GROW A GARDEN FOR WILDLIFE

Grades 4 to 8 - Small group or class

Gardening for wildlife is a very important means of increasing biodiversity! From birds, to bees, to snakes, to squirrels wildlife depend on native species of plants, shrubs and trees to survive.

PRE-ACTIVITY:

What is "biodiversity"?

Biological diversity – the variety of life on Earth.

What are "native species"?

When a plant or animal lives in the area where it originated without any human interventions (e.g. moving it from one part of the world to a different part of the world), it is known as a native species. In their ecosystems, native plants fill a particular role – they provide food, shelter, and nesting places for wildlife. Non-native plants typically don't have the same relationship with local wildlife and often can't provide many of the necessities of life for them.

How can planting native species help wild animals and increase biodiversity?

Biodiversity is reduced in cities due to human activity and infrastructure; forests, meadows, and other green spaces are replaced by roads, stores, parking lots, office buildings, homes and lawns – spaces which can't support a wide variety of wild species. By transforming a portion of your backyard, schoolyard, balcony or other outdoor area into a native species garden, you are helping to increase patches of native habitats that provide important food and shelter for insects, reptiles, amphibians, birds and mammals alike!

ITEMS NEEDED:

- Printed native plant, shrub, and tree trading card sheets, and supplemental reference sheets
- Printed wildlife reference sheets (enough for students to share)
- Printed notes/tracking sheets (1-2 per student)
- Garden design sheet or blank paper (1-2 per student)
- Scissors
- Glue

PREPARATION:

- Determine how many students will be participating in this activity, and print enough trading card sheets for every student to have 8 cards (e.g. 15 students, 120 cards in total, 30 printed sheets with four cards on each).
- Cut out the cards and shuffle them thoroughly.
- Distribute 8 cards to every student; they should have a mix of native flower, shrub, and tree species. Extra cards can be kept by the teacher(s) if they'd like to participate in the trading portion of the game!
- Give each student a garden design sheet and notes/tracking sheet; this is where they will design their garden and provide rationale for their choices!

PLAY:

- Before students start "digging", they first need to make a plan! Students should write down what kind of space they are using for their garden. Garden design sheets provided with this activity offer 2 examples for the yard of a house but students can also create their own space using blank paper (for example, schoolyard, park or balcony). Students should draw their chosen building/space on their sheet of blank paper.
- Using the wild animal reference sheet, students need to select 8 different animals they would like to support and attract to their garden; this should include a mix of birds, mammals, and insects. Students should then make a list of what their animals need from nature to survive.
- Once everyone has had time to plan, students can trade their plant cards with students/teachers to obtain plant species that will support their desired animals. Students will have to determine which native plants would be suitable for their animals using the icons on their cards and the supplemental plant reference sheets.
- Cards should be exchanged at a 1:1 ratio (e.g. give 1 card, receive 1 card in return).
- Students that are happy with their card collection can cut out the picture of the plant/shrub/tree on their cards (which renders them non-tradeable) and glue them to their garden design sheet. It's important they consider where each plant is being placed, since different plants could have different sunlight and water requirements.
- As they "plant" each native species, students should justify their decision-making using their notes/tracking sheets.

POST-ACTIVITY QUESTIONS:

- Was everyone able to plant a garden that supported every species they wanted to attract? Why or why not? What does this tell us about the needs of wild animals?
- If you weren't able to obtain the cards you wanted, how did that affect your garden?
- Everything in nature is connected, and attracting certain animal species can have unexpected ripple effects. What species besides those the students' were specifically targeting could be attracted to their garden? These can include animals that weren't specifically listed in this activity.
- Could animals be attracted by other animals or the structures they leave behind (e.g. abandoned burrows)? Why?
- In real life, could planting native plant gardens have a larger effect on urban biodiversity that goes beyond our homes/schools? How?
- **Older students:** how might city planners use what you've learned today to design urban spaces that are better at supporting a variety of native wildlife?

Check out these additional resources to help you get started!

The Best Native Plants for Gardens in the Greater Toronto Area

Wildlife-Friendly Gardening (video)

Six Native Species Ideal for Winter Wildlife Habitat

Creating a Garden for Birds

DESIGN YOUR GARDEN!

