



What's Growing On?

BASTROP COUNTY MASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATION

January 2019



Rufous Hummingbird on red-flowering currant, a plant native to the Northwest. Photo: iStock

This Spring, Help Birds by Growing Native Plants

By **Mark Jarrot**,

<https://www.audubon.org/magazine/spring-2017/this-spring-help-birds-growing-native-plants>

Looking to make a positive contribution to the world? Audubon has a handy new tool to help.

Little darlings, it's been a long, cold, lonely winter. OK, not all that cold, or for that matter long, at least here in New York, where I type these words on a balmy 56°F February afternoon. But as winters go, this one has been notably, ah, dark. And as we trudge dolefully into spring, I suspect that I am not alone in my desire to seize upon something—anything—that I can do to bring color and light to my world. Well, take heart, bird-loving citizens! Thanks to Audubon, I have found that thing: I am going to plant a

garden. And I exhort you to do the same.

Not just any garden, mind you. A bird-friendly one, chockablock with plants native to my area and therefore teeming with insects upon which my bird neighbors have grown to rely for their sustenance. Here's a particularly stark contrast that demonstrates the point: A native oak tree supports at least 557 different varieties of butterflies and moths.

Table of Contents

This Spring, Help Birds by	
Growing Native Plants	1
Save the Dates	2
Spring Plant Sale	2
Lunch and Learns	2
2019 Master Gardener Classes...	3
HEB Saturday Classes	3
Beautiful and Edible	
Winter Herbs	3
Bastrop to be A Bird City?	4
Gardening Tips for January	4

A non-native ginkgo? Five. For all the benefit that ginkgo provides birds, you might as well just decorate your yard with plastic flamingos.

Now, I'm basically a neophyte gardener. And the garden I create will be entirely confined within containers arrayed around an 80-square-foot urban balcony. But those aren't objections; they're

precisely the point! Every patch of native greenery, however small, is a tangible contribution of healthy habitat for birds in need. And as for my inexperience and decidedly non-emerald thumb, that's where Audubon comes in. Just in time for the spring-planting season, we've launched our [Plants for Birds Tool](https://www.audubon.org/native-plants) (<https://www.audubon.org/native-plants>) that makes it easy to identify and acquire the right plants for your location and the birds you love. Just plug in your zip code, and out pops a comprehensive list of local natives, with photos, descriptions of which birds they attract, and a handy roster of nearby (or online) nurseries that stock them. Still need help overcoming your plant-poisoning ways? You'll get connected to one or more of the 110-plus Audubon centers and chapters that are pitching in with educational programs, native-plant sales, demonstration gardens, and other resources. (You can also find ideas and advice on the Audubon website.

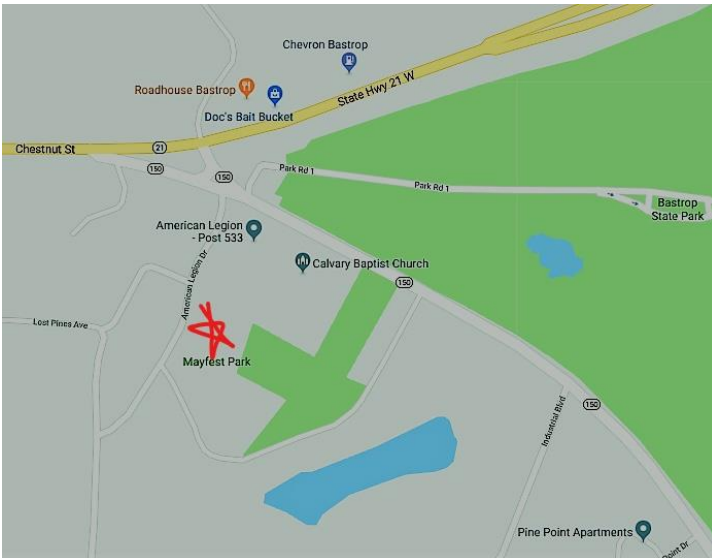
The Audubon Plants for Birds database is the only tool of its kind, which probably accounts for the fact that, since we quietly released a beta version last September, more than 90,000 people have already visited the site. Our goal is to inspire and enable the cultivation of a million native plants, including my own tiny but still significant contribution. Yours, too, I hope.



Photo of the 2018 Plant Sale.

Spring Plant Sale

BCMGA will have its spring Plant Sale on **March 9** at the Bastrop County Show barn at Mayfest Park off HWY 21 and 150 across from Bastrop State Park. We will be focusing on vegetables, Texas superstars, and native and adapted pollinator plants. Come on by and see what we have! Hours: 9 am until 3 pm



Map to Mayfest Park

Save the Dates!

