

# ATTRACTING BIRDS TO YOUR YARD

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# WHAT ALL BIRDS NEED...

- FOOD SOURCES...natural and supplemental
- WATER...for drinking and bathing
- STRUCTURED HABITAT...ground, shrub, tree
- SAFETY...from cats, diseases, window strikes
- APPROPRIATE SPACING

# What birds COULD you get ?

- What bioregion are you in?
- What season are we in?
- What is in your neighborhood?
- What can your neighbors supply?

# Year-round locals

- Local birds may use your yard for
  - Foraging
  - Bathing
  - Roosting
  - Nesting
  - Courtship or territoriality

# The plants you choose....

- May provide berries, or nectar, or seeds
- May provide insects and caterpillars
- May provide safe night roosting
- May give structure for a nest location
- May provide a safe escape route from predators
- May give an elevated showcase for singing in a territory (and watching for competitors)

Some examples....



Toyon

*Heteromeles arbutifolia*





Red-twig Dogwood  
*Cornus sericea*





Red-twig Dogwood  
*Cornus sericea*



Toyon in bloom  
*Heteromeles arbutifolia*





Coyote Brush (female plant)  
*Baccharis pilularia*





Closeup of female Coyote Brush

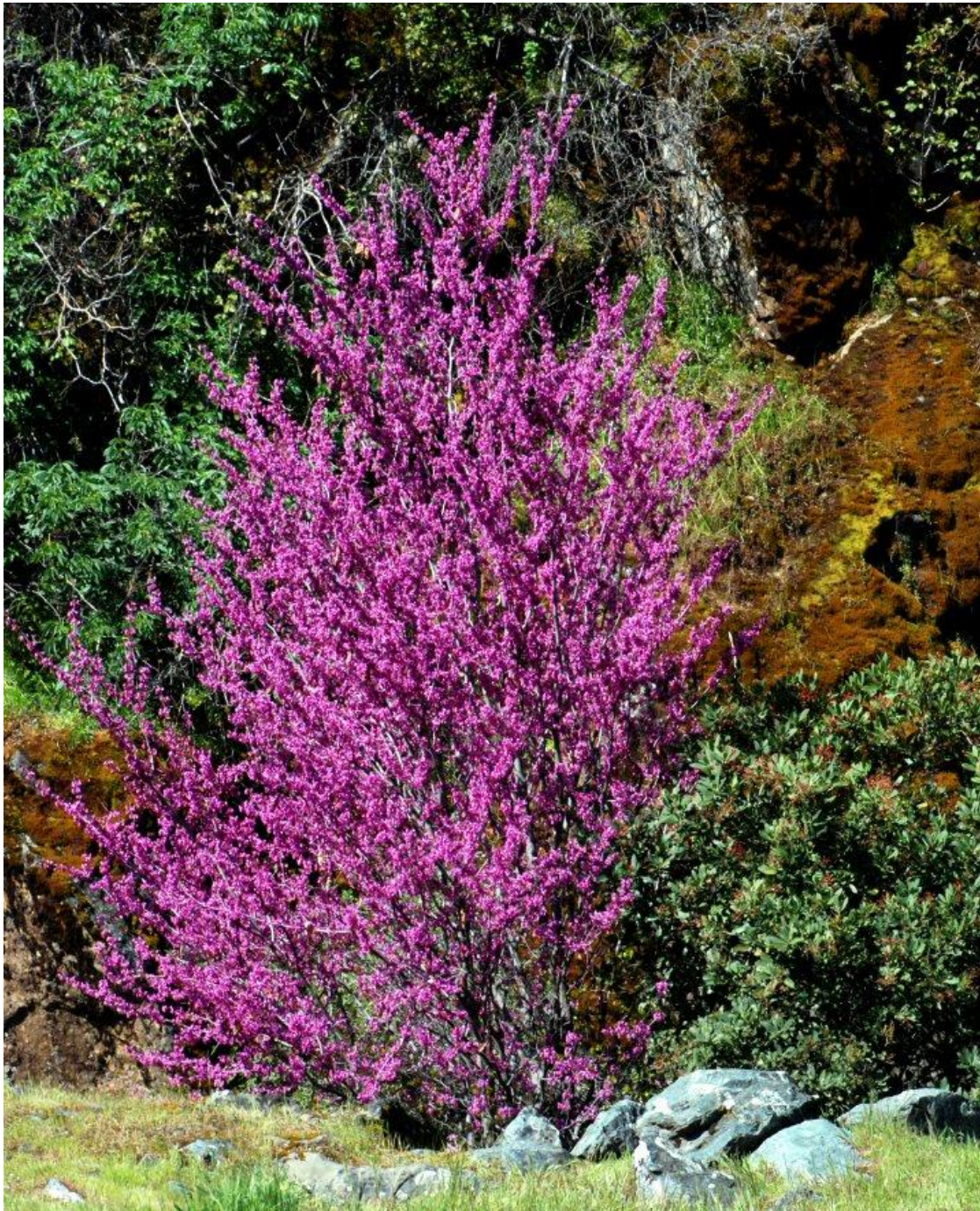


Yarrow

*Achillea millefolium*

Attracts butterflies as well as  
small insects for bird buffet





Western Redbud  
*Cercis occidentalis*

Flowers and seedpods





Ceanothus, or "mountain lilac"

Various shrubby or groundcover species of Ceanothus





Red columbine  
*Aquilegia formosa*



Male Anna's Hummingbird





Rufous Hummingbird male  
Mostly a fleeting migrant fueling up in your yard



Male Rufous  
Hummingbird with light  
from a different angle!