GROW A GARDEN FOR WILDLIFE

Worksheet

GROW A GARDEN FOR WILDLIFE

Worksheet

GROW A GARDEN FOR WILDLIFE

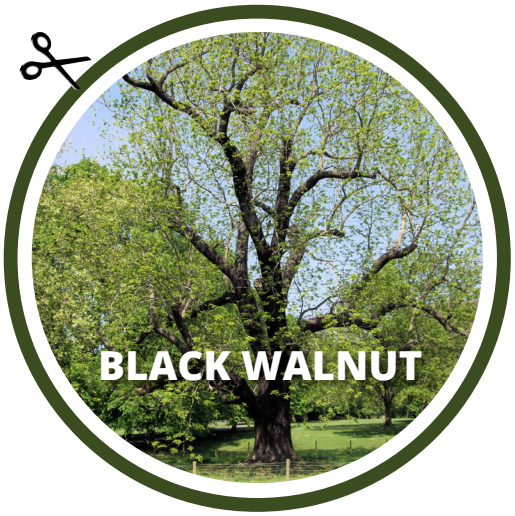
Using the reference sheets, pick up to 8 wild animals that you would like to attract to your brand new garden! Then pick 8 native flowers, shrubs, and trees that could benefit these wild animals. Fill out the table to explain how you decided where to grow each plant, and why you chose them for your garden.

SPECIES I WANT TO ATRACT	WHAT WILL I PLANT TO ATTRACT IT?	WHERE WILL THE PLANT GO IN MY GARDEN? WHY?	WHY IS THIS PLANT ATTRACTIVE TO THIS SPECIES
Chipmunk	Red Osier Dogwood	I will plant many at the edge of my garden, where they can get lots of sunlight and rain!	They can eat the berries, and could build their dens underneath.

Are there any animals you wanted to attract, but couldn't? What plant(s) would you have wanted to grow if you could choose more?

Everything in nature is connected! Can you think of some animals that were not listed in this activity that may be attracted to your garden? What plant(s) or animal(s) might they be interested in?

TREE (Deciduous)



15-23 m

15-23 m

ATTRACTS

LIGHT

WATER

Black walnuts have been used for generations to make natural brown dye for clothing.

TREE (Deciduous)

6-9 m

7.5-10.5 m

ATTRACTS

LIGHT

WATER

Add a pop of colour to your yard with this tree that blooms hundreds of pink flowers every spring!

TREE (Deciduous)

21-24 m

10.5 m

ATTRACTS

LIGHT

WATER

Bur oaks are one of the most fire-resistant types of oak trees, thanks to the thick cork-like bark protecting their trunks and branches!

TREE (Deciduous)

12-18 m

12-18 m

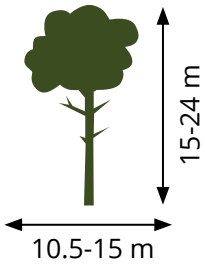
ATTRACTS

LIGHT

WATER

This tree shares their name with the hackberry emperor butterfly - they only lay their eggs on hackberry leaves!

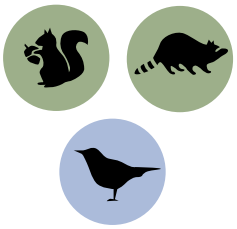
TREE (Deciduous)



ATTRACTS

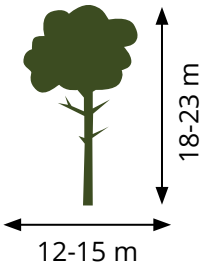
LIGHT

WATER



Silver maples grow so fast that their trunks are often filled with nooks and crannies, perfect for animals like owls, raccoons, and wood ducks to nest in!

TREE (Deciduous)



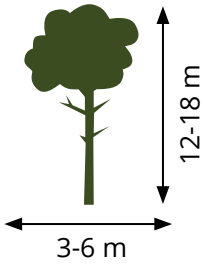
ATTRACTS

LIGHT

WATER

This is Canada's national tree! The sap is used to make a Canadian favourite sweet-treat. You guessed it... maple syrup!

TREE (Coniferous)



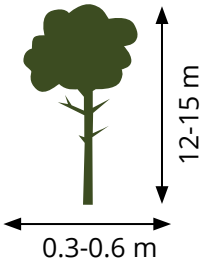
ATTRACTS

LIGHT

WATER

White spruce usually lives between 250 and 350 years but trees up to 1,000 years have been documented!

TREE (Coniferous)



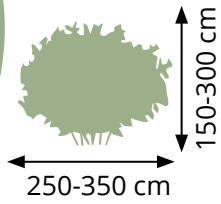
ATTRACTS

LIGHT

WATER

Because of its small size, the Eastern white cedar is a great tree for landscaping, especially as a hedge tree.

SHRUBS (Deciduous)



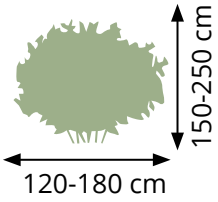
ATTRACTS

LIGHT

WATER

"Osier" refers to the shrub's flexible branches, which can be woven into baskets, wreaths, and furniture.

SHRUBS (Deciduous)



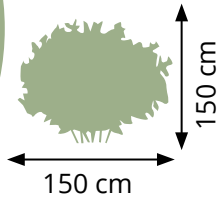
ATTRACTS

LIGHT

WATER

The bark of a ninebark tree naturally peels away in strips to reveal layers of reddish to light-brown bark, which add a splash of colour to your yard in the winter!

