



Why Garden for Wildlife?

A wildlife-friendly yard provides environmental, educational, and inspirational benefits.

- It provides homes for birds, butterflies, beneficial insects and other small animals.
- Increases biodiversity on a micro-scale contributes to urban wildlife.
- Encourages native plantings and adoption of more sustainable gardening techniques (conserves water, reduces use of pesticides and chemical fertilizers, reduces curb-site waste through increased composting).
- Offers an opportunity for bird-watching and for people to feel connected to the natural world.
- Provides a valuable opportunity to introduce children to nature and teach them about stewardship.

DID YOU KNOW?

The introduction of native plantings, nest boxes, and bird feeders to Mt. Begbie Elementary School Grounds attracted 11 “new” species of birds within the first 2 seasons.

Revelstoke has an excellent resource for unwanted wildlife and how to attract the wildlife you want and not the ones you don't. Check out the site at

www.revelstokebearaware.org

Revelstoke Eco-Fact Sheet

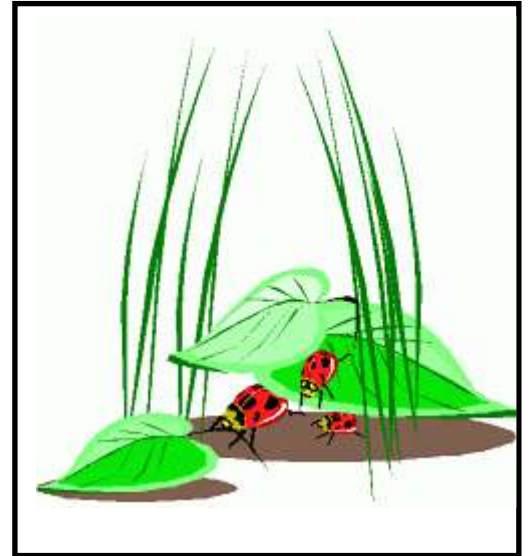
Gardening For Wildlife

Bringing Nature to Your Backyard

It is far easier for Revelstokians to retain their connection to the natural world than it is for people in large urban centres. A wildlife-friendly garden can bring many benefits (see sidebar). With a little work, your backyard can offer the fascination of a robin's nest, the melody of a song sparrow, or the beauty of a butterfly. Gardening for wildlife will provide you and your family with a daily opportunity to learn about nature. Videos and the Discovery Channel are no replacement for hands-on, personal experience with the natural world.

Inviting wildlife into your backyard requires only that you meet their basic needs (see page 2). Some of the creatures you might attract to your backyard are noted below. But, be aware that when you provide habitat to “desirable” species, you may also attract unwelcome guests. To avoid conflict with an animal, exclude it from problem areas by either removing the food, shelter, water or space the animal is looking for or by blocking its entry.

Keep garbage inaccessible, feed only birds, fence your prize vegetables, seal or screen any openings to your home, and eliminate shelter when necessary.



In Revelstoke, be particularly careful to design and manage your space to avoid attracting bears.

While our backyards cannot replicate the wilderness, they can teach small ecological lessons and hone our observation skills, in particular bird-watching, so that we can further enjoy the natural areas around us when we do get a chance to explore them.

Some Wildlife to Expect in Revelstoke's Backyards

~both welcome and unwelcome!~

Birds

Rufous Hummingbirds
Downy Woodpeckers
Northern Flickers
Steller's Jays
American Crows
Tree Swallows
Black-capped Chickadees
Red-breasted Nuthatches
Brown Creepers
American Robins
European Starlings
Yellow Warblers
Western Tanagers
Song Sparrows
Dark-eyed Juncos
Pine Siskins
American Goldfinches
Common Redpolls

Butterflies & Moths

Anise Swallowtails
Pacific Fritillaries
Mourning Cloaks
Painted Ladies
Cabbage Whites
Clouded Sulphurs
White-lined Sphinx Moths
Polyphemus Moths
+ many others

Amphibians & Reptiles

Western Toads
Pacific Tree Frogs
Long-Toed Salamanders
Garter Snakes (common & Western Terrestrial)
Painted turtles

Mammals

Red Squirrels
Snowshoe Hares (or introduced cottontails)
Mice, Voles & Shrews
Little Brown Myotis (Bat)
Bears (Black & Grizzly)
Coyotes
Whitetail Deer
Moose
Cougars

Other Insects

Bees
Wasps
Dragonflies
Ladybugs
Lacewings
Mosquitoes
+ many others

Characteristics of a Wildlife-Friendly Backyard

Regardless of what species you choose to attract, wildlife-friendly backyards all have six things in common.

