

MUST-HAVE HUMMINGBIRD FEEDERS

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Beauty in Your Own Backyard<sup>®</sup>

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BUTTERFLIES  
WITH BLOOMING  
SHRUBS

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birds grow up

## *pretty pots*

12+ TIPS TO BOOST  
YOUR LANDSCAPE

BALD EAGLE

# OUR EAGLES

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**no. 1**  
Bird & Garden  
MAGAZINE

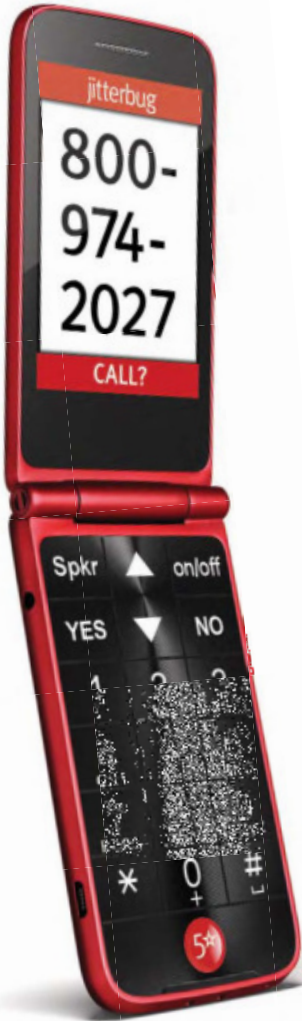
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BIRDS & BLOOMS EXTRA | JULY 2020



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Photo by Dave Welling

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SUMMER:  
Bluebirds



Award-Winning  
Artistry Brings You  
Carefree Style All  
Year Long!

# SONGBIRDS OF THE SEASONS TOTE COLLECTION

FALL:  
Blue Jays and  
Maple Leaves



WINTER:  
Cardinal  
Pair



SPRING:  
Orchard  
Goldfinch



Actual Size of Totes  
are 14" Wide x 11" Tall  
with a 9" Drop

## Fresh Style for Every Season

There's nothing like the music of a songbird to add a carefree, joyful note to the air! Take that feeling along, season after season, with these beautiful quilted totes, featuring the work of award-winning wildlife artists James Hautman and Joe Hautman.

Enjoy the company of sweetly perched songbirds paired with scenic art when you carry these stylish tote bags crafted in poly twill, featuring all-over diamond quilted stitching and colorful piping for a fashionable look. The 4 totes included in this vividly hued seasonal collection are: "Summer: Bluebirds," "Fall: Blue Jays and Maple Leaves," "Winter: Cardinal Pair" and "Spring: Orchard Goldfinch." The fabric lined interior includes two slip pockets and a zipper pocket while the top of the bag zips closed to keep your items secure. A silver-toned birdhouse charm hangs from the strap of each tote. Imported.

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# We All Need a Laugh

Whether your state has reopened and is rebounding from COVID-19 or you're still sheltering in place, I hope you've found some time to enjoy or improve your landscape or other outdoor spaces. I know I have! Not only do I know my backyard birds' feeding schedules like never before, but my husband and I have used this time to check a few projects off our list. He finished burying a drainpipe, and we re-mulched all of our



garden beds—something we'd been putting off for a few years.

Our field editors have used their time wisely as well. Boni Trombetta of West Chester, Pennsylvania, changed her mind about filling in her water garden and fixed it up instead. And Jennifer Broadstreet Hess of Marion, Kansas, is growing a sunflower patch full of different varieties just for fun.

But sometimes the most ambitious backyard projects don't go as planned. To acknowledge that mistakes happen, especially in gardening, we're sharing some hilarious backyard bloopers in "Garden Goofs" on page 14.

Another thing that's sure to bring a smile to your face is our collection of adorable photos of birds growing up in "Young Ones" on page 36. See some of your favorite fliers in various stages of growth, from hatchling to juvenile, and find out exactly what all of those terms mean.

Enjoy our take on lighthearted and uplifting content—I think we can all use it.

Kristen

KIRSTEN SCHRADER, EXECUTIVE EDITOR

## MAILBOX

I noticed a male and female cardinal acting as if they were kissing. I told my husband about it one day, and that afternoon my



May *Birds & Blooms Extra* arrived. I learned in "What's Hatching?" on page 38 that the female cardinal was actually being fed by the male as part of his nuptial feedings.

*Patricia Barron Herrin, Illinois*



## Celebrate

One of the most popular plants on the market, the Wave petunia, turns 25 this year! It won top honors from All-America Selections in 1995.

## HELLO, HUMMINGBIRDS

Check out a few cute yet functional feeders we love on page 24. And remember: When making sugar water at home, skip the red dye. It may harm the hummingbirds.



# Backyard Star

*Funky purple spires invite pollinators and hummingbirds.*

## WILDLIFE BENEFITS

After the flowers fade and dry, liatris still attracts wildlife. Songbirds hover around the fluffy seed heads, picking away at the seeds.

## Liatris

*Liatris* spp., Zones 3 to 9

Also known as blazing star, liatris is a beacon to butterflies and hummingbirds. The purple flowers bloom in late summer or early fall, depending on the species, and last for a month or two. Liatris can be planted in poor soil, but needs plenty of sun. Many species are native to the eastern U.S.

**Attracts:** 🐦 🦋 🌸

**Light needs:** Full sun.

**Size:** 2 to 5 feet tall.

**Grown for:** Borders, cottage gardens and meadows.

**Foliage:** Lance-shaped leaves.

**Cultivars to try:** Alba tends to grow a little shorter than other liatris and has white flowers.

For a smaller plant with purple blooms, grow Kobold Original.





Male blue grosbeak  
in a serviceberry tree

# Sapphires in the Rough

*Look for blue grosbeaks in the brush along roadsides and in old fields.* **BY SALLY ROTH**

**A**ny sighting of a blue grosbeak is a cause for celebration, because these beautiful birds just aren't that common. Although their nesting range covers most of the lower half of the country, spotting one is a rare treat.

"Most people see them only fleetingly during spring migration," says Bubba Scales, who owns Wild Birds Unlimited in Gainesville, Florida, with his wife, Ingrid. These blue birds are sometimes mistaken for indigo buntings, another blue Neotropical migrant that arrives at feeders in spring. Warm brown wingbars and a huge bill set blue grosbeaks apart. The female is tawny brown.

Blue grosbeaks may visit feeders anywhere during migration, but during the breeding season, they aren't backyard birds—unless your backyard includes acres of the shrub-dotted field habitat this species seeks. Bubba, a self-described bird nerd, has feeders on his 10-acre property. This is where he filmed blue grosbeaks visiting, one of 600-plus short videos he's posted online. "Blue grosbeaks visited this feeder every day for four months!" he says.

