

5 Tips to help you create a Water Wise bird-friendly garden

Tip 1: Water features and bird baths

Keep large water features and ponds to a minimum and make them as small as possible. Birds like to drink and bathe - a small raised bird bath with shallow water is ideal and can be replaced with fresh clean water daily.

Tip 2: Reduce your lawn size

Traditional lawns such as kikuyu require regular and lengthy watering. Reduce the size of the lawn with 1-Drop Water Wise trees and shrubs and plant indigenous grasses such as thatching reed grass (*Chondropetalum tectorum*) or red grass (*Themeda triandra*) underneath. These grasses also provide seeds on which seed-eating birds such as weavers, sparrows, wydahs and doves feed on.

Tip 3: Plant a variety of trees, shrubs and perennials

The more variety you have on the menu, the greater the diversity of birds will be to your garden. Different heights and profiles will allow different birds to utilise these different niches in the garden. Select your plants in such a way so that the different varieties will flower and produce fruit and seeds throughout the seasons as well as seclusion areas to attract a variety of bird species.



Crested barbet
Trachyphonus vaillantii



Greater double-collared sunbird
Cinnyris afer



Southern double-collared sunbird
Cinnyris chalybeus

Tip 4: Avoid pesticides

Keep your garden as natural as possible and avoid using pesticides or herbicides which may have a harmful effect on birds. These chemicals will also reduce species diversity causing insect-eating birds to hunt elsewhere.

Tip 5: Allow leaf litter to accumulate

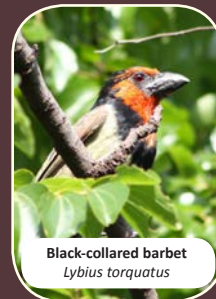
Leaf litter and mulches provide additional nutrients to your plants. Leaf litter and mulches also prevent water loss from the soil. Apart from the above benefits, accumulated leaf litter also provides ideal foraging for insect and worm-eating birds, especially species like thrushes and robin-chats who like to turn over leaves and garden debris in search of their prey.



Cape white-eye
Zosterops virens



Speckled mousebird
Colius striatus



Black-collared barbet
Lybius torquatus

Did you know?

* Many birds are important pollinators, such as the sunbirds which feed on the sweet nectar. These plants rely on sunbirds for effective pollination between neighbouring plants and without the sunbirds, these plants will be unable to reproduce. Pollen sticks to the bird's beak, head, chest or throat.

* Birds are very important seed dispersal agents. In some plants, the seeds need to pass through the digestive system of birds before they will germinate.



Water Wise bird-friendly gardening

Plant Water Wise plants and attract a range of seed, fruit and nectar-feeding birds to your garden.

Selecting Water Wise plants for different feeding strategies

Birds have adapted different feeding strategies which include seed, fruit, berry, nectar and insect-feeding species – some, like the dainty sunbirds, having specialised curved beaks to take advantage of nectar stored inside the flower.

Fruit and berry eaters

The Birds

- * Speckled mousebird (*Colius striatus*)
- * Grey go-away bird (*Corythaixoides concolor*)
- * African olive pigeon (*Columba arquatrix*)
- * African green pigeon (*Treron calvus*)
- * Dark-capped bulbul (*Pycnonotus tricolor*)
- * Cape glossy starling (*Lamprotornis nitens*)
- * Cape sparrow (*Passer melanurus*)

The Plants

- * Carob (*Ceratonia siliqua*)
- * Figs, including rock fig (*Ficus abutilifolia*), mountain fig (*Ficus glumosa*), red-leaved fig (*Ficus ingens*) common cluster fig (*Ficus sycamorus*) and common wild fig (*Ficus thonningii*)
- * Marula (*Sclerocarya birrea subsp. caffra*)
- * Water berry (*Syzgium cordatum*)
- * Kei apple (*Dovyalis caffra*)
- * Natal apricot (*Dovyalis longispina*)
- * Sour fig (*Carpobrotus deliciosus*)
- * Num num (*Carissa bispinosa*)
- * Mickey mouse bush (*Ochna serrulata*)
- * Red currant (*Rhus chirindensis*)