SHRUBS (Deciduous)



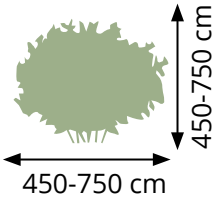
ATTRACTS

LIGHT

WATER

Patience is the key to harvesting these berries! They start off red and round, ripening into dark, wrinkly berries with the look and sweetness of raisins from grapes.

SHRUBS (Deciduous)



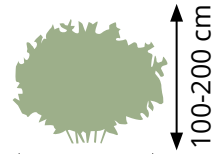
ATTRACTS

LIGHT

WATER

Serviceberries were a staple food of the indigenous people of the Canadian prairies, who mixed berries with dried bison meat to make pemmican!

SHRUBS (Deciduous)



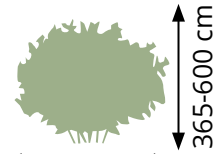
ATTRACTS

LIGHT

WATER

Snowberries contain a naturally soapy substance - crushed berries were once used like a shampoo!

SHRUBS (Deciduous)



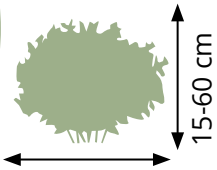
ATTRACTS

LIGHT

WATER

Witch-hazel seeds have an unusual way of dispersing. Once they mature, the woody chambers they grow in snap open and throw the seeds up to 30 ft away!

SHRUBS (Deciduous)



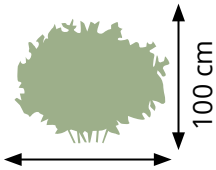
ATTRACTS

LIGHT

WATER

Wild blueberries are thought to have 2x the antioxidants of farmed blueberries, thanks to a higher concentration in the flavonoid anthocyanin (blue pigment).

SHRUBS (Deciduous)



ATTRACTS

LIGHT

WATER

Once known as red root tea, its abundance in New Jersey, USA caused this name to stick. And yes, it does have red roots!

PLANTS (Flower)

ATTRACTS

LIGHT

WATER

The only plant host for monarch butterfly eggs and hatchling caterpillars, who feed exclusively on milkweed leaves.

PLANTS (Flower)

ATTRACTS

LIGHT

WATER

Each New England aster is actually made up of 100-150 tiny, individual flowers that grow together to form one flower. “Ray flowers” form the petals, and “tube flowers” form the centre.

PLANTS (Flower)

ATTRACTS

LIGHT

WATER

This is a hardy plant that will be one of the first to establish in a new environment, paving the way for other species of plants and animals to settle in.

PLANTS (Flower)

ATTRACTS

LIGHT

WATER

Fresh or dried wild bergamot leaves can be steeped in boiling water to make tea, which is said to taste like rose or mint.

PLANTS (Flower)

45-60 cm

ATTRACTS

LIGHT

WATER

Another common name for geranium is the “cranesbill”, named after the long, narrow seed pod that resembles the bird.

PLANTS (Flower)

30-60 cm

ATTRACTS

LIGHT

WATER

The name “anemone” comes from the Greek word for “wind”, giving these flowers the nickname “wind flowers”.

PLANTS (Flower)

60-150 cm

ATTRACTS

LIGHT

WATER

When these flowers first bloom, they produce no smell - but after they are pollinated, they emit a sweet, vanilla-like odor.

PLANTS (Flower)

60-90 cm

ATTRACTS

LIGHT

WATER

Though yarrow is edible and has a licorice-like scent, it can be quite bitter in large amounts. When eaten by cows, it can even make their milk taste bitter!