Nesting season lasts all summer because blue grosbeaks often raise two broods. Look for male birds singing their musical warbles from utility wires or the tops of



Female blue grosbeaks sport muted brown feathers.

small trees. The small nest, often utilizing snakeskins, is built just a few feet off the ground in a bush, briar patch or tangle of vines. Up to five nestlings may cozy up in the little cup.

Meaty grasshoppers make up the biggest part of this grosbeak's diet, bolstered by other insects and seeds, which are plentiful near the nesting sites. Still, often only a single pair of grosbeaks lays claim to a large field.

If a blue grosbeak does grace your feeder, take Bubba's advice and serve its favorite food. "Number one is sunflower chips!" he says, along with whole sunflower seeds and millet. Then enjoy the visit of this uncommon bird for as long as it stays.

## THE FEED

*More about this mysterious blue flier.*



Blue grosbeak pair at their nest.

## HARD TO FIND

No one knows why these beautiful birds aren't more abundant. In fact, the Cornell Lab of Ornithology reports that the blue grosbeak is so scarce that virtually all aspects of its biology are poorly known.

## NO SIGN OF DECLINE

Unlike some bird species, blue grosbeaks did not experience a decline in population in the last 50 years. In fact, there may be more of these birds around today.



Although this sweet songster spends the spring and summer in our southern states, it must be considered as a rather scarce bird there."

JOHN JAMES AUDUBON  
IN *THE BIRDS OF AMERICA*, 1834



# Shrubs to Love

*Boost summer color and pollinator appeal with these plants.*

BY MELINDA MYERS

1



## WILDLIFE MAGNET

Buttonbush is a welcome sight for more than just pollinators—a variety of birds are attracted to the seed heads in winter.



## 1 Buttonbush

CEPHALANTHUS  
OCCIDENTALIS

ZONES 3 TO 11

SIZE: MORE THAN 6 FEET  
TALL AND WIDE

Watch bees, butterflies and hummingbirds flock to these fragrant, spherical white flowers. Buttonbush is also a host for several types of caterpillars. The round fruit persists through winter, providing food for a variety of birds. Grow it in full to partial sun and moist soil.

**Why we love it:** This long-flowering plant provides months and months of enjoyment.

## 2 Kalm

### St. John's wort

HYPERICUM KALMIANUM  
ZONES 4 TO 7; SIZE: 2 TO  
3 FEET TALL AND WIDE

This shrub's blue-green foliage is the perfect backdrop for its bright yellow flowers. You'll enjoy the buzz of visiting bees and, for those in more mild climates, the evergreen foliage. For a more compact cultivar with fine foliage, try out the Gemo.

**Why we love it:** Not only does this adaptable plant tolerate drought conditions once it's been established, but it also handles poor soil.



## 3 Bush honeysuckle

DIERVILLA SPP., ZONES 4 TO 7

SIZE: 3 TO 5 FEET TALL AND WIDE

This native shrub is not an invasive honeysuckle, unlike *Lonicera japonica*. The sulfur yellow blooms and visiting pollinators appear during the middle of summer. For a compact option, choose Cool Splash with its cream and green variegated foliage.

**Why we love it:** It's a host plant for the fawn sphinx moth, and birds eat seeds that come after the flowers.

**DEER-RESISTANT BEAUTY** *If you're looking for shrubs that add visual interest to the garden and that deer tend to leave alone, consider including boxwood, common lilac, Carolina allspice or spicebush in your next landscaping project.*



## 4 Potentilla

DASIPHORA FRUTICOSA FLORIBUNDA, ZONES 2 TO 6  
SIZE: 1 TO 4 FEET TALL AND 2 TO 4 FEET WIDE

The bright buttercup yellow flowers look stunning and attract local bees. To keep this traditional summer bloomer looking its best, regularly prune out a third of the old stems.

**Why we love it:** Though it prefers to be in full sun with well-draining soil, this hardy shrub can withstand both poor, dry soils and extreme cold.



## TOP 10



# 5

### 5 Virginia sweetspire

*ITEA VIRGINICA*, ZONES 5 TO 9; SIZE: 3 TO 6 FEET TALL AND WIDE

The Virginia sweetspire's white flowers, which give off a slight fragrance, attract hummingbirds, bees and butterflies.

Grow in sun or shade and moist, acidic soils. Select Henry's Garnet for superior flowering or the smaller Little Henry for narrow spaces.

**Why we love it:** The leaves turn from green to yellow, orange and reddish purple colors during autumn.



# 6

### 6 Summersweet

*CLETHRA ALNIFOLIA*, ZONES 4 TO 9; SIZE: 4 TO 8 FEET TALL AND 4 TO 6 FEET WIDE

Entice hummingbirds, butterflies and bees with the fragrant white flowers of summersweet.

This plant is tolerant of both shade and moist soil and will form colonies perfect for naturalizing, unless you remove the root suckers. For a more compact cultivar, try Sugartina Crystalina.

**Why we love it:** Go ahead and plant this one in a shadowy spot—this is one of the few shrubs that flower in the shade.



# 7

### 7 New Jersey tea

*CEANOTHUS AMERICANUS*, ZONES 3 TO 8  
SIZE: 2 TO 3 FEET TALL AND WIDE

This compact native shrub attracts a wide range of pollinators, including butterflies and native bees. You may even see hummingbirds stopping by. Plus, the deer tend to leave it alone. Its deep root system keeps it from being susceptible to many difficult-to-manage conditions.

**Why we love it:** Plant several of these shrubs together to create a low-growing, drought tolerant hedge.

**FUSS-FREE** *Part of the appeal of shrubs is the lack of maintenance they require.*

*Always check the plant's hardiness zone and follow any specific instructions, but most perennial shrubs require minimal work when planted in the correct conditions.*



# 8

### 8 Tianshan seven-son flower

*HEPTACODIUM MICONIOIDES* 'MINHEP', ZONES 5 TO 8; SIZE: 8 TO 12 FEET TALL AND 5 TO 7 FEET WIDE

Providing year-round appeal, this is a smaller, more compact version of *Heptacodium*. The bark is quite beautiful, but the real show happens when the white flowers bloom in late summer in clusters of seven, hence the seven in the name.

**Why we love it:** Rose-purple sepals appear after the white flowers.





## 9 Rose of Sharon

*HIBISCUS SYRIACUS*, ZONES 5 TO 8; SIZE: 8 TO 12 FEET TALL AND 6 TO 10 FEET WIDE

Bring in hummingbirds with the colorful blossoms of this lovely late-summer bloomer. You'll also find bees, butterflies and other pollinators visiting the white, pink, red, purple or violet flowers. Grow in full to part sun and moist, well-draining soil.

**Why we love it:** This incredibly adaptable shrub grows in almost every type of soil, except for any that is extremely wet or dry.

