



[socalhort.org](http://socalhort.org)

# Southern California Horticultural Society

**AUGUST 2011**

**SHARING SECRETS**

*Compiled by Debra Bushweit Galliani*

**“How have you made your yard more bird friendly?”**

There are some plants which I do not deadhead. Goldfinches love the seeds of tidy tips, *Verbena bonariensis* and lettuce. (Letting lettuce go to seed is my best vegetable gardening tip. Not only do you feed the birds, but you get a free lettuce crop next year.) Also, I adore my cat, but do not let him go outside. I wish my neighbors would do the same with theirs.

- P. H.

The bird feeder above my vegetable garden contains cracked corn which does not germinate or cause weeds below. Many LBBs (little brown birds) flock to it and the quail come for the windfall.

- J. S.

Welcoming birds is great for lazy gardeners like me ... I planted wildflowers that reseed every year. I just let them run their course, dry up and go to seed – instant bird feeders!! When they are totally spent, I crush them down into a kind of instant mulch/nesting materials. No mess, no fuss!

- S. M.

I don't prune my potato vine/tree because the birds like to play in there.

- S. H.

Probably the best thing to attract birds is to have moving water that makes noise. We have two bird baths with drippers and a small fountain in a small pond. Provides water for drinking and bathing.

We have many tubular nectar flowers (lots of salvias), tecomaria (large and small) for nectar and shelter. Our neighbors have a tall bottlebrush that projects over our fence and attracts orioles, hummers and warblers.

We have an oak tree for shelter, acorns and bugs, an elderberry for fruit and shelter, have some baby birch trees that someday will provide bugs for insect-eating birds. We have a mulberry tree (fruit, although largely ignored the last two years) and a loquat (except ours won't fruit but we have had them in the past with good bird activity).

We have a *Eucalyptus sideroxylon* for winter flowers that provide nectar. We used to have a toyon – great for fall berries, but ours did not survive the replacement of our fence.

A nearby neighbor had two good-sized palm trees – the hooded orioles nested in them, but they cut them down last spring (thank goodness BEFORE migration!).

We have many hummingbird feeders and a couple of oriole feeders (nectar plus grape jelly and an orange). We have several seed feeders of different designs, including flat trays, and on one of the trays have an "exclusion cage" to keep the larger birds out and give the smaller birds a little chance.

We put out several types of seed to placate even the most particular avian palate. We have five nyjer seed feeders for the goldfinches and friends. We buy our seed in bulk.

In winter and spring we usually have mealworms available – especially popular in the spring for birds to feed their chicks. And we make our own no-drip suet in the winter – a high-energy food source.

So we provide a smorgasbord of food, and shelter and water. What more could a bird want?

- A. & E. B.

### **Anonymous Contributors**

We went from virtually no plants to a nice garden – it drew birds, bees and lizards within one season!

Leave vegetables to go to seed. The birds love spinach, kale and lettuce seeds.

We put in a bird seed feeder, nesting basket, pond and bird saucer.

Lots of large shrubs and trees for habitat, including an old pereskia on a chain link fence.

Variety of flowers which don't get deadheaded. Chicory is great for lesser goldfinches and other seed eaters.