

Backyard Habitats: Mammals and Birds

The following information has been compiled for the benefit of a homeowner to be used only on your own property.

Deterring Mammals

Squirrels

- Use safflower seeds instead of sunflower seeds, since they don't like the taste. Thinner shell that's easier for birds to crack and doesn't wind up in huge piles under the feeder
- Consider squirrel proof feeders that are weight sensitive
- Keep birdfeeders away from anything a squirrel can jump from, at least 10 feet away
- A stove pipe with a hose clamp as a baffle prevents them from climbing up the pole with a feeder
- Can mix up your own cayenne pepper spray for buds and plant stems*

Groundhogs

- Don't like onions and garlic. Plant these near sheds to deter digging.
- Hot pepper deterrent squirrel spray for problem areas

Moles/voles

- use physical obstacles in tunnel or noises from a radio on the ground (sensitive to sound waves)

Deer

- Fences for large areas, must be at least 8 ft tall. Bottom should be secured to the ground.
- Critterfence/polyfence strung between trees
- Metal cages around trees and shrubs
- Deer-off spray on plant stems and leaves, but must be reapplied after rain. Do not spray on flowers.
- Motion activated sprinklers

*Search online for credible websites that offer suggestions of natural methods of deterring mammals, including recipes for spray deterrents.

Bird Feeders

- Avoid hanging from trees
- Avoid seed with mostly millet
- Shrubs nearby for shelter
- Dome over feeders deters unwanted birds (starlings)
- One platform for birds with larger beaks
- Suet for woodpeckers, wrens, and other insect eaters
- Mealworms for bluebirds, robins, and young
- Kitty litter on bottom of 1" tube feeders keeps seed dry and rot-free
- Large pan or upside down baffle to catch falling seed cases

Bird bath tips

- Shallow basin
- Slight slope
- Concrete is hard to clean and cracks in winter
- 2-3 feet high
- 2 inches deep max water depth
- Shade near trees or shrubs if possible
- Keep clean and full
- Optional: Dripping water (from dripper or sprayer), heating element for ice in winter

Bird Houses

- Reinforced metal around entrance holes to deter squirrels
- Extended roof, Untreated wood
- No perches on the outside
- Clean out after winter is over, use cedar chips as base
- Look up the height and entrance hole size for the species you want to attract

Birds that nest in boxes in our area: Chickadees, titmice, nuthatches, wrens, bluebirds, tree swallows, purple martins, woodpeckers, kestrels, wood ducks, Screech owls, great crested flycatchers