### PLANT SOME TREES, TOO

*Welcome more birds and pollinators with these options.*

- Crape myrtle
- Japanese stewartia
- Desert willow
- Smoketree
- Golden rain
- Silver linden



## 10 Elderberry

*SAMBUCUS NIGRA CANADENSIS*, ZONES 3 TO 9  
SIZE: 5 TO 12 FEET TALL AND WIDE

Give this shrub plenty of room to spread and grow, then watch as both butterflies and bees gather on flowers and as the birds flock to the ripe fruit. Although it prefers full sun and moist soil, it tolerates drier conditions once it's established.

**Why we love it:** Elderberry suckers form large and lush thickets, which are perfect hiding spots for songbirds.

*Melinda Myers depends on low-maintenance shrubs to add beauty and year-round appeal to her garden.*



# Garden Goofs

*Mistakes happen, but they often result in tales worth repeating. Here are some humorous blunders these gardeners won't forget.*



## Blown Away

After the catkins have finished falling from the oak trees in our yard each spring, I have the honor (according to my wife, Judy) of hauling the leaf blower up to the roof to blow them off.

As I was finishing my task last year, I noticed some catkins snagged in a spiderweb on the top of the bathroom vent pipe. I took a passing swing over the pipe with the

blower, but the debris stayed in place. I became more insistent, passing over the vent again with no success.

Determined to clear the vent pipe, I gave it a whopping 207 mph blast to be sure I moved the entangled catkins. And I did.

Unbeknownst to me, I moved more than just the catkins!

Judy met me at the door and said, "We've got to call the plumber! The toilet blew up!"

Apparently she had been in the bathroom cleaning the toilet bowl as I shot the blast of air down the pipe. It shot the water out of the toilet, drenching her.

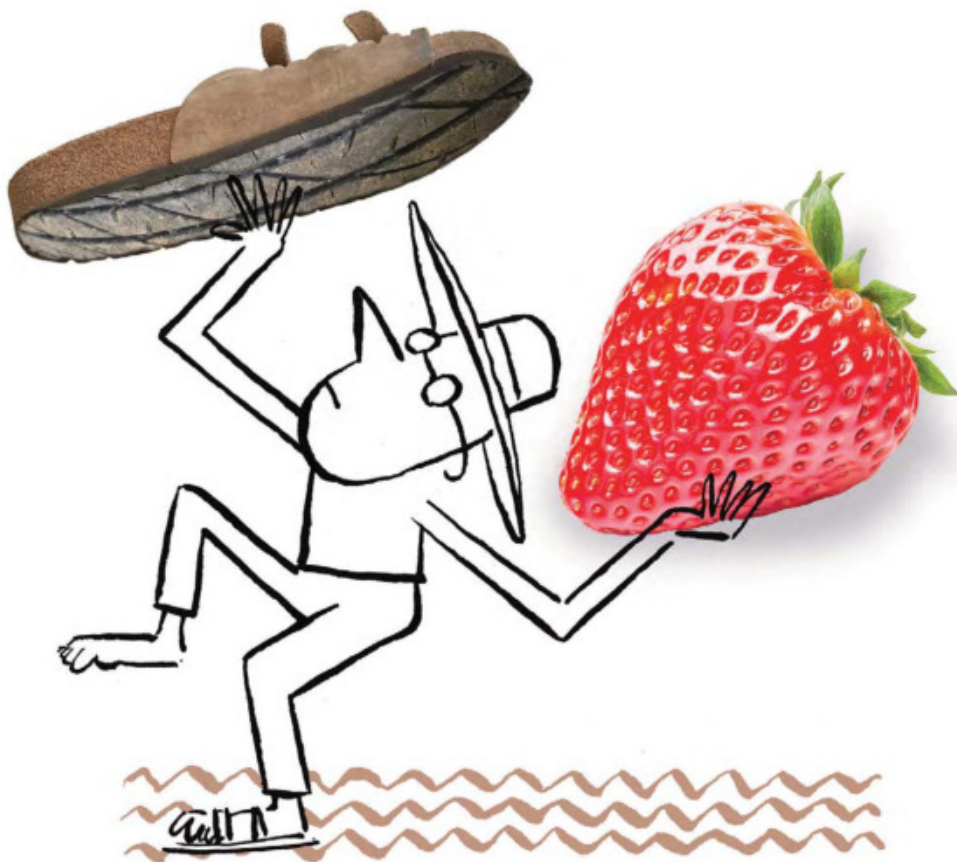
Needless to say, I'm not allowed on the roof anymore. And at my age, maybe that's for the best.  
*David Murray*  
*Seekonk, Massachusetts*



## Tireless Treads

I was raised on a farm, and when I had my first home, I immediately started a garden near a small alley. I grew vegetables, but the strawberries were my pride and joy. I noticed tire tracks going down the rows of strawberries and thought someone was driving through and picking them, so I went on a garden watch. Several days later, I discovered the culprit: The soles of my sandals had a tire tread pattern. It's still a little embarrassing to this day.

*Charles DeHaven  
Hondo, Texas*



## Itching for Transplants

I was searching my property for the perfect ground cover to grow in front of the fence we just installed. I found a green, leafy vine that looked like an easy grower. I spent hours transplanting it with pride.

What cropped up next was not my transplanted vines, but a nasty rash that itched like crazy. I went to the family doctor to find relief.

"Poison ivy," said the doctor.

I echoed what he said. He stared at me incredulously and said, "Don't you know what

poison ivy looks like?"

"I do now!" I said.

Today I laugh about the entire thing, and I haven't played with poison ivy since.

*Janet Darling  
Little Rock, Arkansas*



## Rough Start

I started clearing brush in the backyard with my chain saw, but it just wasn't running smoothly as it used to, and it was extremely hard to start. So I took it in for a simple tuneup.

A few days later, I picked it up and returned to my brush project.

The saw started up like a dream. I took a break for lunch, but when I returned, it wouldn't start again.

I called the shop and told the folks there that I wasn't too happy with their

work. They were very apologetic and had me bring it back so they could fix it.

About 30 minutes later, the shop called and told me that my chain saw was ready to pick up.

"What was wrong with it?" I asked.

"It ran just fine after we added some gas!" the mechanic laughed.

I was too embarrassed to pick the saw up. So I sent my wife.

*Gary Lund  
Longwood, Florida*

## ESSENTIALS

### ▼ GROUND BEETLES

Hiding during the day beneath the surface of your garden, ground beetles come out at night to feast. They eat dozens of common pests, including slugs and snails, and also have been used to control invasive, nonnative gypsy moths.



### ▲ SYRPHID FLIES

These insects may look like bees, but don't be fooled! Syrphid flies, also known as flower flies, don't just have a beelike appearance—they're pollinators, too. Some syrphid fly larvae eat aphids, a garden nuisance. One larva can devour several hundred aphids before entering its pupal life stage.