GROW A GARDEN FOR WILDLIFE

WILD ANIMALS FACT SHEET

WINTER BIRDS

SPECIES	FOOD	DIET BREAKDOWN	HABITAT
Black-capped chickadee 	**Spring and Summer** • Eats primarily caterpillars, spiders, small snails/slugs, and other **insects**. • Eats **berries** as available (e.g. blackberries and **blueberries**), **Winter** • Insects, spiders, fat from scavenged mammals and fish. • **Seeds from flowers** and **coniferous trees**. • Soft fruits and berries when available.	**Spring and Summer:** 90% animal, 10% plant **Winter:** 50% animal, 50% plant	• Build nests in tree cavities (holes), which both sexes of a breeding pair help to excavate. Use beaks to remove material from the cavity, often rotten wood. • May use holes that were previously excavated by another species. • Prefer **deciduous trees**. In Ontario, most commonly use birch, aspen, and **sugar maple** trees and other trees commonly found in **neighbourhoods**. • Nests constructed using moss, **rabbit** fur, and **deer** hair.
White-breasted nuthatch 	• Eats a variety of insects and plant matter, including **acorns** and **nuts**. • Forage by hopping up and down the trunk and branches of trees -- including the underside of branches and occasionally look for food on the ground. Will chip away bark to reveal food hidden in crevices. • "Scatterhoard" food in the fall/winter, hiding stores of food throughout their territory. Store food in crevices of bark and cover with rotton wood, lichen, or moss.	**Spring and Summer**: 48% plant, 52% animal/insect - typically does not eat seeds in summer **Winter:** 68% seeds, 32% insects	• Favors mature **deciduous** woodlands, occasionally in **residential areas.** • Uses natural cavities (holes) in trees or reuses abandoned **woodpecker** nests. • Nests reported in ponderosa pine, American elm, **hackberry, silver maple,** and **black walnut.** • Nests constructed with bark, lumps of earth, and topped with a cup of finer bark, grass and rootlets, and softer materials (e.g. **fur**, wool, and **feathers**).
Northern cardinal 	• Eats mainly seeds and fruit, supplementing these with insects (and feeding nestlings mostly **insects**). • Common fruits and seeds include: **dogwood**, wild grape, buckwheat, grasses, sedges, mulberry, **hackberry**, blackberry, sumac, and tulip-tree. • Eats a variety of adult and larval insects, including: beetles, grasshoppers, butterflies and moths, cicadas, ants, dragonflies, and spiders.	**Annually:** 29% animal/insect, 71% plant	• Thick shrubby areas such as forest edges, overgrown fields, **backyards**, marshy thickets, and regrowing forest. • Cardinals nest in dense foliage and look for high perches for singing. Nests tend to be wedged into a fork of small branches in a sapling or **shrub**. • They use many kinds of trees and shrubs, including: **dogwood**, honeysuckle, hawthorn, grape, red cedar, **spruce**, pines, hemlock, rose bushes, blackberry brambles, elms, **sugar maples,** and box elders.
Blue jay 	• Eats mainly **acorns**, nuts, soft fruits, **seeds**, small vertebrates (e.g. mice, frogs, lizards, bats, and songbirds), bird eggs, and a wide variety of **insects**/arthropods (e.g. beetles, millipeeds, caterpillars, dragonflies). • Prefers larger seeds, such as sunflower seeds. • Hard seeds (especially **acorns**, beechnuts, hazelnuts, hickory, and chestnuts) constitute 43% of their yearly diet.	**Annually:** 22% animal/insect, 78% plant	• Inhabits both **deciduous** and **coniferous** woodlands, common in **towns** and **residential** areas, especially those with large trees bearing nuts and seeds (e.g. **oaks**) • Nests built in V area of where trunks/branches meet, or on the end of large horizontal branches • Nests consist of an outer shell of twigs, containing bits of bark, moss, dried leaves and grasses. Lined with rootlets, decomposing leaves, sometimes man-made materials (e.g. pieces of paper, cloth, string, wool, and plastic).

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WILD ANIMALS FACT SHEET

WINTER BIRDS

SPECIES	FOOD	DIET BREAKDOWN	HABITAT
Cedar waxwing 	• Eats mostly fleshy fruits, including: **serviceberry**, strawberry, mulberry, cherries, **dogwood**, raspberries, and many ornamental fruits (e.g. hawthorn and crabapples). • **Cedar** berries historically dominated winter diets, and wintering populations still congregate in areas with an abundance of cedars. • During early spring, they will consume more **flowers and insects** (when fruits are scarcer), including: mayflies, dragonflies, ants, emerging stoneflies, budworms, and beetles.	**Annually:** 84% fruit, 12% insect, and 4% flower parts **Early spring:** 44% flowers, 15% fruit, 41% insects **Winter:** almost 100% fruit	• Often rely on open woodlands and shrubby fields where **fruit-bearing small trees and shrubs** grow. Can also feed on fruit crops in orchards, parks, and **urban areas.** • Habitats can include **deciduous**, **coniferous**, and mixed trees. • Nests typically built in the forks of horizontal branches. • Common trees/shrubs used for nesting include: **maple**, red cedar, apple, pear, hawthorn, **bur oak, white cedar,** and pine.
Northern shrike 	**Spring and Summer** • Eats primarily grasshoppers, beetles, bumblebees, and insect larvae. **Winter** • Eats mostly small animals (voles, lemmings, mice, shrews) and birds. • Can pursue and capture birds significantly larger than itself for prey, including American robins, small sandpipers, blue jays, and pigeons!	**Annually:** 100% animal/ insect	• Prefers **deciduous** or mixed-forest edges, especially areas where trees and shrubs are planted along the edges of agricultural lands. • During breeding season, avoids dense forests, staying near forest edges, and looking for openings along rivers, lakes, logged tracts, and agricultural clearings. • Known to nest in **coniferous (white spruce),** and **deciduous trees/shrubs** (willows, alders, and poplars). • Nests built well below the tree's crown, on branches against the main trunk, well concealed by leaves and overhead branches.
American goldfinch 	• Eats almost exclusively seeds; prefers seeds from **flowers** (particularly sunflowers, thistles, **coneflowers** and **asters**), grasses, and some trees (alder, birch, **cedar**, and elm). • Very acrobatic birds that balance on the seedheads of plants to pluck the seeds.	**Annually:** 95% seeds, 5% plant matter (e.g. buds)	• Prefers naturalized areas like fields, open floodplains, and **native plant gardens** with an overgrowth of **plants and shrubs.** • Also commonly found in parks, suburbs, and backyards. • Nests built in **shrubs**, with clear side along one side of the nest site.

