

# ORNAMENTAL PLANTINGS FOR WILDLIFE

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Planting trees and shrubs for our own pleasure and for the benefit of wildlife frequently begins with the question: What should I plant, evergreens or deciduous, native species or ornamentals? A mixture of evergreen and deciduous species is the best approach for the benefit of wildlife, while the choice of materials is less crucial. Wildlife does not differentiate between native and ornamental species, and certainly there are species of trees and shrubs in both groups that are highly beneficial as sources of food and shelter.

Listed below are a selection of ornamental trees and shrubs that are valued for their esthetic appeal as well as usefulness to wildlife. There are many other ornamentals to choose from besides those mentioned here. Whatever your choice, the presence of trees and shrubs to give shelter, food or both will make your property more attractive for wildlife.

## DECIDUOUS

Crab apple (Malus) - A valuable group of small trees in which certain varieties retain their fruit well into the winter; some varieties are not heavy fruit producers and therefore are of less value to wildlife. The fruit are eaten by many birds and may be especially important for over wintering or early arriving robins.

Amur maple (Acer ginnala) - A small maple with brilliant red leaves in the fall. The bright red seeds are eaten by a variety of bird species.

European mountain ash (Sorbus aucuparia) - Similar to the native species of mountain ash with clusters of red-orange berries in the fall, a favorite food tree for many birds, especially robins.

Russian olive (Eleagnus angustifolia) - An attractive tree with silvery leaves. The inconspicuous fruit are readily eaten by birds. This tree does well in dry, sunny areas.



Black locust (Robinia pseudocacia) - The fragrant flowers of this tree are attractive to humans as well as hummingbirds. The suckering habit may be a nuisance if planted too close to flower beds but no trouble if grown in a lawn.

## EVERGREEN

Mugho pine (Pinus mugo) - A compact pine resembling a shrub whose dense needle growth provides shelter for birds close to the ground. Both dwarf and standard types are available.

Colorado spruce (Picea pungens) - Several varieties of this tree have bluish needles and are referred to as blue spruce. The seeds from the cones and shelter by the foliage are attractive to birds.

Austrian pine (Pinus nigra) - The exceptionally dense foliage of this pine provides wildlife shelter, even at an early age. It looks especially good when combined with white birch.