# Backyard Helpers

*Welcome these beneficial creatures into your garden.*



### ▲ LACEWINGS

Lacewing larvae do a great job of eating aphids. But while ladybugs, the other famous aphid eaters, tend to spread themselves out over a large area, lacewings set themselves apart by staying in a more concentrated section, which can really take care of those pests. You can buy larvae online, but growing a pollinator-friendly garden attracts them naturally.

### ▼ LADYBUGS

Sometimes known as lady beetles or ladybirds, these insects have an aphid-eating reputation for good reason. But they also help keep other nuisance pests, such as mites and mealybugs, under control. If you notice a large number of ladybuglike beetles around a window or in your home, don't blame ladybugs! You're probably actually dealing with Asian lady beetles, an invasive and mostly harmful species.







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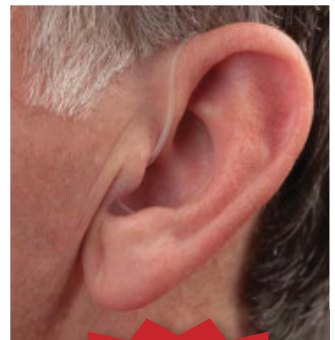
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— J. Fitzgerald, VA



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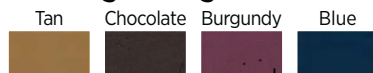
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# Soaking Up the Sun

*Feathered friends enjoy the warm days of summer.*



This cute juvenile male ruby-throated hummingbird was investigating the zinnias in my garden. I watched him as he landed on the stem of this flower and attempted a tightrope act up the stalk. All hummingbirds are fun to watch, but I think juveniles are especially intriguing with their wide-eyed curiosity of their new world.

Carol Holliday  
TERRE HAUTE, INDIANA

**BRIGHT  
SIGHTS**

Zinnias aren't the only vivid flowers that attract hummingbirds—bee balm, catmint, eastern red columbine and honeysuckle all boast bold colors known to draw in these fast fliers.



## **This shot**

was taken during a hot summer day at the Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum in Tucson. I had never seen a female varied bunting eat from a cactus fruit, so it was very exciting for me to snap this moment.

**Dawn Arjes**

PAW PAW, ILLINOIS



### **DESERT WILDLIFE**

The Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum hosts a variety of birds, including Anna's hummingbirds, cactus wrens and elf owls.



## **A pair of sandhill cranes**

have made their summer home on our property for the last few years. They have provided countless hours of enjoyment as we watch them preen, do their jumps and dances, and care for their colts. And their sound has to be heard to be believed!

**Julie Heifort** ST. FRANCIS, MINNESOTA





## I took this

in my wife's flower garden. Watching this female ruby-throated hummingbird chase the butterfly away from "her" flower was a real treat. It was an amazing sight to capture.

**Paul Blossom**

BRAINTREE, VERMONT



## I absolutely love pelicans.

This one was trying to convince me that he was bashful, but I didn't believe him—I had just witnessed him fighting to get fish scraps that some fishermen were throwing away. His vibrant colors stood out against the water.

**Cary Mathis**

FULTON, TEXAS







**While on a vacation** in Indian Rocks Beach, Florida, we stayed at a motel right next to a skimmer nesting area. My greatest joy was just sitting and watching them for hours.

**Kathryn Herndon**  
FLORAL CITY, FLORIDA

**I frequently** cut a melon in half and put it out on a feeder just to see who will turn up to eat. On this particular day, it was a gray catbird.

**Keith Anderson**  
PONCA CITY, OKLAHOMA

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# AMERICAN EAGLES



Bald eagle

Get to know two of North America's largest and most magnificent birds of prey that share a name but little else.

BY KENN AND KIMBERLY KAUFMAN

DAVE WELLING (2)





Golden eagle



# IT'S AN AWE-INSPIRING EXPERIENCE

to look up and see a bald eagle or a golden eagle soaring overhead. With similar names and resemblance in their younger life stages, it's natural to assume they are closely related. But aside from the fact that they both belong to the hawk family, these two eagle species are very distant relatives, and they have extremely different lifestyles.

## Two Groups of Eagles

On a global scale, the name eagle is applied to more than 60 members of the hawk family. They're a diverse selection, mostly large to medium in size, but not necessarily related. The two North American eagles represent distinct groups.

The bald eagle is a typical member of a group of about eight species known as sea eagles or fish eagles. Widespread in North America, Europe, Asia, Africa, Australia and many islands, they're most often seen along coastlines or around lakes and rivers. The golden eagle belongs to a group that includes about a dozen species, and they're also found on the same five continents. However, they generally live in dry interior country, not along coastlines, and they're less likely to be found on islands.

Although these two groups of eagles are equally widespread, the bald eagle itself is a specialty of North America, found only from Alaska and Canada south to northern Mexico. The golden eagle is widespread in North America, especially in the West, and it also lives across the wilder regions of Europe, Asia and parts of northern Africa.

## On the Menu

Both of these eagles are powerful predators, and both species have varied diets. The tops of their menus are different, though: Bald eagles prefer fish, while golden eagles feed mainly on small mammals.







An adult golden eagle feeds young in its nest on a cliff. The wingspan of a golden eagle may reach 7 feet (left).





Bald eagles often hunt by flying over the water and then swooping down to grab a fish near the surface with their strong talons. They also steal fish that have been caught by other birds, like ospreys or other bald eagles, but they're just as likely to eat dead fish that have washed up on shore.

Golden eagles, by contrast, almost never eat fish. Their mainstays are mammals like jack rabbits, prairie dogs and ground squirrels, and they also catch large birds such as grouse and ducks. And, while this might not seem to fit with their majestic looks, both species are scavengers, taking advantage of easy sources of food like roadkill and other carrion.

### A Nest Fit for an Eagle

Both bald and golden eagles build large nests out of sticks. In both species, pairs may use the same nest for years, continuing to bring new material to add to it each year, creating a massive structure. The two eagle species prefer

## A MAJOR COMEBACK

Fifty years ago, bald eagles were seriously endangered. Their populations had been decimated by illegal shooting and especially by the effects of DDT and other pesticides. Fewer than 500 pairs were left in the Lower 48, and most of those pairs were failing to raise young. With increased protection, the eagles have made a spectacular recovery since the 1970s, and there are now well over 10,000 pairs in the Lower 48, plus many more in Canada and Alaska.







An adult bald eagle soars in flight. At left, a parent bald eagle feeds its young.

different kinds of nest sites, however. Bald eagles usually place their nests in large trees, although they'll sometimes build the nest on a cliff or even on the ground on an island. Golden eagles usually choose a site on a cliff, but on flat land where no cliffs are available, they will build nests in large trees.