GROW A GARDEN FOR WILDLIFE

WILD ANIMALS FACT SHEET

MIGRATORY BIRDS

SPECIES	FOOD	DIET BREAKDOWN	HABITAT
American robin 	• Generally consumes ground and foliage invertebrates (e.g. worms), and eats fruit (on plants as well as fruit that has fallen to the ground). • Most successful at capturing prey in well-lit environments, and worms in moist soils. • Preferred berries include: junipers, hollies, crabapples, hawthorns, **serviceberries** and **dogwoods**.	**Spring and Summer:** >90% invertebrates/ insects, 10% fruit **Fall and Winter:** >90% fruit, 10% invertebrates/ insects	• Nests often constructed low in protected **coniferous** trees, just below the branch layer with the largest volume of foliage. • Typically migrate to southern USA and Mexico in the winter, but hardy indviduals may overwinter in Ontario in locations where **berries** are abundant.
Golden-crowned kinglet 	• Eats mainly small soft-bodied arthropods, such as spiders, mites, and insects. Insects include: grasshoppers, lice, aphids, beetles, larval and adult forms of butterflies and moths, flies, midges, and mosquitoes. • Consumes small amounts of plant materials, mostly small seeds and remains of fruit.	**Spring and Summer:** 99% small arthropods, little to no plant matter **Migration:** 90% small arthropods, 10% plant/fruit	• Predominantly forages on **coniferous trees**, including **white spruce** • During migration, can be found in a range of habitats, including forests, old fields, **urban parks**, and **yards** • Nests in forests with conifers, particularly those dominated by **spruce**, fir, and **pine** • Nests are suspended, often by their rims, from stems or twig forks in conifer trees. Constructed of twigs, moss, lichen, spider webs, and strips of bark; lined with bark, moss, lichen, **deer hair**, and **feathers**.
Yellow-bellied sapsucker 	• Mainly eats sap from a variety of perennial plant and tree species including **deciduous** trees throughout the summer (red maple and **oak**), and switches to red oaks, apple trees, and **maples** in the early autumn. Also eats insects, tree fibres, fruit, and seeds. • Creates small circular holes penetrating below the bark, then inserts bill to probe into the tree and lick sap up with tongue. • Also consumes tree cambium (growth layer of trees located just below bark). • **Insects** eaten as available, including: ants, spiders, grasshoppers, mayflies, beetles, spruce budworm larvae, moths, and dragonflies	**Annually:** 50.7% plants, 49.3% animal/insect	• Prefers young forests containing quaking aspen, birch, **maple**, and mixed-conifer forests for nesting. • During migration, found in woodlands, orchards, and scrublands (areas characterized by shrubs, grasses, and herbs) as well as in green spaces in **cities**. • Excavates a cavity in a tree trunk; no nest is contructed, eggs are laid on a bed of wood chips leftover from the excavation.

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WILD ANIMALS FACT SHEET

MIGRATORY BIRDS

SPECIES	FOOD	DIET BREAKDOWN	HABITAT
Rose-breasted grosbeak 	• Eats a variety of **invertebrates/insects,** including beetles, bees, ants, and the larvae of butterflies and moths. • Eats fruit (elderberry, blackberry, raspberry, mulberry, **serviceberry** and juneberry), weed seeds (smartweed, pigweed, foxtail, sunflower, and **milkweed**), and cultivated crops and fruit.	**Spring and Summer:** 52-74% animal matter, 26-48% plants **Fall migration:** almost entirely fruit (96%)	• Utilizes a wide variety of habitats: most commonly uses **deciduous** and young mixed woodlands and well-vegetated **suburban** areas. • Nests are a loosly contructed cup of sticks, twigs, grasses, weed stems, decayed leaves, and a lining of soft natural materials.
Ruby-throated hummingbird 	• Feeds on nectar from a variety of native flowers, and hunts small insects. • Prefers red or orange tubular flowers, but will take nectar from many types of native flowers, including: honeysuckles, scarlet beebalm, red morning glory, and **wild bergamot**. These birds are important pollinators. • Favourite **insects** include mosquitoes, spiders, gnats, flies, and small bees.	**Annually:** Estimated 40-50% nectar, 50-60% insects (more research required)	• Often associated with woodland clearings, forest edges, **gardens**, and orchards. Tree species used for nesting include **oak**, hornbeam, yellow birch, poplar, **hackberry**, and **pine**. • Nests in mixed woodlands and **deciduous** forests.
Wood duck 	• This bird is omnivorous, having a broad diet. Eats seeds, fruits, and aquatic and terrestrial invertebrates (e.g. flies, beetles, butterflies/moths, and isopods). • This species possesses an extremely distensible esophagus, enabling it to swallow **acorns** up to 1.0 cm wide and 5.7 cm long; as many as 30 small acorns have been found in one esophagus!	**Spring and Summer:** 7% insects, 4% fruits, 89% plants **Fall and Winter:** 4% insects, 96% plants	• Found in habitats near creeks, rivers, swamps, marshes, and beaver and farm ponds, even around **urban** areas. • Cavity nesters use preformed cavities (holes) in mature trees; most cavities large enough for wood duck nests develop when branches break and the trunk rots. • Use many tree species, including **oaks, ashes,** and **maples**. Often reuse nest sites. • Nests are lined with down feathers from the female wood duck.

