

Master Gardeners Show How To Attract Wildlife

UNIVERSITY PARK (Centre Co.) — Homeowners who prefer live action in their gardens can get tips on attracting birds, small mammals, insects, and other wildlife to their property at a Penn State Cooperative Extension exhibit during the 2000 Pennsylvania Farm Show.

The display, which is located in the Family Corner on the second floor of the Northeast Building will use photographic panels to detail four elements of a suburban or rural garden that attracts creatures ranging from butterflies to bunnies.

Volunteers from Penn State's Master Gardener Program will staff the display. "We will answer questions, offer advice, and provide detailed fact sheets on how to attract a variety of animal and insect life to your yard," said Connie Schmotzer, horticultural assistant in the York County cooperative extension office. "For people who are experiencing a problem with a specific species, we will have wildlife control fact sheets available."

Schmotzer explained the display suggests four ways to provide a haven for wildlife:

- **Food.** Birds and animals often eat seeds and berries from plants, and gardeners can choose plants that offer food sources throughout the year. "We also can show you how using pesticides on foliage plants can deter and harm wildlife," Schmotzer said.

- **Cover.** Different species of plants provide shelter and protection for animals that occupy different habitats within the environment. "There are bird species that like to nest in evergreens, others that like shrubs of different heights.

- **Water.** Water sources are very important to sustain wildlife populations, according to Schmotzer. Homeowners can use bird baths, waterfalls, water gardens, ponds or marshlands to attract various

species. "Even setting a tray of water out can be an adequate supply," she added.

- **Space to Raise Young.** "It's important to provide undisturbed places around the fringes of your property where birds and animals can raise young in relative safety," Schmotzer said. Such areas include dead tree stumps, hedge-rows, shrubs of varying size and even a small brush pile.

"Pennsylvania and other states are rapidly losing acres of natural area to suburban development," Schmotzer said. "Many native plant species are replaced with lawns or exotic plants that are of little or no value to wildlife. Losing these native plant species also affects insects and animals who

may depend on these plants for food, shelter or cover."

Schmotzer said visitors to the Farm Show also can get detailed information on Penn State's Master Gardener program.

There are more than 1,500 Master Gardeners in 58 counties pursuing activities ranging from garden club lectures to creating horticultural trial gardens. "Master Gardeners are there to help consumers and provide educational programs."

To join the program, participants must fill out an application, go through an intensive interview, and take a test on horticultural topics. Candidates accepted into the program must complete 30 hours

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