


Welcoming Wildlife

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The following presentation is part of the University of Georgia Extension service Georgia Green Landscapes program funded by the Center for Urban Agriculture. These guidance series will help Georgia residents create certified sustainable Georgia Landscapes, protecting our natural resources for future generations.

Why Do I Want Wildlife?



- A living classroom for children and adults
- Important to the balance of the ecosystem
- They were here first
- Down right entertaining

What Does Wildlife Need?



- Food
- Water
- Shelter
- Space
- *Safety from harmful human intervention

Food



- Planting native plants as food sources is the best practice! (fruits, seed, forage, nectar, pollen)
- Let insects live – base of the food chain
- No bread (ducks – wild or domestic)
- Don't feed any wildlife other than birds
- Never hand feed
- Clean feeders regularly
- Hummingbird feeders should be changed and sanitized daily in South Georgia to prevent hummingbird kills

Water



- Bird baths
- Puddles
- Old plate or shallow dish
- Add rocks or marbles to enable insect use
- Plants with cupped leaves
- Rocks or pavers with depressions



Shelter



- Leaf piles/mulch
- Decaying logs
- Stick or log piles
- Rock piles
- Snags
- Diversity of vegetation
- Vertical structure
- Bird houses/gourds
- Bat houses

Space



- Wildlife is naturally afraid of humans
- Close or forced encounters can trigger stress in the animal, defensive behavior, injury for both parties, or capture myopathy (death of a wild animal due to handling -- caused by stress and shock).

What Not to Do/Use



- Sticky traps
- Netting
- Poison
- Moth balls

What Not to Do/Use: Sticky Traps



- Kills birds, bats, lizards, snakes – literally anything that crosses it
- Animals rip skin off in an effort to escape
- Animals will chew through legs and other body parts trying to escape
- Slowly starve or bleed to death in contorted positions

What Not to Do/Use: Netting



- Netting traps and severs snakes as well as other wildlife
- This can happen both in the garden and in trees
- Cruel, messy, and destructive

What Not to Do/Use: Poison



- Cruel, slow, and inhumane way for anything to die
- Cats, owls, hawks, eagles, foxes, and other predatory animals die from eating prey that has ingested poison
- Animal can eat poison and get into walls, air ducts, and other hard to find places and die (and decay)
- Non-target animals such as pets can ingest poison and die

What Not to Do/Use: Moth Balls



- Moth balls are highly toxic to all organisms (including you)
- They are a pesticide and any use that is not on the label is against the law
- Using them outside is illegal and extremely dangerous
- Outside use will kill many creatures
- There are no effective repellants for snakes or any other wildlife

What Might I See?



- Birds (songbirds, hawks, owl, osprey, ibis, etc.)
- Turkey
- Armadillos
- Raccoons
- Deer
- Snakes
- Lizards
- Turtles
- Rabbits
- Frogs and toads
- Pollinators
- Bats
- Squirrels
- Your understanding of the natural world grow!

Certification Checklist Items:

- Provide a food source with native plants: fruits, seed, forage, nectar, and pollen.
- Do not feed wildlife, other than birds, and do not feed bread to waterfowl. Your native plant landscape will suffice.
- Clean and sanitize bird seed feeders regularly and change and sanitize your hummingbird feeders daily in South Georgia, and multiple times per week in North Georgia.
- Let insects live. They are part of the ecosystem too!
- Provide water with bird baths, puddles, a shallow dish (with rocks or marbles for insects), plants with cupped leaves, or rocks with depressions.
- Provide shelter with leaf piles/mulch, decaying logs, stick or log piles, rock piles, snags, diverse vegetation, vertical structure, bird houses, and bat houses.
- Provide space for wildlife. Dedicate a zone of your landscape as off limits to humans and minimize your passage.
- Keep your distance. Wildlife do not like being harrassed!
- Do not use sticky traps, netting, poison, or moth balls. Only passively manage wildlife activity through landscape design.

Questions?

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