In both species, the female lays one to three eggs, with two being the typical number. Although each parent takes part in incubating the eggs, the female does more of it, and the male often brings her food at the nest. After the eggs hatch, the female stays with them most of the time at first while the male hunts to bring back food for the family. Later, both parents will go off to find food for the growing eaglets.

Raising a family is a lengthy process for these big birds. Golden eagles incubate eggs

for about six weeks until they hatch; then it's about another 10 weeks until the young learn to fly. For bald eagles, the incubation period is about five weeks, but it may be another 11 to 13 weeks before the young eagles take to the air.

No matter how many times you see an eagle, it always takes your breath away. The more you understand about their lifestyles and behaviors, the better you can protect their populations and ensure that future generations will also gasp in awe at the sight of these magnificent birds. ●

*Kenn and Kimberly Kaufman live near Lake Erie in northwestern Ohio, where bald eagles are numerous. For several years, Kimberly was an official bald eagle nest monitor for the state's Division of Wildlife.*



# *THE* PERKS *OF* POTS



Use containers to jazz up  
entryways, hide garden eyesores,  
create privacy and more.

**BY LUKE MILLER**

Left: Blue Jangles  
hydrangeas are  
perfectly at home  
in containers.



Add interest  
to pots with  
creative combos  
like sweet potato  
vine, lavender  
and tomato.





## CONTAINER GARDENING IS AS HOT AS EVER.

People love pots because they're versatile—you can choose whatever styles, colors and sizes you wish—and they can be filled with an almost unlimited selection of plants.

While the best-looking containers often feature one upright focal plant surrounded by sprawling fillers and falling spillers, anything goes.

"There's a general freedom to put in almost anything and everything—shrubs, annuals, perennials and bulbs, as well as decorative pieces," says Eric Liskey, owner of Landscapes by Liskey, a landscape design and installation firm in West Des Moines, Iowa. "It's a fun way to make a statement that reflects one's own style."

As a landscape designer, Eric sees the ways gardeners use containers firsthand. He advises his customers not to be shy. "Go big! Large plants make a dramatic impact," he says. "Plants like cannas, ferns and elephant ears create a lot of 'visual mass,' which really makes a big statement."

Given a prominent position and massed for extra impact,





Pots of calibrachoa lend color and definition to the steps of an entryway.

containers serve any number of roles in the garden.

### Hide an eyesore.

Containers mask an unsightly item or block a view. A group of stout containers can hide low-lying items like utilities and hose reels, while taller containers will cover even larger items. “You can use structures in containers, such as small panels, trellises and obelisks,” Eric says, referring to the additional height they offer, “then grow vines on them to create a green screen.”



Sweet potato vine, sedum and coleus

### Decorate an entryway.

Try naturally adorning your doorway with containers. Fill them with plants that reflect the landscape’s formal or informal nature. Or take a few hints from your home’s architecture. “Doorways often have strong vertical elements—trim, columns, windows—and I like to complement those with vertical potted plants,” Eric says. “Grasses, cannas and bird of paradise plants are among the best.”

### Add ambiance.

Beauty is in the eye of the beholder—just like ambiance. “Plants definitely have a style,” Eric says. “More contemporary homes and decor are complemented by succulents, spiky grasses, horsetails and sedges, while traditional homes tend to be enhanced by old-fashioned plantings such as fuchsias, begonias and trailers like bacopas. For a country feel, try daisy-type flowers such as black-eyed

Susans, zinnias, coneflowers and asters.”

### Provide a sense of enclosure.

If you have a patio or deck, containers may be what you need to add privacy. “Don’t overdo it,” Eric says. “It does not need to be a solid wall. Just a few pots with the same, repeated design will mark the edge of the space and create the feel of an outdoor room.”

### Mark a grade change or steps.

“Containers make excellent visual markers that signal the transition from one space to another,” Eric says. “For example, at the top of stairs, pots flanking the top step clearly define the transition.”


While attractive plants are a bonus, they’re secondary to the containers themselves. “Use large, heavy containers that are weatherproof so they can stay outside all year,” Eric says. “Large urns can even be functional in this way without any plantings in them.”

### Feed the pollinators.

One rather unorthodox use for containers is to attract wildlife, particularly the larvae of monarch butterflies. “Put a few medium to large containers in your flower beds and plant milkweed in them to attract monarchs,” Eric says. “Some native milkweeds are aggressive spreaders, but in containers you don’t have to worry about them invading your beds.” ●

*Luke Miller decorates his covered entryway with pots of dried flowers, evergreen foliage and birch branches.*





Spikes of purple fountain grass add height and movement when grown with sedum and purslane.



## TIPS FOR CONTAINER SUCCESS

Landscape designer Eric Liskey shares his best advice.

- Group containers in odd numbers—threes and fives—which feel more natural.
- Use multiple sizes for a more dynamic effect.
- Tie containers together visually with a shared material or color.
- Limit small pots to one species; large pots can accommodate three or more species.
- Create a stage for tall focal-point plants with mounding, monochromatic companions.
- Add extra color and texture with soil toppers such as marbles, colorful rocks or pine needles.
- Grow herbs and small veggies in pots if you don't have room for a vegetable garden.



# young ones





BEFORE YOU KNOW IT, THEY'RE ALL GROWN UP!  
READERS SHARE EXPERIENCES WITH SMALL,  
FLUFFY, FUZZY BABY BIRDS.



**A JUVENILE CHIPPING**  
sparrow was perched in my  
lilac tree and then took a  
short flight to my fence. It  
looked so proud sitting there,  
as if to say, "Thanks, Mom,  
I can fly!" It was so tiny but  
so brave—all puffed up,  
enjoying life.

**Connie Redinger**  
INDIANA, PENNSYLVANIA





### **BALTIMORE ORIOLES**

built a nest on a tree branch above my porch. Once their eggs hatched, I enjoyed watching both parents feed and take care of the young. I was lucky to see this fledgling settle on my fence. I love how its feathers look and how my tree is reflected in its eye.

**Marybeth Zilnicki**

RIVERHEAD, NEW YORK

**I FOUND THIS** adorable gosling at Lakewood's Belmar Park, home to a large variety of birds and a favorite spot with walking trails, ponds and an abundance of wildlife. I use photos like this to create watercolor paintings.

**Chuck Danford**

LITTLETON, COLORADO







**WHEN I FIRST NOTICED** this little one watching me, I thought it was a baby owl. Upon closer inspection, I realized it was a young American kestrel. Because it wasn't doing much flying, I had time to grab my camera for this shot. The kestrel was under a butterfly bush at our old house in Woodland, California.

