

TOP 10

SUSTAINABLE PLANTS FOR BIRDS
SELECTED BY PHIPPS CONSERVATORY AND BOTANICAL GARDENS



These plants are excellent choices for your home garden landscape. They are non-invasive and resistant to disease and insects, eliminating the need to use pesticides. Once established, they require little to no watering or fertilization.

TREES



Photo © Agnieszka Kwiecień, Nova

American Bladdernut (*Staphylea trifolia*)

Showy, drooping clusters of cream bell-shaped flowers attract bees and butterflies to this 10 – 15-foot understory tree in spring. It thrives in moist, well-drained soil and produces 3-chambered brown, papery pods of edible seed. The brown-gray trunk streaked with white and greenish twigs add winter interest. Native to southwestern PA, this small tree provides bird nesting sites and forage for small mammals.



Photo © Agnieszka Kwiecień, Nova

Flowering Dogwood (*Cornus florida*)

Fragrant pink or white-petaled spring blooms of flowering dogwood attract bees, butterflies, moths and hummingbirds. This native southwestern PA tree can grow to 40 feet. It prefers moist, well-drained soil and partial sun. Horizontal, tiered branches offer bird nest and roost sites. Red berries provide food for songbirds and other wildlife in the fall. Foliage hosts butterfly and moth caterpillars.



Photo © Katrin Schneider

Serviceberry (*Amelanchier* spp. and cultivars)

Lovely, multi-trunked trees, serviceberries offer showy clusters of fragrant white flowers in spring to nourish pollinators. Black-to-purple berries follow, relished by songbirds and other wildlife. Fall foliage varies from yellow to orange to red. Serviceberry grows in full to partial sun in moist, well-drained soil. Several species are native to the eastern US, ranging in mature height from 6 – 25 feet.



Photo © SBJohnny

Sweetbay Magnolia (*Magnolia virginiana*)

Large, fragrant white flowers attract pollinators to this southwestern PA native tree in mid-spring. Slow-growing in moist, organic-rich soil in full to partial sun, sweetbay magnolia can reach 20 – 35 feet tall and provide winter cover for birds. Cones of bright red fruits yield seeds that are relished by many birds and small mammals in the fall. The foliage hosts butterfly and moth caterpillars.

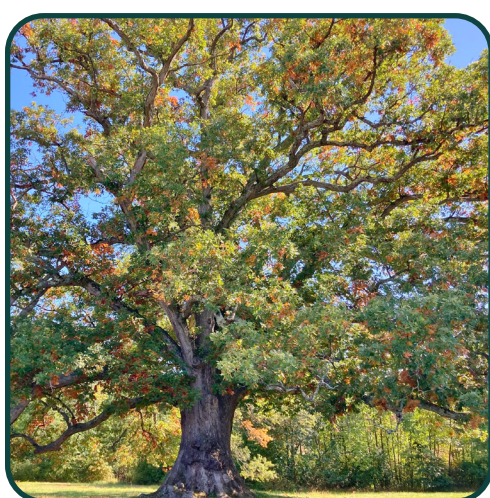


Photo © Marty Alligata

White Oak (*Quercus alba*)

Stately, slow-growing and long-lived, white oaks are habitat superstars. They offer cover for wildlife, bird nest sites and host hundreds of species of caterpillars so food is available for birds during spring and fall migrations and breeding season. Fall acorns provide food for many birds and other wildlife. Native to southwestern PA, they grow 50 – 80 feet in full sun and rich, moist, well-drained soil.

SHRUBS



Photo © Vyacheslav Argenberg

Blueberry (*Vaccinium* spp. and cultivars)

Songbirds, game birds, wildlife and people all relish the fruit of the several species of blueberry shrubs native to southwestern PA. Butterflies and bees are attracted to the pink or white bell-shaped flowers in spring. Foliage feeds hundreds of species of caterpillars as well as deer and rabbits. Blueberry shrubs prefer full to partial sun and acidic soil. Many cultivars are available.



Photo © Bobbin

Buttonbush (*Cephalanthus occidentalis*)

This rounded, 6 – 12-foot shrub grows glossy green foliage on arching, irregular stems. Summer blooms are long-lasting, fragrant and unique: creamy white spherical flower clusters resembling 1-inch globes. It prefers moist to wet areas in full to partial sun. Flowers of this southwestern PA native plant attract bees, butterflies and hummingbirds; nutlets are consumed by many species of birds and waterfowl.



Photo © Paul g. Wiegman

Elderberry (*Sambucus canadensis*)

Dense, fragrant clusters of white flowers and multiple arching stems are features of this 5 – 12-foot southwestern PA native shrub. Spring and summer blooms attract bees, butterflies and moths. Purple-black, berry-like fruit forms in late summer to feed many species of birds and mammals. Elderberry branches offer songbird nest sites and cover for game birds. This plant prefers partial sun and moist soil.



Photo © Katya

Staghorn Sumac (*Rhus typhina*)

Fast-growing to 8 – 25 feet, the staghorn sumac shrub features yellow-green summer flowers swarmed by pollinators, followed by red pyramidal clusters of berries sought by many species of birds in fall and winter. It is native to southwestern PA and grows in full to partial sun along woodland edges, slopes and stream margins. Foliage hosts many caterpillars before turning scarlet, yellow and orange in fall.



