

## Make your garden the envy of the neighborhood

Written by StatePoint

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Gardens are a source of beauty. They are also a sanctuary from the hustle and bustle of daily life. Something as simple as hearing songbirds in the morning can help you start your day on the right note.

While your neighbors spend the season trying to grow a uniform lawn, why not elicit their envy by creating your very own Garden of Eden? A little pruning and some wildlife-friendly additions will make your garden stand out for neighbors as well as native birds and butterflies.

Here's how you can get started:

- \* First, tidy up the yard. This may require re-seeding parts of your lawn that are known problem spots. If you plan to aerate your grass, don't forget to aerate the soil around your flowers and shrubbery as well. Water and air circulation helps prevent the spread of fungus while promoting healthy microorganisms that keep plant life vibrant.
- \* Prune dead branches and cut back perennials. Fruit trees, in particular, thrive with pruning and often produce more blossoms as a result. Blossoms attract hummingbirds, butterflies, and honey bees. If you find an old nest, it is best to leave it. Many bird species will reuse it.
- \* Whenever possible, plant native greenery which is safer for wildlife than exotic imports and helps slow the spread of invasive plant species. Native choices can be vibrant choices. Choose colors that compliment your home and are pleasing to the eye.
- \* Windows represent a significant collision hazard for birds in flight. You can protect visiting songbirds with advanced window decals such as those made by WindowAlert. These decals have the delicate appearance of frosted glass, but glow like a stoplight for birds with their unique ability to see ultraviolet light. You can order them online at [www.windowalert.com](http://www.windowalert.com).
- \* Remember to periodically clean feeders, birdbaths, and nesting boxes with organic soap and distilled water to prevent the spread of disease. Hummingbird feeders should be cleaned weekly and kept in the shade so the nectar does not ferment.
- \* If you want to attract butterflies and bees, install some special nectar feeders and butterfly homes, which will bring their acrobatic dance to your backyard. Mason bees, which are easily

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attracted with ready-made hive kits, are a gentle and docile addition as well.

"Wildlife can beautify your garden" says Spencer Schock, founder of WindowAlert. "But birds and other wildlife don't appear by chance. They seek habitats that provide them with food, shelter, and safety."

\* Don't be afraid to add a personal touch. A gentle wind chime or brilliant sun catcher can add a special dimension to any garden without frightening wildlife.

By following these tips, your garden is likely to be envied by neighbors -- and loved by wildlife.