ForeWord Reviews

Gardening for the Birds
Thomas G. Barnes
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Broad expanses of immaculately maintained lawns, perfectly trimmed yews and patterned beds of annuals may be pleasing to many homeowners but not as pleasing to wildlife. The urbanization of the landscape has not been good for all creatures. The growth of gardening as the major leisure activity of many has generated a trend back to nature. Thomas G. Barnes' Gardening for the Birds is a Japanese lantern, lighting the path toward understanding the requirements for backyard guests. Although this work is primarily targeted for Kentucky gardeners, the guidelines have application in most plant hardiness zones.

One should not be distracted by the title, for birds are only part of the grand design for creating a habitat that welcomes all of nature. Understanding the basic habitat requirements for wildlife can send you on a life-long journey of learning, and the personal satisfaction one can attain by sharing one's yard with all of nature is unlimited. The first visit with a towhee under the viburnums can become a long remembered event. Limiting the amount of open spaces by planting native trees and shrubs will not only attract new visitors to your backyard, but also can provide the additional benefits of reducing maintenance, fertilizer and water requirements. In a clear, easy to follow style, the author answers most of the questions for the amateur gardener who wishes to make the transition from the tame to the intrigue of a wildlife sanctuary. Returning your landscape to a more natural state will require a great amount of effort and time. Before turning over the first spadefull of sod, this book should be required reading.

There are appendices for native perennial plants, trees and shrubs. Also a directory of nurseries and catalog sources to locate that special plant. There is an excellent appendix devoted to the butterflies most likely to be seen in Kentucky and to their host plants. Photographs of our feathered friends are spread throughout the text. This book should provide a good basic understanding to natural gardening.

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