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WILD ANIMALS FACT SHEET

INSECTS

SPECIES	FOOD	HABITAT
Monarch butterfly 	• Adult butterflies will drink nectar from a variety of blooms with open or deep flowers. • Caterpillars feed exclusively on milkweed plants; the toxins in **milkweed** make monarch caterpillars and butterflies distasteful to most birds.	• Live in open woodlands, fields and meadows, marshes, roadsides, and **gardens**; not limited by human disruption, and will breed on even tiny patches of healthy milkweed plants.
Eastern tiger swallowtail 	• Adult butterflies are generalists, and will drink nectar from a variety of blooms with open or deep flowers (e.g. **milkweed, bee balm, coneflower,** Joe pye weed, ironweed, and wild cherry). • Caterpillars feed primarily on leaves from cherry, ash, tulip, hop trees - and even parsley!	• Range includes all Canadian provinces and territories, and reaches north of the Arctic Circle. • Prefers open **deciduous** woodlands and forests, and gardens and roadways near treed areas.
Hummingbird clearwing moth 	• Adults drink nectar from a variety of plants, including: **wild bergamot,** red clover, and lilacs. • Caterpillars eat leaves of **snowberry** bushes, honeysuckle, hawthorn, and cherry and plum trees • Feed by hovering in front of flowers, similar to hummingbirds.	• Found in open woodlands and shrubby areas, **gardens**, and meadows. • Range includes most of Canada, with the exception of Nunavut.
Eastern common bumble bee 	• Generalists that do not rely on specific species of flowers. • One of the first groups of bees to become active in late winter, and the last active in the autumn. Do not keep large stores of honey, so early- and late-season blooming flowers (e.g. **New England asters**) are critical sources of pollen and nectar.	• Found in a variety of open habitats, including grasslands, farmlands, and urban areas. Habitat loss (e.g. meadows, loss of native flowers) is affecting many bee species. • Nest sites often underground in abandoned **rodent burrows.**
Sweat bee 	• Generalists that do not rely on specific species of flowers. However, because they have short tongues, they require shallow or easily accessible flowers for nectar such as **cup plant, goldenrod,** or **wild geranium.** • Sweat bees get their common name from their behavior of landing on skin on hot summer days to feed on sweat but they are unlikely to sting you unless you accidentally squish them or swat them.	• Unlike the majority of wild (native) bees, which have solitary nests, sweat bees (Halictus) are eusocial, with one female (queen) doing all the egg laying and her female offspring (workers) helping with foraging and rearing the developing brood. • Burrows are dug underground by females; sometimes females will share a tunnel entrance (and responsibility for guarding main entrance), but each female will have her own tunnel for her own young.
Leafcutter bees 	• Attracted to a variety of pollen- and nectar-rich flowers. • Solitary, docile, known as “super pollinators” because they carry dry pollen on their hairy undersides and leave some pollen on every flower they visit.	• Cut circles out of thin, non-hairy leaves to create protective “cocoons” for their eggs; these are hidden under rocks, in rotten wood, or in tunnels underground. They also leave a small ball nectar-pollen mix for the larvae to eat upon hatching. • Prefer leaves in the rose family (including roses, hawthorns, plums, and cherries), but will also use **maple leaves.** They make use of natural tree cavities to lay their eggs in and use leaves and flower petals as nesting materials. Hence their name; they cut small semicircles off of leaves.

