

Design your home landscape to attract beneficial wildlife

by Terri Sonleitner Law UC Master Gardener

Q. I love to see birds, bees and butterflies at work in my garden. What can I do to attract more beneficial wildlife to my yard? Robert, San Luis Obispo

With spring just around the corner and with severe ongoing drought creating additional pressures on wildlife, now is a great time to assess the utility of your yard. Have you incorporated the four basic needs of wildlife? In order to be attracted to your yard, our wildlife friends need four essential elements year-round: food, water, cover or shelter, and space.

There are many native plants that can be incorporated into your landscape to provide food for wildlife. Think California native or well-adapted plants that provide food in the form of seeds, berries, nuts or fruit. There are many ways to provide water for wildlife, from fountains to birdbaths to ponds. Shelter or cover will include diversity both in the type of plants and in the horizontal and vertical orientation of the vegetation. Providing space for wildlife includes either natural nesting places or installing houses for our bird, butterfly, bee, bat, amphibian, and reptile friends.

The Master Gardeners next free Advice to Grow By workshop will discuss “Designing Landscapes to Attract Wildlife”. The workshop, conducted by University of California certified Master Gardeners, will be held on Saturday, February 15th, from 10:00 AM until Noon in our Garden of the Seven Sisters. The garden is located at 2156 Sierra Way in San Luis Obispo. Learn how to design your home landscape to nurture and sustain our garden wildlife friends and have your wildlife questions answered.

The topics for this workshop will include how to provide food for wildlife each season, supplemental feeders, how to provide water and establish water features, natural nesting places and houses, native plant selection, reducing pesticide use, limiting areas of lawn, removing exotic plants, and the many benefits of enhancing wildlife habitat in your garden. Join us for this informative and timely workshop!