**Dianne Braun**  
SOUTHPORT, NORTH CAROLINA



“ This limpkin parent was efficiently plucking clams from the lake bottom, bringing them to shore and breaking them open for a meal. An immature bird was close behind, eager to learn and mimicking every move. **Robert Broome** WINTER GARDEN, FLORIDA ”





**A MALLARD FAMILY** took up residence in our neighborhood lake. One duckling exploring a grassy area nearby was so intrigued by a dandelion! It reminded me of the saying “Always take time to stop and smell the flowers!”

**Raven Ouellette**  
SUDBURY, ONTARIO

**THESE AMERICAN ROBINS** were waiting to be fed in early spring. Their nest was on a farm tractor next to the gearshift, so I had to wait until they fledged to use the tractor.

**Daryl Beck**  
PLEASANT HILL, MISSOURI







“ My husband and I feed a pair of black phoebes. They snatch mealworms right out of the air when we toss them. The birds brought their new brood, and this juvenile posed on a patio chair. The photo is special to us because of our relationship with these amazing fliers. **Jennifer Meyer** MISSION VIEJO, CALIFORNIA ”





“ Finally, a young eastern bluebird! Along with our neighbors, we put out many nest boxes and have been planting wildlife gardens with native shrubs and trees to attract these beauties. It takes a village to raise a bluebird. ”

**Leslie Abram** CODRINGTON, ONTARIO





Hatchlings



Nestling

## GROWING PAINS

Find out what these common bird life stages mean and how robins look in some phases.

### ● HATCHLING

A bird after it hatches from an egg. It usually does not have feathers and its eyes are closed. Some birds are born with feathers.

### ● NESTLING

A bird developing in the nest. This bird is not yet ready to leave the comfort of the nest, cannot fly and needs to be fed.



Fledgling

### ● FLEDGLING OR JUVENILE

A bird in its first coat of feathers that is capable of moving about on its own. Its feet can grip a branch and it has developed feathers. At this stage, a bird will venture out of the nest and start to learn how to survive without its parents. It has not reached full adult plumage, and the feathers are likely to be loose and soft. A bird in this stage often looks notably different from an adult. No need to be alarmed if you find a bird like this out of the nest—its parents are likely nearby.

### ● SUBADULT

A bird whose plumage is no longer juvenile but not quite adult.



Juvenile

### ● IMMATURE

Any bird that isn't an adult yet, including those with juvenile or subadult plumages. The term is commonly used to reference large birds like bald eagles and some gulls that don't achieve full adult plumage until they are 4 or 5 years old. ●



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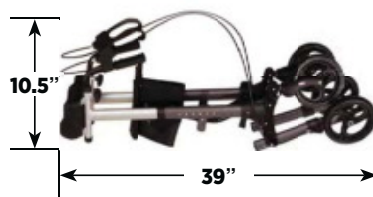
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It's a cruel fact of life, as we age, gravity takes over. Our muscles droop, our bodies sag and the weight of the world seems to be planted squarely on our shoulders. We dread taking a fall, so we find ourselves walking less and less—and that only makes matters worse.

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# Ask the Experts

*How to keep blooms healthy and identify backyard visitors.*

**Q** Do Anna's hummingbirds normally have white-tipped tails?

Kathy Hitzemann FREELAND, WASHINGTON

**Kenn and Kimberly:** For most of the North American species of hummingbirds, including Anna's, the females and young birds have big white spots on the tips of their outer tail feathers, which the adult males don't have. When the birds are perched, those white spots are often hidden by dark central tail feathers, so it's easy to overlook the white patches unless you get a close look while the birds are hovering and fanning their tails. When the birds are perched, sometimes the tail feathers are disarranged so the white spots are revealed.

Anna's  
hummingbird





## ASK THE EXPERTS



### Q What kind of moth is this?

**Nancy Burall** NORTH RICHLAND HILLS, TEXAS

**Kenn and Kimberly:** This beautiful and streamlined creature is a tersa sphinx moth. Adults may be sluggish in the daytime, but they fly around rapidly at dusk and night. When they visit gardens, they hover in front of flowers to feed, just as hummingbirds do. Caterpillars of this moth feed on plants in the madder family, including pentas. Although tersa sphinx moths sometimes wander as far north as Canada, they mainly live in the tropics and in the southeastern states, from Texas to Florida and into North and South Carolina.



### Q My Rustic Rubra Saucer magnolia bloomed twice this year and it's producing seedpods for the first time. Is this unusual?

**Jim Flindall** ST. CATHARINES, ONTARIO

**Melinda:** Plants often bloom out of their normal cycle when they experience unusual weather. Drought or temperatures that are cooler than normal can trigger some spring-flowering plants to bloom again in summer or fall. Saucer magnolias rarely form seedpods. Stressful weather conditions can stimulate seed formation. Continue providing proper care and your tree will be fine, although it may have fewer flowers next spring.




### Q I saw this hawk in the woods near my house. What species is it?

**Sheryl Fleming** HOFFMEISTER, NEW YORK

**Kenn and Kimberly:** It's a special treat to get a good look at this bird. The brown back and the wide black and white bands across the tail mark this as an adult broad-winged hawk. Unlike the red-tailed hawks that can be seen in open country and along roadsides all year, broad-winged hawks are forest birds. They're often hard to approach. In summer, they live in wooded regions of the eastern United States and Canada, mostly east of the Rockies. In fall, they migrate to the tropics, going as far south as South America.






**Q** My bougainvillea bush is doing great but doesn't flower. What's going on?

**Peter Grant** CRYSTAL RIVER, FLORIDA

**Melinda:** Too much shade, water, nitrogen fertilizer and pruning can all reduce or prevent flowering. Overwatering can negatively impact bougainvilleas that are native to arid locations. Excess nitrogen encourages leaf and stem growth at the expense of flowers. Overpruning or pruning at the wrong time can eliminate flower buds. Prune right after the plants finish flowering if you need to control their sizes and shapes.



A close-up photograph of an American goldfinch perched on the seed head of a sunflower. The bird is bright yellow with a black cap and a black wing bar. The sunflower has yellow petals and a brown, textured seed head. The background is a soft, out-of-focus green.

American goldfinch

**Q** Is leaving up old sunflower blooms helpful for wildlife? **Joan Miller** SCOTT, ARIZONA

**Kenn and Kimberly:** Of course many gardeners deadhead regularly to keep things looking tidy, and for some plants it can help them produce more blooms. But whenever possible and practical, leaving spent flower heads in place is a great thing to do for wildlife. This is especially true for sunflowers and other members of the daisy family. They produce abundant seeds that attract finches, buntings, native sparrows and others, serving as natural bird feeders for as long as the seeds last. One compromise is to deadhead the flowers in the front of your garden and to leave the plants in less conspicuous areas untidy for a backyard bounty.





