



Providing Water for Birds

Provide water at varying heights to attract the greatest variety of birds. Some birds prefer ground level ponds and puddles. Most birds will look for water on the ground as that is where nature normally provides it.

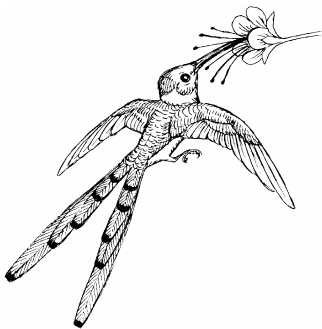
- Fill plant saucers with water and place around your yard.
- Purchase pre-formed shallow bird bath ponds to sit on the ground, providing a small pond that is a few inches deep.
- Make a slight indentation in your garden and set a hose in it. Let the water flow into the indentation *very* slowly, making an artificial rain puddle.

Remember to provide shallow water. Songbirds can drown in a pond or deep bird bath. Water should be only a few inches at its deepest. If your birdbath is deeper, either put pebbles or gravel in the bottom or just do not fill the bath.

The sound of water will lure many birds to your backyard. Bubbling, dripping, and splashing water will all attract birds. You can purchase recirculating fountains that take the water within a birdbath and spray it up into the air, drippers that let a drop of water fall every few seconds, and misters that provide an extremely fine mist that birds and butterflies especially enjoy.

Make your birdbath a bit more alluring to birds. Bird baths are most used when they are ground level, but that puts the birds at a greater risk if there are neighborhood cats prowling around. Plus pedestal bird baths are certainly pretty and wonderful accents for your backyard. Here are some tips:

- Keep the water shallow in your bird bath.
- Place some small rocks along the sides or even a larger one in the middle for birds to perch and enjoy the water at varying depths.
- Make sure that the bottom of the bath is not slick. Birds can slip on the wet surface as you would slip in the bathtub. Provide secure footing with gravel, sand, or even an old bath mat cut to fit!
- Stay away from wild painted designs, especially on the bottom of the birdbath. Birds flying by may not understand that the designs are just decorative and view the bath as unsafe water. Plain solid color surfaces are usually the best.
- Put a hanging dripper over the bird bath or purchase a dripper or mister that clamps onto the edge of your birdbath.



Ponds are an attractive way of providing water for birds but also add an element to your backyard that is beautiful and pleasant for people to enjoy. If you want a quick and easy pond, you can purchase a pre-formed bird bath pond. Remember to keep at least the edges of the pond shallow so the birds will use it. If your pond uses a liner, cover it with sand, gravel or pebbles so the birds will not slip.

Frequently Asked Questions

How do I make a dripping bird bath?

The simplest technique is to take a clean, plastic gallon bottle and punch a teeny hole in the bottom. Fill it with fresh water, put the cap on, suspend the bottle above a shallow dish that also contains fresh water, and voila, you have a dripper.

Are all metals safe for use in birdbaths?

Metal is safe but many do rust, which certainly can make the water unappealing. Bird baths made of concrete, with or without a glazed surface, work well in moderate climates.

Is copper toxic to birds?

As long as you put only water in the copper birdbath, there should be no problems. Toxicity could occur only if the copper finish got flaked off by using vinegar or some other abrasive to clean the bath.

What is the best way to provide drinking water in freezing temperature?

There are some excellent bird bath heaters available, and they don't use much electricity. Also available are bird baths complete with a built-in, automatic heater.