GROW A GARDEN FOR WILDLIFE

WILD ANIMALS FACT SHEET

MAMMALS

SPECIES	FOOD	HABITAT
Eastern grey squirrel 	• Opportunistic feeder, allowing them to live in a variety of habitats. • Diet varies seasonally, but mainly comprised of **nuts, seeds,** and **fruit** - buries hundreds of nuts **(acorns, hickory nuts, butternuts, walnuts,** and **pine seeds**) and seeds for the winter. • Will also eat tree buds, insects, caterpillars, and occasionally birds' eggs and young birds.	• Historically occupied hardwood forests, favouring **oak** and **hickory** trees. • Prefer to build nests in tree cavities, but often forced to resort to leaf nests because of the scarcity of suitable tree dens. • Leaf nests built near the top of pine, hemlock, **maple**, **birch**, and **oak trees.** Typically lodged in a V where two branches meet or on a limb near the trunk; a platform of twigs supports the nest, and the outer shell is made of leaves and twigs. Lined with moss, grass, bark, bird feathers, and sometimes cloth and paper.
Eastern cottontail 	• Herbivorous, will feed on a variety of herbs, grasses, and shrubs. • In the summer, can show a preference for **goldenrod**, **clovers**, **dandelion**, and leaves of young saplings. • In the winter, turn to buds, stems, and bark of shrubs and trees (including raspeberry stems, bark of **red osier dogwood,** young birch trees, and wild rose. • Will also eat garden plants and seeds spilled from bird feeders.	• Prefer "edge habitats', where thickets, hedgerows, or treed areas meet old fields or meadows; this gives them escape covers. Any landscapes that provide a combination of open space and escape cover will be good for a rabbit. • Commonly found in **parks**, greenspaces, and **gardens**, where brush piles, and thickets of **shrubs** and **bushes** can provide good cover.
White-tailed deer 	• During spring and summer, diet consists mostly of leafy materials from woody plants, grasses, and herbs. Can include delicacies like fiddleheads, mushrooms, and **blueberries**. • In autumn and winter, will eat **acorns**, twigs and buds from trees and shrubs, and winter-green grasses and sedges.	• Most widely distributed large mammal in North America, extending from the southern tip of the continent to the boreal forests of northern Canada. • In the summer, almost any forested or bushy area can attract deer. • During the winter, particularly once snow becomes deep, deer concentrate in areas that provide shelter from storms and deep snow.
Red fox 	• Omnivores, and will eat almost anything they can find/hunt. • Diet mainly consists of **small mammals** (e.g. squirrels, mice, rats and rabbits), but supplement this with invertebrates (e.g. grasshoppers, caterpillars, earthworms), **fruits**, **berries**, amphibians, and birds' eggs.	• Found in all provinces and territories in Canada, live in forests, prairies, farms, and **suburban** settings - it's not unusual at all to find one curled up in the sun in your backyard!
Eastern chipmunk 	• Seeds are most important source of food; usually forage on the ground, but will also climb trees and shrubs to find **nuts** and **fruit**. • Supplements diet with insects, earthworms, flowers, berries, mushrooms, and occasionally eggs or small birds/mammals.	• Live in **urban parks** and immature, **deciduous** forested areas, where there are rocks, bushes, and piles of brush to provide cover from predators. • Construct underground tunnels, with entrances hidden under rocks or in **bushes**. • Underground nest chambers are filled with soft insulating materials, making it cozy to raise their babies.
Virginia opossum 	• Omnivorous opportunists, will eat invertebrates, insects, small mammals, birds, berries, fruit, eggs, etc; willing to eat almost anything they find (considered an integral part of nature's "clean-up crew") - they even eat ticks! • Preferred plant foods include: **berries**, apples, **acorns**, beechnuts, and garden vegetables.	• Historically lived in damp woodlands, or forests near water. Have adapted well to living in **cities**, settling in areas near incidental food sources (e.g. gardens, compost piles) • Often considered nomadic, but will den under stumps, in hollow trees and logs, and in rock piles. Will sometimes take over dens excavated by other animals (e.g. groundhogs).