Photo © DC Gardens

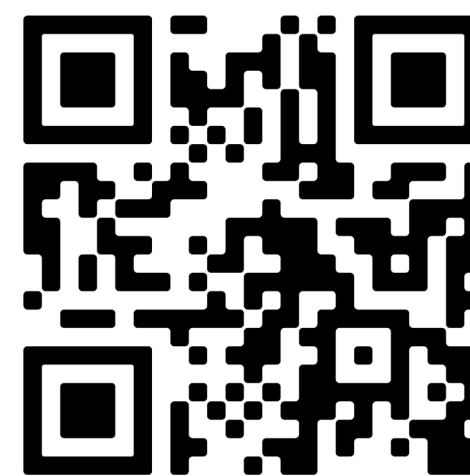
Possumhaw Viburnum (*Viburnum nudum*)

Native to southwestern PA, this 6 – 10-foot shrub provides nest sites for breeding birds as well as summer berries and caterpillars for nourishment of songbirds and other wildlife. Fragrant, flat-topped, white flower clusters attract bees, butterflies and moths in spring; foliage hosts moth and butterfly caterpillars. This shrub prefers full to partial sun and medium to wet soil such as in a rain garden.

For more information, visit Phipps online at phipps.conservatory.org/sustainable

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PERENNIALS



Photo © Fotomem

Anise Hyssop (*Agastache foeniculum*)

Anise hyssop provides beautiful lavender blooms in late summer. This upright, clumping southwestern PA native perennial grows 2 - 4 feet tall and thrives in full sun and a variety of soils. Bees, hummingbirds and butterflies are attracted to the nectar of anise hyssop. Goldfinches and other small songbirds feed on the dried seed heads during winter. The aromatic leaves can be used in herbal teas.



Photo © Tony Hudson

Red Hot Poker (*Kniphofia uvaria*)

This striking member of the lily family sports bright, orange-red flower spikes on tall stems from late spring to early summer. Growing to 2 – 4 feet tall and 1 – 2 feet wide, it forms dense clumps and features grassy, arching, semi-evergreen foliage. It thrives in well-drained, average soil and part to full sun. The nectar attracts bees, butterflies, hummingbirds, orioles, and sometimes even finches.



Cardinal Flower (*Lobelia cardinalis*)

Narrow and upright, this 2-4-foot-tall southwestern PA native perennial features scarlet flower spikes in mid-late summer. Cardinal flowers thrive in moist, rich soil and are a colorful complement to rain and pollinator gardens. Hummingbirds and butterflies are attracted to the nectar. Finches and other birds enjoy eating the small seeds. It is resistant to deer and rabbits.



Photo © Joe Schneid

Scarlet Beebalm (*Monarda didyma*)

Showy, bright red clusters of tubular flowers attract bees, butterflies and hummingbirds to sip nectar from this southwestern PA native plant. Scarlet bee balm prefers rich, moist, well-drained soil in full sun, where it will grow 2 – 4 feet tall and provide color and contrast in gardens and borders. It is a larval host for several moth species, which may in turn end up as food for birds!



Coneflowers (*Echinacea* spp. and cultivars)

Native to eastern and central North America, big, bold, long-lasting coneflowers add oomph to any garden. Bees, butterflies and hummingbirds are attracted to the flowering clump from midsummer to early autumn. Spent blooms make attractive seed heads, enjoyed in winter by goldfinches and other seed-eating songbirds. Coneflowers prefer full sun and well-drained soil. Cultivars of varying sizes and colors are available.



Photo © Zeynel Cebeci

Trumpet Honeysuckle (*Lonicera sempervirens*)

This vigorous, deciduous vine, native to southwestern PA, grows to 15 feet on an arbor, fence or as groundcover. Tubular red flowers bloom in spring to attract bees, butterflies and hummingbirds. Red berries follow and attract finches, quail, robins and thrushes. Trumpet honeysuckle prefers well-drained, average soil and full sun. It is a host plant for giant leopard and hummingbird clearwing moths.



Photo © Cephas

Cup Plant (*Silphium perfoliatum*)

Cup plants, native to southwestern PA, are named for the basin formed where leaves join the stem. Birds and insects may sip water from the “cup.” Large yellow summer blooms attract bees, butterflies and hummingbirds to these 9-foot-tall plants. Grown in moist, well-drained soil, they spread easily through abundant rhizomatous roots to form a lovely summer garden screen. Seed heads nourish over-wintering finches.



Photo © Cephas

Wild Bergamot (*Monarda fistulosa*)

During summer, brilliant clusters of aromatic lavender-to-pink flowers of this southwestern PA native perennial plant are frequently visited by bees, butterflies, moths and hummingbirds. Spent flowers provide seeds for birds. Wild bergamot grows to 2 – 4 feet in full sun and thrives in well-drained average soil. Grey-green leaves provide contrast in the garden and are used to make a fragrant tea. It is resistant to rabbits and deer.



Photo © David J. Scang

Northern Sea Oats (*Chasmanthium latifolium*)

A clumping, perennial grass, northern sea oats is native to southwestern PA. It features soft, drooping seed spikes from arching stems. Shaded gardens and borders are enhanced by the textures and seasonal color contrasts provided by this plant. Stems and leaves are utilized as bird nesting materials; seeds are a food source for small mammals and birds. Northern sea oats host skipper butterflies.



Photo © Aika, Thomas & Juliette+Isaac

Wild Sunflower (*Helianthus* spp.)

Several species of wild sunflower native to southwestern PA have common characteristics beneficial to local wildlife. During the summer, the flowers attract bees, butterflies and moths. Its foliage feeds many species of moth and butterfly caterpillars and provides cover and habitat for birds. The seeds are a nutritious food source for many birds, including birds migrating through southwestern PA in the fall.

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