

Weekly Column for week of 01-25-10
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Planning for more Wildlife in Your Yard

You may be wondering how you can bring more wildlife to your yard this upcoming spring. Perhaps more butterflies or hummingbirds would be nice. And there are many bird species as well as squirrels and chipmunks to name a few. If you would like to increase your chances of having more wildlife in your backyard, there are some steps you can take to achieve this goal.

For wildlife to feel “invited” to your yard, they need to have a reliable food source, enough water, and the right cover or shelter. Even if you have to add to the landscape to supply these basic needs, it should look as natural as possible. Of course, if you live in an area that is already near a wetland or wooded area, you will have to exert less effort to attract and see wildlife. However, a backyard in a more urban setting can still attract more wildlife with careful planning.

Attracting insects is a great way to get more wildlife to visit your yard because insects are a food source for wildlife. Insects enjoy weedy patches of broadleaf plants and grasses. As you may imagine, this would be easy to create. Just till a small area in the spring and leave it to grow for 3-5 years. You may be thinking that this sounds like the most unsightly thing you could possibly do to your yard. Some things you can do to soften the look would be to mow a border around it, pave a path through or around it, or plant some nice flowers around it. Be sure to check local codes and ordinances to make sure you are allowed to do this type of cultivation in your yard.

Planting flowering trees and shrubs is another way to attract more insects if you do not wish to use the method previously mentioned. Seeds, fruits, nuts, and nectar are very appealing to different types of wildlife. Plenty of green vegetation will also attract animals such as rabbits and deer.

Attracting more beautiful wildlife to your yard can be an amazing experience. For more information on how this can be done, you can visit the web at <http://www.extension.purdue.edu/extmedia/FNR/FNR-247-W.pdf>. You can also contact your Elkhart County Extension office for more information.

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