GROW A GARDEN FOR WILDLIFE

EXTRA INFORMATION

TREES

SPECIES	BLOOMING/FRUITING TIME	WILDLIFE ATTRACTANTS
Black Walnut	Yields ripe walnuts in mid-autumn.	• Nuts are eaten by woodpeckers, foxes, and squirrels. • Leaves may be browsed by white-tailed deer.
Eastern Redbud	Rosy pink flowers begin to cover the branches in early-spring, which persist for 2-3 weeks.	• Early blossoms attract nectar-seeking insects, including butterflies and some bee species. • Some songbirds will eat the seeds. • Provides nesting materials and shelter for birds and mammals.
Bur Oak	Yields ripe acorns from late-summer to early-winter.	• Many animals consume the acorns, including: squirrels, chipmunks, wild turkeys, wood ducks, rabbits, raccoons, and black bears. • Deer and porcupine will eat the leaves, twigs, and bark.
Hackberry	Produces dark red fruit that matures in mid-autumn, and persists well into winter.	• Fruits are popular with mammals and overwintering birds, especially cedar waxwings, mockingbirds, cardinals, and robins. • Attracts many butterfly species.
Silver Maple	Seeds mature in late-spring to early-summer (has the largest seeds of all native maples!).	• Buds and seeds are eaten by many animals, including squirrels, chipmunks, and birds. • Provides nesting sites for a variety of birds. • Trunks are often hollow, leaving cavities that owls, wood ducks, opossums, and raccoons can live in. • Beavers find this tree particularly tasty!
Sugar Maple	Seeds ripen from early-summer into autumn and will fall from trees from September to November.	• Commonly browsed by white-tailed deer, moose, and porcupines. • Squirrels and chipmunks feed on the seeds, buds, twigs, and bark. • Early-season pollen important for honeybees and other insects. • Many birds use this tree for food (seeds, buds, flowers, and insects), shelter, and nesting material.
White Spruce	Cones ripen in late-summer to autumn and fall from the tree throughout the winter.	• Red squirrels and many songbirds consume the seeds. • Foliage is eaten by rabbits and deer in the winter. • The bark can be eaten by porcupines and black bears.
Eastern White Cedar	Cones ripen and seeds are dispersed in autumn and cones may stay on the branches for many months afterwards.	• Bark eaten by white-tailed deer in the winter. • Seeds are eaten by squirrels and many songbirds.

GROW A GARDEN FOR WILDLIFE

EXTRA INFORMATION

SHRUBS

SPECIES	BLOOMING/FRUITING TIME	WILDLIFE ATTRACTANTS
Red Osier Dogwood	Berries ripen in late-summer to early-fall.	• Provides dense cover/shelter for a variety of wild animals. • White berries are popular with many animals, including: bears, small mammals, and many bird species. • Twigs and foliage are browsed by deer, rabbits, beavers, and chipmunks.
Common Ninebark	Red seeds mature in the autumn.	• Domed clusters of flowers attract pollinators, including bees and butterflies. • Birds will eat the ripe seeds.
Northern Wild Raisin	Berries ripen in autumn, and persist into winter.	• Berries may be eaten by migratory birds, squirrels, chipmunks, skunks, and deer. • If grown in thickets, can provide dense cover for many wild animals.
Serviceberry	Berries ripen in early to mid-summer.	• Berries are popular with many birds, squirrels, chipmunks, foxes, and skunks. • Flowers essential for early-season pollinators, and leaves host >100 species of butterflies and moths.
Common Snowberry	Berries ripen in late-summer to early-fall.	• Birds and bears will eat the berries. • Some animals browse on the leaves and stems, including rabbits, mice, and deer.
Common Witch-hazel	Unusual yellow spindly flowers with four, twisted petals, which bloom in late October or early November and hold on until the leaves have fallen	• Seeds eaten by birds and small mammals. Birds will also eat the fruits. • Browsed by deer and beavers.
Lowbush Blueberry	Berries ripen in mid to late-summer.	• Berries often attract birds and large mammals, including: bears, coyotes, raccoons, foxes, porcupines, and deer. • Leaves are popular for many caterpillars
New Jersey Tea	Late spring to early summer, summer.	• The flowers are a nectar source for hummingbirds, butterflies, and native bees.

GROW A GARDEN FOR WILDLIFE

EXTRA INFORMATION

PLANTS

SPECIES	BLOOMING/FRUITING TIME	WILDLIFE ATTRACTANTS
Common Milkweed	Summer.	• Hundreds of insects feed on milkweed, and the flowers attract a wide range of pollinators. • The only host plant for Monarch butterfly larvae.
New England Aster	Late-summer to early-autumn.	• Important source of late-season nectar. • Attracts butterflies, bees, and other pollinators. • Seeds and leaves may be eaten by wild turkeys; leaves may be browsed by deer and rabbits. • Seeds are eaten by many birds, including chickadees, goldfinches, and many migratory birds (who may also be attracted to insects on the flowers).
Black-Eyed Susan	Late-summer.	• Dried seed heads can feed overwintering birds. • Attracts bees, butterflies, and other nectar-seeking insects.
Wild Bergamot	Summer to early-autumn.	• Popular with many pollinators, including bees, butterflies, moths, and hummingbirds
Wild Geranium	Early-spring to late-summer.	• Flowers attract a variety of butterflies and bees. • Seeds can attract mourning doves, deer, and chipmunks.
Canada Anemone	Late-spring to early-summer.	• Flowers attract several native bee species.
Purple Coneflower	Summer.	• Nectar attracts bees, butterflies, moths, and hummingbirds. • Dried seed heads feed a variety of overwintering birds, including: sparrows, goldfinches, blue jays, cardinals, chickadees, woodpeckers, and juncos.
Yarrow	Summer.	• Flowers attrack a varity of pollinating insects.