Southern red bishop
Euplectes orix

Seed eaters

The Birds

- * Helmet guineafowl (*Numida meleagris*)
- * Speckled pigeon (*Columba guinea*)
- * Laughing dove (*Streptopelia senegalensis*)
- * Cape robin-chat (*Cossypha caffra*)
- * Cape weaver (*Ploceus capensis*)
- * Southern masked-weaver (*Ploceus velatus*)
- * Southern red bishop (*Euplectes orix*)
- * Common waxbill (*Estrilda astrild*)

The Plants

- * Thatching reed grass (*Chondropetalum tectorum*)
- * Bristle-leaved red top (*Melinis nerviglumis*)
- * Red grass (*Themeda triandra*)
- * Pride-of-the-Kaap (*Bauhinia galpinii*)



The Birds

- * Cape white-eye (*Zosterops virens*)
- * Amethyst sunbird (*Chalcomitra amethystina*)
- * Malachite sunbird (*Nectarinia famosa*)
- * Greater double-collared sunbird (*Cinnyris afer*)
- * White-bellied sunbird (*Cinnyris talatala*)
- * Marico sunbird (*Cinnyris mariquensis*)

The Plants

- * Crane flower (*Strelitzia regina*)
- * Proteas (*Protea spp.*)
- * Aloes (*Aloe spp.*)
- * Cape honeysuckle (*Tecoma capensis*)
- * Lions ear (*Leonotis spp.*)
- * Bauhinia (*Bauhinia spp.*)



Cape glossy starling
Lamprotornis nitens

Insect eaters

The Birds

- * Greater honeyguide (*Indicator indicator*) – attracted by bees
- * Golden-tailed woodpecker (*Campethera abingoni*) – grubs behind bark
- * Cardinal woodpecker (*Dendropicos fuscescens*) – grubs behind bark
- * Black-collared barbet (*Lybius torquatus*) – garden pests such as snails and grasshoppers
- * Crested barbet (*Trachyphonus vaillantii*) – garden pests such as snails and grasshoppers
- * Green wood-hoopoe (*Phoeniculus purpureus*)
- * Common fiscal (*Lanius collaris*) – insects and lizards
- * Arrow-marked babbler (*Turdoides jardineii*)
- * Karoo thrush (*Turdus smithi*) – worms, larvae
- * Cape wagtail (*Motacilla capensis*)

The Plants

- * Common hook-thorn (*Acacia caffra*)
- * Sweet thorn (*Acacia karroo*)
- * Umbrella thorn (*Acacia tortilis subsp. heteracantha*)
- * False thorns (*Albizia spp.*)
- * False olive (*Buddleja saligna*)

The importance of creating a bird-friendly Water Wise garden

Birds play an important role in one's garden as many plants rely on birds for effective pollination between neighbouring plants as well as for seed dispersal. Our gardens have created a diverse range of habitats for birds; however, the diversity of birds in many gardens is limited to a handful of species. You can easily triple the number and diversity of birds visiting your garden by planting one-drop Water Wise plants. These plants will provide a buffet throughout the year for seed, fruit and nectar-feeding birds. Apart from conserving water, a diverse selection of Water Wise plants will also contribute to an eco-friendly garden, which will attract insects which will in turn grab the attention of insect-eating birds. Many one-drop Water Wise plants also make perfect roosting and nesting sites for birds.



Cape robin-chat
Cossypha caffra



Red-eyed bulbul
Pycnonotus nigricans

What are Water Wise plants?

- * They originate from regions with low rainfall and therefore adapted to survive and thrive with very little watering.
- * Once established, they require very little watering, except during very hot dry spells.
- * They only require water every 6-8 weeks during the dry winter months.
- * All succulent plants are 1-Drop plants and need no extra water and can survive on local rainfall only.



For more info on Water Wise call 0860 10 10 60 or visit www.randwater.co.za and click on the Water Wise logo