

Maintain Your Bird-Friendly Garden

in Spring ...

1. When in doubt, wait to pull it out.

new growth could be a native plant

2. Cut old dried stems.

use dried stems, twigs, and leaves as mulch

3. Check container's soil moisture.

if the soil feels dry, then it's time to water



American goldfinch.
Photo: Deb Pluma / Audubon

CONTAINER GARDEN

- Use fresh potting soil and a clean container for new plants.
- Use a pot that is deeper than the plant's rooting depth.
- Leave a small space between the top of the soil and the rim of the pot, up to 2" for large containers.
- Use a pot with a drainage hole and saucer to catch excess.
- On the roof, consider setting up a wind-break, such as a lattice, that won't cast shade.

IN-GROUND

- Prune summer and fall-blooming plants as needed.
- When the ground has thawed, plant trees, shrubs, and perennials.
- Re-plant plants that have "heaved" out of the ground.
- Mulch with leaf litter, twigs, and dead perennial stems.
- Apply compost, compost tea, or other slow-release organic fertilizers as needed.



Northern cardinal.
Photo: Anthony Louviere / Audubon

... and Summer

1. Get to know plant names.

keep a running list of plants in your garden

2. Prevent weeds from outcompeting natives.

clip them at the crown to avoid disturbing the soil

3. Install a rain barrel or drip irrigation!

CONTAINER GARDEN

- Move pots to shade when it's hot.
- Small containers and clay pots dry out faster.
- Avoid standing water to prevent mosquito outbreaks. Use a battery- or solar-powered water wiggler in bird baths.
- Regularly clean hummingbird and seed feeders, as well as bird baths, to prevent the spread of disease.

IN-GROUND

- Give fall-blooming perennials a "haircut" for more compact growth.
- If a plant wilts in the daytime but recovers in the evening, watering is not necessary.
- Apply compost, compost tea, or other slow-release organic fertilizers as needed.



Audubon

Patterson Park
Audubon Center

patterson.audubon.org

Maintain Your Bird-Friendly Garden

in Fall ...

1. Leave the leaves!

ground-foraging birds need them and they're nature's perfect mulch

2. Leave flower heads intact.

they contain seeds (bird food) and leftovers will re-seed

3. Label your perennials.

use waterproof stakes so you know what's what come spring

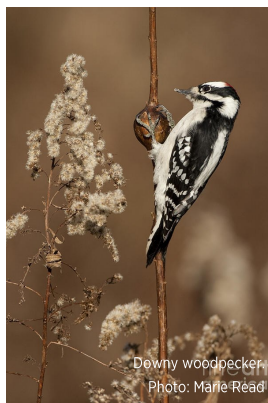


CONTAINER GARDEN

- Water between rains, only when the soil feels dry.
- Take stock of what's missing. Evergreens? Berries? Fall color? And add them to your spring shopping list.
- Or better yet, plant them now! Fall is the best time to plant trees, shrubs, and spring bloomers.

IN-GROUND

- Plant now for more robust blooms in spring!
- Water new shrubs and trees through the first year.
- If you plan to replace more turf in spring, mow the area to the ground now and cover with a thick layer of mulch. In spring, plant densely!
- Mulch with leaf litter, twigs, and dead perennial stems.



... and Winter

1. No need to overwater.

little to no water is needed in winter

2. Leave dried herbaceous stems standing.

they will harbor overwintering beneficial insects that will emerge in spring

CONTAINER GARDEN

- Use containers that won't crack—metal, thick plastic, stone, concrete, or wood. Do not leave clay and ceramic outside.
- Cluster pots together on the north or east side of the home.
- For added insulation, pile leaves or snow between pots.
- If possible, wrap pots with heavy plastic, bubble wrap, fabric, burlap, old blankets, or insert pot into a larger pot.
- Don't bring plants inside. They're native and need to be outside year round!

IN-GROUND

- Mulch with leaves, branches from Christmas trees, wood-chips, or mulch to prevent heaving when ground freezes.
- Prune woody shrubs and trees as needed.
- Avoid using salt as a de-icing agent. Consider environmentally-friendly alternatives—Calcium Magnesium Acetate, Ice Ban, gravel or sand.
- Remove heavy snow from branches, but leave it on the ground around plants.



Audubon

Patterson Park
Audubon Center

patterson.audubon.org