## Q What are these pretty white flowers?

**Tom and Linda Christie** OWL'S HEAD, MAINE

**Melinda:** The native little bluests (*Houstonia caerulea*) found a home in your lawn. You may also find these small but showy spring flowers growing in fields, along roadsides, in forests, near shorelines and high in the mountains. The flowers may be blue, or white like yours, with a yellow center. These plants prefer full sun or partial shade and moist, slightly acidic soil.

## Q How do you treat and prevent mildew on phlox?

**Kelly Groth** WINONA, MINNESOTA

**Melinda:** Consider replacing your mildew-susceptible phlox with one of the resistant varieties. This is the easiest way to manage this disease. If you want to keep the plant, consider removing one-fourth of the stems in spring to increase air flow and light penetration, which helps reduce the risk of powdery mildew. Make sure plants receive full sun and are not overcrowded. Consider planting something shorter in front of the phlox to mask the diseased leaves but not the flowers. As you already know, the phlox will survive the disease and return next year. Remove the diseased leaves in fall to reduce the source of infection for next season. Lightweight horticulture oils are an organic option for treating this disease. As always, read and follow label directions, whether using organic, natural or synthetic products.



## Q A friend gave this mystery flower to our daughter before she passed away, and we planted it. What could it be?

**Bob Finan** PINE BUSH, NEW YORK

**Melinda:** The yellow flowers inspired its common name: sundrops (*Oenothera*). As you have discovered, the plant is quite vigorous and may require regular dividing to contain its growth. Sundrops thrive in full sun, and well-draining soil is a must. Watch for bees and butterflies stopping by the brilliant blooms for a sip of nectar.

## MEET THE EXPERTS



*Kimberly and Kenn Kaufman are the duo behind the Kaufman field guide series. They speak and lead bird trips all over the world.*



*Melinda Myers, a nationally known, award-winning garden expert and TV/radio host, has written more than 20 books.*



Explore the  
Great Smoky  
Mountains via  
Newfound Gap.



# Adventures in the South

*Explore nature in Great Smoky  
Mountains National Park.*

BY CHRISTINE PETERSON



Black-throated  
blue warbler

## A PARK FOR LISTERS

*Visit this year-round birding hot spot.*

Habitat types—and the birds within them—vary greatly in Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Low elevations reveal Louisiana waterthrushes or eastern meadowlarks. In hardwood forests, look out for ovenbirds,

black-throated blue warblers and white-breasted nuthatches. High elevations include hermit thrushes, winter wrens, Canada warblers and saw-whet owls. About 60 species stay year-round.

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**3** With winding roads and scenic vistas, the Great Smoky Mountains are a perfect place to tour by car. Bisect the park from lowlands to mountaintops on **Highway 441**, then drive **Cades Cove Loop Road** to see historic churches and other structures.



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# How do you beat the heat in your summer garden?

*Readers share tried-and-true tips for staying cool and keeping plants healthy.*

With **sunscreen on and a bottle of water nearby**, I work in the garden around 9 a.m. to avoid mosquitoes. I begin with the sunny areas and move to shady ones as the morning wears on. I finish no later than noon, often earlier. **Juli Seyfried** CINCINNATI, OHIO

---

I use a **small adjustable umbrella** to protect me from the direct sun.

**Nancy Pedersen** CENTER CITY, MINNESOTA

---

I work in the **late afternoon** because it's light out until 9 p.m. **Cleone Benson Larson** SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH



**Misters in the garden.** Find the kind designed for the end of a hose at any home improvement store. They cool a large area with subtle mist and provide water to thirsty plants and insects. **Kathryn Rucci** ORLANDO, FLORIDA



**I water early** in the morning so less water evaporates throughout the day.

**Jimmy Vicars**  
PRINCETON, WEST VIRGINIA

---

**Drought tolerant plants** are a must. We're on a well, and the last thing we want is to have it run dry because we're watering the garden. Bee balm and coneflowers are ideal for dry conditions.

**Jen St. Louis**  
ELMIRA, ONTARIO

## YOUR TURN!

**Q.** What's your best bird feeding tip for fall?

Share your answer with us at [birdsandblooms.com/submit](https://birdsandblooms.com/submit).



YOU DON'T SAY



# Caption This!

*An opportunistic squirrel finds easy access to the bird feeder.*

**J**eff Rader of Bowling Green, Ohio, discovered a squirrel “standing” on a shrub so it could reach the feeder. House finches occasionally joined the furry creature for a meal!

## SHARE YOUR CAPTION

Your funny caption for this feeder scene could appear in the next issue. Share your clever idea at [birdsandblooms.com/caption](https://birdsandblooms.com/caption).

LAST ISSUE'S  
**WINNING  
CAPTION**  
“I think it’s called  
a molar.”

SUBMITTED BY  
**JEAN MATYCZYN**  
LOWELL, MICHIGAN





BUTTERFLY LIFE

# Salute the Admiral

*Watch for these majestic butterflies to sail into your backyard.*







## *Red admiral*

### WINGSPAN

1¾ to 2½ inches.

### DISTINCTIVE MARKINGS

The forewing is dark with a red-orange stripe and white dots and the hindwing boasts a red-orange border.

### HABITAT

Found nearly everywhere. Males are especially active in the afternoon and evening as they look for females.

### HOST PLANTS

Nettles—stinging nettle, false nettle, wood nettle.

### NECTAR FAVORITES

Adults visit flowers but prefer tree sap, fermenting fruit and animal droppings.

### RANGE

United States, Mexico and southern Canada, plus Europe and western Asia.

## ▲ A red admiral

caught my interest with its tapestry of color. I watched it go from one flower to another and patiently waited for it to come closer. It finally landed a few feet away from me. The light from behind made the edges of its wings glow and the blues look luminous.

**Michelle Nyss**

MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN

## ◀ This plum tree's

sweet fragrance alone was breathtaking. The red admiral made the scene in my parents' backyard even better.

**Ursula Anderson**

HINES, MINNESOTA



## ► CATERPILLAR

Mostly black or dark brown, with or without speckling. They also have yellow markings along their sides.



# Peachy Keen

See how many of these blush-colored blooms you know.

answers  
on the  
bottom!

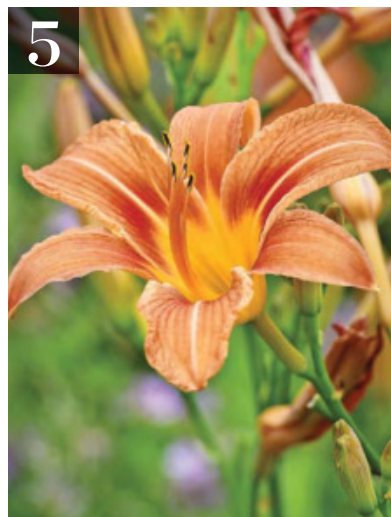


## True or False?

**A. PEACH ROSES** represent sincerity and gratitude. A bouquet of them is ideal for a hostess gift.

**B. THE PEACH BLOSSOM** is the state flower of Delaware, despite the northern location.

**C. GEORGIA PEACH** coral bells have peach leaves and white blooms and are grown as perennials in most of the U.S.



ANSWERS 1. ZINNIA 2. HIBISCUS 3. IRIS 4. DAHLIA 5. DAYLILY A. TRUE B. TRUE C. TRUE



## Find the Hummingbird

In each issue, we hide a hummingbird like the one above left. Enter to win at [birdsandblooms.com/contests](http://birdsandblooms.com/contests) if you find it. Winners receive a one-year subscription to *Birds & Blooms*. In the May issue, we hid it on page 35.

