name in the 'Find' box and you're on your way!