Feb 2, 9, 16, 23:	HEB Classes
Feb 4:	Lunch and Learn
Feb 19:	BCMGA meeting
March 9:	Spring Plant Sale
Aug 3:	Master Gardener Class begins

Lunch and Learns are scheduled monthly through June. The Feb 4th speaker will be Jodi from Bastrop Community Gardens. Grab a sandwich and come. Locations vary. It's free. Check the Bastrop Master Gardeners Facebook page for more dates and information.

<https://www.facebook.com/BastropCountyMasterGardeners/>

January 14 Lunch and Learn

The 2019 Lunch and Learn program got off to a good start with the Container Gardening and More presentation by Jody Young of Bloomers Garden Center in Elgin. Jody brought several containers full of beautiful plants to demonstrate. Not only were they pretty, but they were edible as well - like a salad in a pot. In one container there was spinach, chives, leaf lettuce, calendula and pansies as well as some filler annuals. She said that this time of year is good for container veggies since many are quite cold hardy. She likes to keep several containers near the kitchen so she can just step out and snip some salad.

Jody said that there are 3 things to keep in mind to create a beautiful container planting. You need a "thriller", some "filler" and a "spiller". The "thriller" is an eye-catching, dramatic centerpiece such as a taller flowering plant or dramatic leaf plant. The "spiller" is a low-growing, creeping or spill-over type plant such as sweet alyssum. Then use other medium height plants you love to "fill-in" the rest of the container.

She also recommended seeds by Renee's Garden, carried by Bloomers, for container gardening. These are vegetable varieties selected for their smaller size and adaptation to containers. There's a Garden Babies Butterhead lettuce (5-6" rosettes) that looks tasty and fun to try!



Sweet Alyssum *Lobularia maritima*

Photo from: <https://www.bhg.com/gardening/plant-dictionary/annual/sweet-alyssum/>

2019 Master Gardener Class has been re-scheduled to August 3 – November 2, 2019. Classes will be every Saturday from 9-1 at Bluebonnet Electric Headquarters, 155 Electric Ave., Bastrop TX on Hwy 21 East. Watch for additional information and registration information.

February Saturday Classes at HEB in Bastrop
February 2, 9, 16, 23. Check out our Facebook page for more information and class descriptions.
<https://www.facebook.com/BastropCountyMasterGardeners/>



Master Gardener teaching 2018 HEB Class

Winter Gardens: Stop by 901 Pecan in Bastrop and check out the **Demonstration Gardens**. The Vegetable garden is still growing, and you are welcome to try some! Spicy mustard greens are my favorite! The Superstar beds were cleaned up for the winter and mulch added.



Cabbage from the BCMGA garden

11 pounds of cabbages and 5 pounds of broccoli from the BCMGA Community Garden in downtown Bastrop were given to the Bastrop County Emergency Food Pantry in January.

Beautiful and Edible Winter Herbs



Pansies *Viola*

Likes cool weather and will bloom all winter. I was first introduced to this edible flower in a salad, but it has many other edibles uses as well as being a beautiful winter flower in your garden.



Calendula *Calendula officinalis*

Used traditionally as culinary and medicinal herb. The petals are edible and can be used fresh in salads or dried and used to color cheese or as a replacement for [saffron](#). Calendula ointments are used to treat minor cuts, burns, and skin irritation.



Calling on Waggoneers!

Do you have a pull-wagon we could use for our March 9 Spring Plant Sale? It would be very helpful for customers to be able to load a wagon while they shop. This will expedite checkout and loading plants into their vehicle, too. Put your name on it so that we can return it to you after the sale!



Bastrop to be A Bird City?

BCMGA was invited to participate in the application for Bastrop to be a designated Bird City last year.

What? What? What???

Audubon Texas and Texas Parks & Wildlife Department have announced the launch of a new program that improves native bird habitat and engages residents and elected leaders with habitat management, bird recreation, and bird monitoring. The new "Bird City Texas Program" sets a new standard for communities to manage wildlife habitat, prevent injuries to birds, and engage and educate their citizens.

Here is a link to the Texas Parks & Wildlife page about the Bird City Program:

<https://tpwd.texas.gov/wildlife/birding/bird-city-texas/>

Gardening Tips for January:

- Start tomato, pepper and eggplant seedlings indoor
- Download the Central Texas vegetable planting guide [here](#)
- Have a [soil test](#).
- Fertilize asparagus, daylilies, iris, pansies and roses
- Water everything well before a freeze, but do not overwater
- Move and transplant plants to desired location
- Divide and transplant perennial herbs and summer and fall bloomers
- Prepare soil—test, loosen soil, add compost and/or fertilizer
- Check the vegetable planting guide and create garden plan
- Clean, repair and replace garden tools
- Prune ornamental trees and shrubs
- Prune oaks before February to prevent the spread of [oak wilt](#), do not prune between February and June!



Purple Finch

"Come Grow With Us"