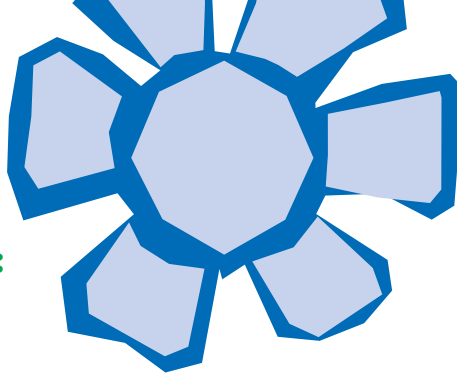


NATURE CANADA'S MISSION:

*Together we protect nature,
its diversity, and the processes
that sustain it.*

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more information at info@naturecanada.ca.



Your Hands-on Guide to Backyard Living

Welcome Wildlife



Your balcony, patio, or backyard can be essential habitat for local wildlife. Habitat is especially important in areas with little 'green space'.

PUT OUT FEED. Make a feeder by cutting a large opening in a clean, plastic juice bottle and hang it by its handle. Sunflower seeds attract the most types of birds. And don't put out baked goods, which are bad for birds.

MAKE A COMMITMENT. Putting feed out in winter requires a long-term commitment because wildlife becomes dependent upon it. This is especially important during bad weather and after snow storms.

HANG NESTING MATERIAL in mesh vegetable bags - birds love wood shavings, short lengths of yarn, burlap threads, wool, cotton batting, or furniture stuffing.

PUT UP A BIRDHOUSE - especially important in neighbourhoods with few wooded areas. Place it out of reach of cats and clean it out in the fall. If you build your own, remember to follow dimensions, exactly for each species.

GROW NATIVE (OR NATURALIZED) TREES, shrubs and plants. They provide shelter, places to raise young, and food sources. Good choices include aspen, willow, lilac, hollyhock, sunflowers, pussy willow, clover, bachelor's buttons, bee balm, butterfly bush, marigolds, globe thistle, Shasta daisy, and even dandelion! For winter, consider evergreens. No yard? Try planters.

STAY CLOSE TO HOME. Plants native to Canada are the best choice because they are hardy, require less watering and little maintenance, attract beneficial insects, and have evolved with local wildlife.

PUT OUT A BIRD BATH. This is especially important in winter because most natural water sources are frozen. A plant saucer with textured finish and a stone in the middle is good. Avoid metal in winter. Use hot water to melt ice rather than breaking it into sharp pieces. Place bath in an open area and near a perch. Scrub it weekly and rinse it well if you use soap.



Make nature-friendly choices



MAKE A CONSCIOUS EFFORT to buy goods that use minimal or no packaging. Bring and use cloth bags when shopping. Reuse or recycle plastic products.

Pack lunches in reusable containers. Buy a reusable mug. Look for products labeled with the 'Ecologo'. Buy local goods which support your community and reduce transportation pollution. Avoid disposable products.

LOOK FOR BETTER OPTIONS. Buy laundry 'soap' instead of detergent; Borax or washing soda instead of bleach; baking soda and vinegar instead of drain cleaner. Avoid phosphate-containing detergents and cleaning supplies - they enter the waterways and cause explosive algae growth, which robs aquatic species of oxygen.

CONSERVE WATER. Purchase energy- and water-efficient appliances. Repair leaky faucets and install flow restrictors. Turn off the water while shaving or brushing your teeth. Take short showers, not full baths. Only run the dishwasher or washing machine with a full load. Don't water your lawn during the heat of the day. Even better, replace grass with native ground covers that won't require watering or mowing.

TRY ORGANIC FERTILIZERS or natural solutions like sprinkling lawns with grass clippings, topsoil or compost to improve soil, thereby avoiding the need for fertilizer. Get rid of pest insects with a spray mixture of 15ml (3tsp) liquid soap in 1 litre (4 cups) of water, or attract beneficial bugs, which eat them.

If it says '-cide' on the bottle, don't use it or buy it.

Poisons from pesticides, herbicides, fungicides and insecticides get washed into waterways and ingested into the food chain. Birds, for example, can be harmed by eating poisoned insects.

Out and About



CELEBRATE NATURE. Visit a local nature sanctuary or protected area. Take up gardening. Attend a birding festival. Participate in a Christmas bird count with your local birdwatching or nature club. Go for a hike or a walk in a nearby park or wetland. You'll be happy you did!

REIN IN YOUR PETS. Keep cats belled and indoors more often, especially during spring. Better yet, build an outdoor cat enclosure. Feline predation is not part of the natural food chain in Canada. Keep dogs leashed in natural areas and off beaches in bird-breeding season.

PUT WASTE IN ITS PLACE. Birds become entangled in plastic bags, fishing line and other garbage, resulting in injury, strangulation or easy predation. Animals have died after ingesting plastic. Cut up plastic mesh vegetable bags and plastic rings from six packs of cans before disposal. Don't release helium balloons and dispose of all balloons properly so they are not ingested by wildlife.

IF YOU MUST DRIVE, DRIVE CAREFULLY, especially in rural areas where frogs, turtles, deer, foxes, raccoons and porcupines may be hit or killed trying to cross roads that divide their habitat. Wake from powerboats damages shoreline habitat, and snowmobiles, all-terrain vehicles and trail bikes destroy habitat and harm wildlife by crushing eggs, nests, and nestlings.

INTRODUCE ONE PERSON to the wonders of nature. Participate in a NatureWatch program with a child. Volunteer at a local protected area and help raise awareness and support. Join your local natural history society or nature club with your family. Use your knowledge to teach others about the joys of our world!

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world."

Margaret Mean,
WORLD-RENOWNED ANTHROPOLOGIST.

An estimated 140 million birds and small animals are killed each year in Canada by pet cats.

