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BIRDS AND HOW TO ATTRACT THEM ABOUT OUR HOMES.

By J. C. MIDDLETON, LONDON, ONT.

Most of us take a good deal of pride in the surroundings of our dwelling places, and have succeeded in making them real beauty spots. However in most cases with city dwellings we have not the opportunity of carrying out a good many of our cherished wishes, still our surroundings are largely what we make them, individually or collectively. What could be more charming than being surrounded by an abundance of bird life the year round?

Now without trees or shrubs we would have very few birds as they provide protection and shelter from extreme heat and cold, and from the searching eyes of natural enemies such as the cat, dog and birds of prey. They also provide resting and sleeping places as well as meeting places for many of our most favorite birds. Important as all these reasons are, trees, shrubs and plants are indispensable to most bird life for another great reason, that is they provide food either by producing or sustaining it. It is quite true we may have plenty of house sparrows and perhaps birds that feed while on the wing, such as the swallow or martin, without trees, but these are only exceptions which go to prove the general rule. It goes without saying that dense foliage is essential for good protection. This can be best obtained by the use of evergreens, which if planted in clumps or hedges will give ample protection both for summer and winter, their growth is much thicker and heavier than our deciduous trees. A good hedge of spruce trees is a great attraction for birds in the cool nights of early spring, or in the fall, and a thick cover of some sort of evergreen is essential if we are to have the birds stay with us during the winter.

Most close growing shrubs and trees are valuable for nesting places. Of course many birds nest on the ground in clumps of grass or thickets, but these are not likely to build in our gardens unless we have some quiet and unmolested spot.

The different fruits and seeds being produced and ripened at the different times of the summer are either eaten, perhaps when only partly matured, (such as the cherry) or on the other hand hang on long after the leaves have fallen to serve as food in fall and winter.

The myriads of leaf insects, to say nothing of the moths and fruit pests, form a large portion of the birds' bill of fare. Then again what about the borers, and other insects which live either in or under the bark?

The sap of trees is also enjoyed by some birds. For instance, the sapsucker will almost always be found at work where the Balm of Gilead poplar trees are plentiful.

What is our deduction from these facts? Is it not a fact the more nearly we can create these conditions in our gardens, the more birdlife we are likely to have, for after all the two great essentials to success in attracting birds are an abundance of food and ample protection.

Now I don't suppose it would be either practical or wise to have all our garden space taken up with plantings suitable only for bird life; most of us are far too fond of flowers to allow this, but on the other hand how often are gardens planned entirely without a thought for the welfare of our birds. With our system of laying out our cities in blocks what would be easier than to have our back garden separated by hedges. I am quite sure you will agree with me that the garden would look very much more artistic and natural than they are with our present system of board fences. There are many different kinds of trees, plants and vines which are quite adaptable for hedges. If this system could be established, just think what it would mean for the birds, and not only for the birds for I am inclined to think that living between board fences has a very detrimental effect on all our natures, and that if we could but trace where that hard or unsympathetic spot in our natures originated we would find, perhaps back a generation or two, that the rude obstruction of a high board fence around our gardens has had a great deal to do with it.

It would be difficult to name all the best trees and shrubs. Mr. Baynes in "Wild Bird Guests" gives a very complete and quite an extensive list of these with their relative fruiting seasons. I quite agree with Mr. W. E. Saunders that our own native trees are likely to prove more attractive than imported ones. We naturally take to our favorite