



SPRING & SUMMER BACKYARD BIODIVERSITY

HOW TO HELP WILDLIFE IN YOUR YARD

With a little bit of education and a lot of heart, we can achieve peaceful co-existence with wildlife throughout the urban forest, starting with our own backyards! Both LEAF and TWC have extensive information on our websites, but here are some quick tips to keep wildlife safe and your gardens healthy.

PLANT A GARDEN FOR WILDLIFE

A mix of native flowers, shrubs, and trees will provide food and shelter for many wild species, such as bees, butterflies and songbirds.

Design your garden so that there is a continuous succession of nectar- and pollen- producing plants flowering from spring through fall. Try to include species that provide berries and seeds which act as a natural food source for our wild neighbours.

Consider planting a native species garden, which you can curate to attract specific native species and design to fit your backyard. These gardens can brighten up your space while creating important habitats and food sources for birds and pollinators.



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CREATE A MORE WELCOMING LANDSCAPE

Lose the manicured lawn, and instead plant a “yard”en! Rabbit nests are commonly found in yards. Only a shallow depression in the ground covered in fur, grass, and leaves protects them.

Consider transitioning from a grassy lawn to diverse low-lying native plants and colourful flowers. Besides promoting plant and animal diversity, you’ll be giving rabbits a safe place to rest! If you must mow the lawn, always check for nests prior to cutting the grass, as they are very hard to see.



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ENSURE THE SAFETY OF WILDLIFE

Healthy gardens and trees will attract many species of wildlife, all of which will be in danger if you let your cat wander free outdoors. Consider creating an outdoor cat enclosure or walking them on a leash so they can also enjoy the backyard biodiversity you've created!

BREAK UP REFLECTIVE SURFACES

While windows offer us the opportunity to appreciate nature outside our doorstep, they are also a major threat to songbirds – millions die from window strikes every year. Breaking up external reflective surfaces with visual markers or bird screen, can save lives.



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PROVIDE A HABITAT THAT MAKES EVERYONE HAPPY

Why not plant a tree? Besides the many environmental and aesthetic benefits a tree provides, many wild species can use a tree for shelter, and hopefully spare your attic.

If you find a wild family in your house, patience often works best. Babies will disperse when old enough, after which time you can repair the entry point. If a wild family must move, humane harassment techniques should be used to encourage them to leave to avoid orphaning any babies. Visit the TWC website to learn how!



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HELP PROVIDE CLEAN WATER TO WILDLIFE

Providing a container of fresh water can help wildlife. Vegetation and its accompanying soil also filter pollutants from rainwater, providing wildlife with cleaner groundwater to drink! This is especially important in urban areas where a large portion of the ground surface is covered by impermeable, man-made materials. Even though plants can be great for filtering water, make sure you aren't using pesticides, as chemicals can remain in the water and be toxic to wildlife.



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If you find a sick, injured or orphaned wild animal, contact our Wildlife Emergency Hotline: 416-631-0662

For more information, visit www.torontowildlifecentre.com

LEAF

LEAF offers subsidized planting programs that make it easy to help wildlife in your yard. To learn more about the trees, shrubs and garden kits offered,

Visit www.yourleaf.org or call 1-888-453-6504