Black-chinned Hummingbird male on a hummingbird feeder...a quick energy drink





Black-chinned Hummingbird female with at least two babies...notice how short and soft their bills are. She feeds them on tiny insects, and uses nectar and insects for her own needs.



Adult male Bushtit. Outside of the breeding season they join mixed flocks of small warblers and other songbirds and glean insects from your trees and shrubs.



Male bushtit putting finishing touches on the hanging nest. He and the female each weigh about five grams and together will brood and raise 5-7 babies!





American Goldfinches in winter plumage on a niger thistle seed feeder.



Female American  
Goldfinch

Loves seeds from a  
feeder or from your  
garden plants in the  
winter...and it may  
nest high in your  
trees in spring.



Male American Goldfinch in all his glory.





Male American Robin



Female American Robin



Baby American Robin...note the spotted breast and down still coming off his or her head and back. Mom and dad will still be feeding this chick. They often nest in parks and yards.





Male Bullock's Oriole

If you are VERY lucky a pair will build a hanging nest and raise several youngsters in your trees. They eat fruit and insects.



Female Bullock's Oriole. Note that she's going for fruit. You can put cut fruit out on a feeding spot to bring them in close. The young need insects and caterpillars to grow, so the pair will keep your pests down.



A pair of Barn Swallows building a nest on a shelf-like structure. They are messy, but they eat masses of flying insects and feed their brood of 5-7 young where you can enjoy watching the process!





Male Barn Swallow



Adult Cliff Swallow in flight...they build mud nests that cling to cliffs, bridges and dams. If you live near water and have lots of flying insects you may see them.



Mourning Dove on a nest with nestlings. They often nest in trees in yards.





Adult Male Mourning Dove



The California Towhee is an understory bird. It gleans what it needs from the ground and low branches in shrubbery. It's quite shy.



Note the California Towhee's rich rust undertail coverts...a subtle beauty.





A male Spotted Towhee singing on territory. Note the really long toes. They forage in the understory and nest fairly low in shrubs.



A refreshing bath for a female Spotted Towhee...one of the benefits of supplying a water feature is watching their antics in the water. Be sure to avoid placing the water near where predators could lurk.



Another male Spotted Towhee...note the long toenails





A House Wren with a caterpillar for the babies. They are cavity nesters, and might use a birdhouse with a small entrance hole.



The brash, bold and entertaining Northern Mockingbird. If you're an insomniac, you'll love or hate this bird!



Probably trying to chase another bird from the favorite berry bush, or just heading to a high perch to sing a long medley.





If you or your neighborhood have trees with insect damage or cavities from broken branches, the Nuttall's Woodpecker may forage and even create a cavity nest. Occasionally they can be found nesting in a nestbox set up high.

A woodpecker has a very long tongue which retracts and wraps up the back of the skull, but which allows them to reach into crevices and extract the grubs harming your tree.

Suet feeders in winter can provide a tasty and nutritious supplement.

This bird, without red on the head, is a female.



And here's the male Nuttall's Woodpecker....



Golden-crowned Sparrow...a winter-only bird in most of California





This young Golden-crowned Sparrow has found a nice supply of seeds.  
At the end of winter they leave us.



This elegant Fox Sparrow may visit your yard and explore the leafy debris below the shrubs. With their extremely long toes they churn up the leaf litter to find insects



One of our winter birds in much of California is the White-crowned Sparrow. If you live near the coast or in the Sierra you could be in their breeding range.

Males and females look alike, and adults have white and black head stripes.

They'll come to seed feeders or forage on the ground near cover.





...and in their first year of life the sport tan and brown head stripes.



Male Brewer's Blackbird...note his very glossy plumage and very yellow eye



The bold and noisy and intelligent Western Scrub-Jay will either delight you or frustrate you. (or maybe both)

You may find yourself digging out or cutting off many of the trees and shrubs the jay has planted...but not where YOU want!





...in this case, no problem. It's a peanut!



## Male House Sparrow

They readily nest in yards, often very near your house so you can enjoy the family life.



Female House Finch

Notice that she's more plainly colored. She has to blend into the background while on a nest,





...and he gets to show off.



For most of us, a winter only bird....the Yellow-Rumped Warbler.



A young female Yellow-Rumped Warbler. Both sexes have the bright yellow rump.





This is a male House Sparrow, or “English Sparrow”. They were introduced a very long time ago and cause some problems for native birds...but the males ARE beautiful.



The much plainer female House Sparrow....



And sometimes in your personal Eden a vision of the balance of nature will appear...suddenly, with no evil intent, just seeking the same things ALL birds need.