



## Backyard Wildlife

Tennessee has tremendous wildlife diversity with approximately 1500 species of animals. Providing food, water, space and shelter can increase the number and variety of species that live in your yard. In order to get started with attracting wildlife, you need to know the basic necessities.

**Cover:** Plants provide wildlife with a place to rest and eat. They also serve as protection from the weather and predators. Your landscape should include an assortment of trees, shrubs, perennials and grasses. In order to provide year round refuge, include evergreen trees and shrubs in your landscape.

**Food:** As you well know, wildlife feed on plants or other animals. Provide wildlife with a year round food source by having a variety of plants in your garden as the plants will have varying times of flowering, fruit, and seed. Also placing different types of feeders in your landscape will help support wildlife.

**Water:** If you can't provide anything else for wildlife, you can at least provide water. Fresh water is important for wildlife. Water is used for bathing, egg laying and some wildlife live partially or entirely in water. Simply placing a birdbath or a large saucer filled with fresh water can supply the needs of a variety of wildlife. Rain gardens can be used to support the habitat of various wildlife.

**Nesting:** Plants that can provide cover for wildlife can also be used as locations where they can raise their young. Creating a wildlife habitat will allow you view the entire life cycle of species. Just think, you may be able to see the evolution of a tadpole to a frog or a caterpillar to a butterfly. Think about building a birdhouse that will provide a place for the young to raise their babies in your landscape.

Start your own backyard wildlife habitat by determining what you would like to attract to your garden. Learn about the wildlife habitat that you have in your area. Read materials that talk about attracting wildlife to your garden. Doing these things will turn your garden into a wildlife playground! Happy gardening!



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