### HIDDEN OBJECT GUIDELINES

No purchase necessary to enter to win. Purchase will not improve your chances of winning. Sweepstakes is open to legal residents age 18 years or older of the U.S., its territories and possessions, or of Canada (excluding the Province of Quebec). Sweepstakes begins on June 3, 2020, and ends on July 29, 2020. Visit [birdsandblooms.com/contests](http://birdsandblooms.com/contests) for official rules. VOID WHERE PROHIBITED. Sweepstakes sponsored by RDA Enthusiast Brands, LLC.

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**Contact:** We may contact you via phone, email or mail regarding your submission, but our small staff can't acknowledge receipt of submissions.

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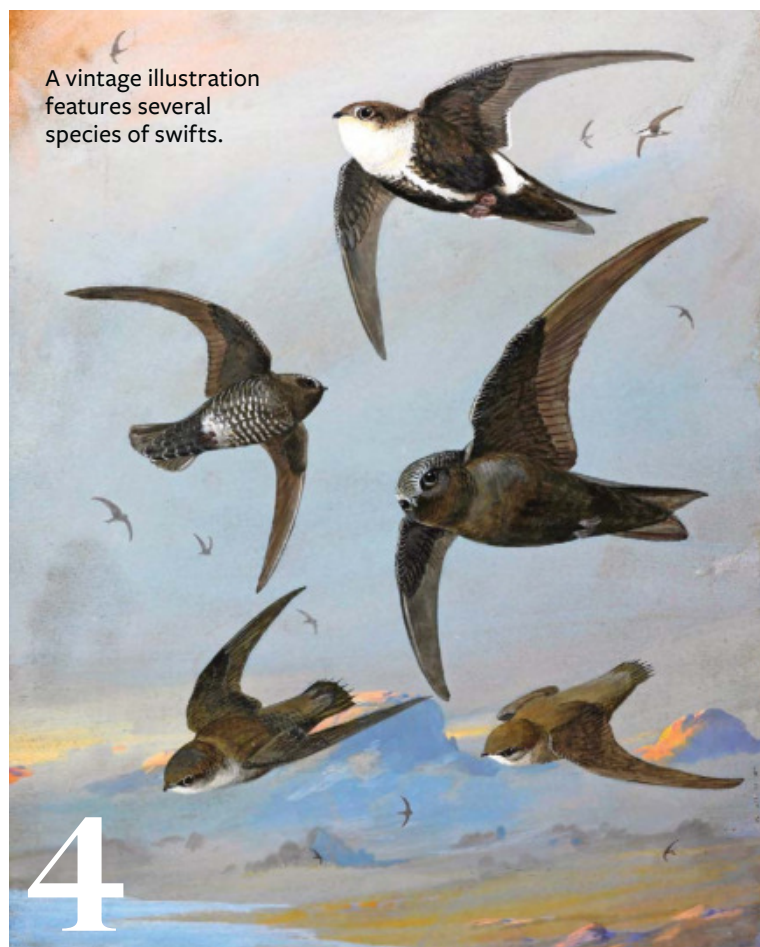
Mikal Gilliat



# In Constant Motion

*Get to know swifts—the family of airborne birds that can't sit still.*

BY EMILY HANNEMANN



A vintage illustration features several species of swifts.

1

One way chimney swifts adapted to habitat loss is using their saliva to stick their nests to houses.

4,000

*In 2010, geolocators helped researchers discover black swifts travel 4,000 miles to Brazil each winter. Before that, the birds' wintering location was unknown.*

35,000

When roosting, up to 35,000 Vaux's swifts may gather in one site.

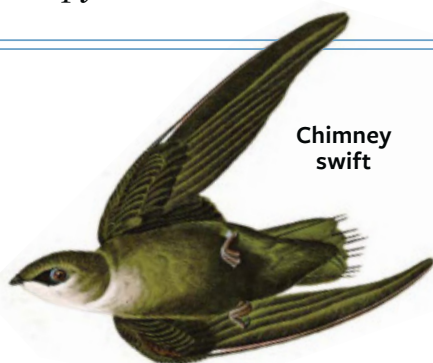
500

*Chimney swifts spend most of their lives in midair. They eat, drink and mate while flying, only stopping to raise young. It's estimated they fly more than 500 miles each day.*

*Four types of swifts nest in North America. Black, Vaux's and white-throated swifts are found in the western half of the United States, while chimney swifts occupy the East.*

180

White-throated swifts nest in a wide range of sites, from Death Valley at 180 feet below sea level up to elevations of 11,000 feet.



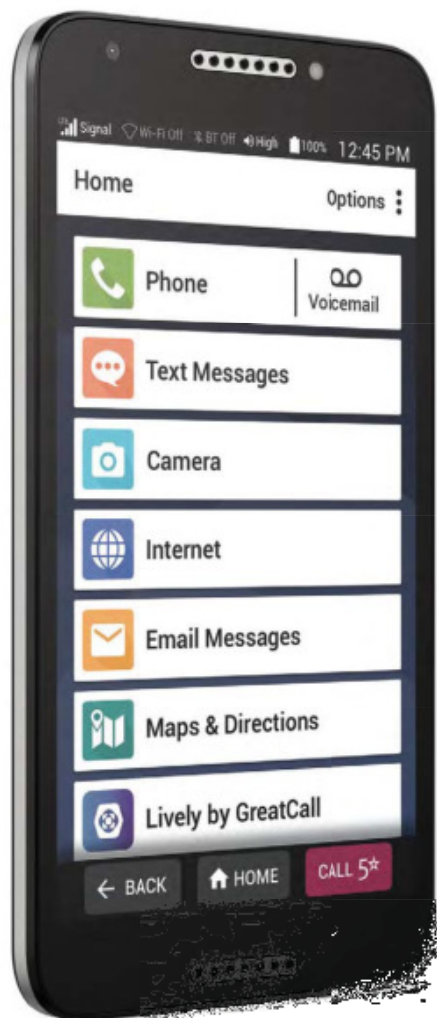
Chimney swift

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“To be afraid and  
to be brave is  
the best kind of  
courage of all.”

—Alice Dalgliesh



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