1. Chemical-Free. No chemical fertilizers or pesticides (herbicides, insecticides, and fungicides) should be used.

2. Healthy Soil. Soil with complex structure and lots of microbial activity will provide small creatures with food and shelter. It will grow healthier plants with less need for chemical “quick-fixes”. Composting, the use of slow-release fertilizers, rotational planting, and the use of nitrogen-fixing plants all will help to build healthy soil.

3. Provide Water. Water will attract wildlife to your garden and can be provided by a pond, stream, bird bath, or even a water bowl. Birds are particularly attracted to moving water, and turbulence will also discourage egg-laying mosquitoes. Add a dripper or mister to your birdbath and combine them with a timer to conserve water. Clean your birdbath once a week to control disease & eliminate mosquitoes.

Provide Food. Of course the best food for wildlife comes from natural sources – native plants that produce foliage, berries, fruit, nuts, seeds, or nectar. Wildlife evolved with native vegetation, and migration and breeding cycles are timed to take place when foods are available to provide the required energy. Supplemental feeding of wildlife is generally not recommended, except for small birds. Despite some controversy, bird-feeding is not considered to be harmful and has become a popular way to enjoy backyard wildlife. However, In Revelstoke it is important to stock your bird feeder only in winter. Clean it before spring so that mice, bears, etc, aren't attracted.

4. Provide Shelter & Space. Shelter provides wildlife with refuge from bad weather, cover from predators and a safe place to rear young. Trees and shrubs, standing dead trees, brush piles, logs, tall grass patches, and rock piles all provide shelter. You can expand the space available to wildlife by thinking in three dimensional terms. Adding diverse layers of vegetation - from tall trees to groundcovers - and features like brush piles, will create more habitat in the same square footage of yard.

Create a Safe Bird-feeding Environment

- **keep your cat indoors** - house cats kill millions of birds each year
- clean your feeders at least once every two weeks and more during heavy use
- rinse in a solution of one part bleach to nine parts water and dry thoroughly
- offer only fresh seed – keep seed dry and discard any that gets wet or moldy
- clean hummingbird feeders every time you refill the nectar (every 3 to 5 days)
- provide multiple feeding stations to disperse birds and prevent crowding
- consider moving your feeders periodically to limit the accumulation of waste
- provide cover in your yard where feeder birds can escape from predators
- place feeders 1.5 to 3.5 meters away from places predators can hide
- avoid window strikes by breaking up the reflections that birds perceive as a pathway through your home; for problem windows consider attaching netting to the outside to buffer impact or by moving your feeders to within 1 meter of the window or further than 9 meters away. Bird shaped silhouettes cut out of black paper can be taped to the window as an easy way to break up a large reflection.

For More Information

- <http://www.northcolumbia.org/> and check out NCES binders at the library.
- <http://www.hctf.ca/nature.htm> visit the Naturescape British Columbia site for online information or to order your own Naturescape Kit or borrow the kit through the Revelstoke library.
- <http://www.wildaboutgardening.org> visit the Canadian Wildlife Federation's website dedicated to gardening for wildlife – lots of information, plus an on-line native plant encyclopedia and source-list for native plant material.
- <http://www.nwf.org/backyardwildlifehabitat> information and tips from the National Wildlife Federation's Backyard Wildlife Habitat Program or order *The National Wildlife Federation's Guide to Gardening for Wildlife* through the library.
- <http://www.birds.cornell.edu/pfw> for excellent information about *Project Feeder Watch*, birds and bird-feeding.
- <http://www.evergreen.ca> Evergreen Canada's *Home Grounds* program has lots of free resources either on-line or available by calling 1-888-426-3138.

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