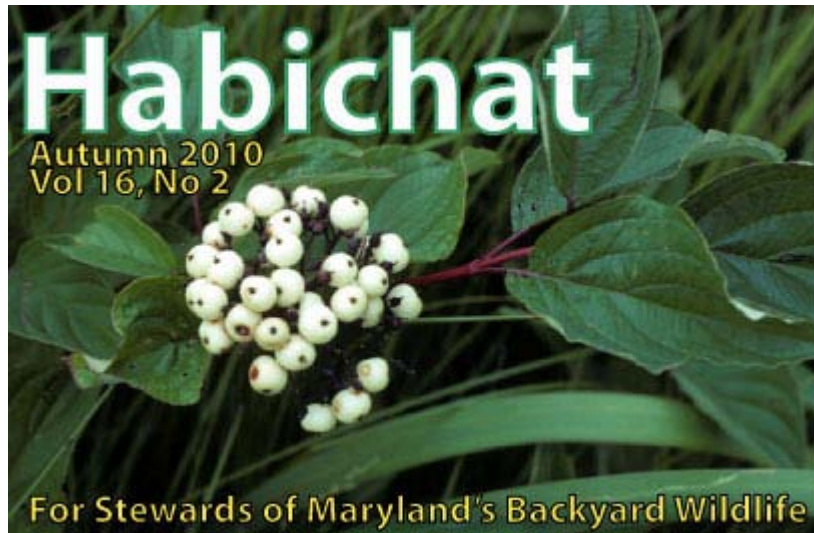


Maryland's Wild Acres



HABITAT - the arrangement of food, water, cover, and space - IS THE KEY.

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Printer-Friendly Version

Native Plant Profile.....Red Osier Dogwood (*Cornus stolonifera*)

Common Names: Red Osier Dogwood, Red Stem Dogwood

Family: Conaceae (Dogwood family)

General Description: Red osier dogwood is a small to medium sized deciduous shrub with green stems that turn reddish or purple-red from late summer into early fall, becoming brighter in winter.

Leaves: Opposite leaves with rounded bases are long and somewhat narrow. Dark green in color, turning a dull red, purple-red, or orange in autumn.

Flowers/Fruit: Clusters of small white flowers appear in late May to early July, followed by pale blue fruit maturing in August to September.

Height: 3-6 feet

Growth: Fast grower, spreading 10-15 feet

Soil: Prefers moist soil but adapts to a range of soils and locations.

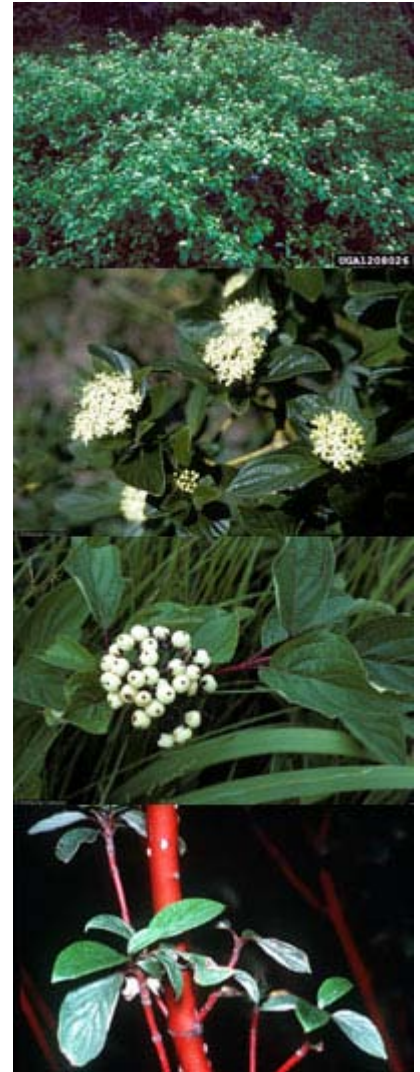
Sun: Full sun to part shade

Importance to Wildlife: Many wildlife species including song birds and squirrels eat the dogwood fruit. The Red Stem Dogwood is also great for a bird garden.

Landscaping Notes: Great for planting as beds, borders, and waterside.

Did you know?

- The young branches of this shrub have been used by Native American Indians in making baskets.
- The bark of the stems has been traditionally collected to make a red dye.



Photographs (top to bottom) of Red Osier Dogwood courtesy of:

(Shrub) Dave Powell, USDA Forest Service, Bugwood.org

(Flowers & Fruit) Richard A. Howard Image Collection, courtesy of Smithsonian Institution, USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database

(Branch) Robert H. Mohlenbrock @ USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database / USDA SCS. 1989. Midwest wetland flora: Field office illustrated guide to plant species. Midwest National Technical Center, Lincoln.

Maryland Wildlife.....Eastern Box Turtle (*Terrapene carolina carolina*)



Size: Average 4½- 6 inches (11.5-15.2 cm)

General description: Box turtles are one of the most common turtles found in suburban areas. They have a high dome-like carapace that allows them to fully withdraw into their shells.

Coloration: Box turtles are dark brown with black, orange or yellow markings.

Life Span: Box turtles may live for more than 100 years.

Food Habits: Opportunistic omnivores feeding on a variety of animals and vegetable matter, including but not limited to, earthworms, slugs, beetles, grasses, fruit, berries, mushroom, flowers, and carrion.

Habitat: They live in open woodlands near ponds and streams. Preferring deciduous or mixed forested regions with a moderately moist forest floor with good drainage, they can also be found in open grasslands, pastures, or under fallen logs. They may sometimes visit a cool mud puddle or pond to cool off in the hot summer.

Fun Facts

When frightened, box turtles retract their head, tail, and limbs into their shell and clamp it shut. They wait in this position until the perceived threat is gone.

While juveniles have several predators, very few species can prey effectively on adults due to this defense technique.

Birding Tips for Families

Birdwatching is a favorite hobby for millions of Americans. For many, birding is serious business, with participants becoming experts in locating and identifying even the rarest of birds. But birding can be simple, too, and you don't need to know how to identify a single species to help your kids get started.

To Begin Birding, All you Need are Three Items

1. Binoculars or pairs of empty toilet paper rolls to make pretend binoculars
2. A field guide
3. A blank notebook

Getting Started

- Pick a time of day for your walk when birds are most plentiful — usually early morning or late afternoon works best.
- Start nearby. Walk through your yard or neighborhood or a local park. As your kids become more invested in birding, you can explore wilder places. Take kids to a pond, lake, or wildlife refuge where they can easily see large water birds such as ducks, geese, or herons — or to a nature center with a bird feeding station where they can closely observe birds coming to a feeder.
- Some of the very best habitat for birding consists of open water wetlands, where you can see water birds easily and note their field marks and behaviors. There will usually be a number of small birds like marsh wrens and song sparrows at wetlands as well, which can offer a greater challenge to a slightly more advanced birder. And you may get to see an osprey or bald eagle!
- Be sure to dress your kids in comfortable clothes. Bring along snacks and sunscreen. Bring binoculars if you want, or pairs of empty toilet paper rolls to make pretend binoculars. They won't make the birds look bigger, but they will help kids focus in. If you want to get binoculars for your kids to use, they should be small enough that they are easy to hold, with a wide field of view and an easy way to focus them. See: <http://birds.audubon.org/buying-binoculars>
- For older kids, consider bringing along field guides to help them identify the species they are spotting. A great guide to backyard birds — with a foldout ID chart — is Audubon Pocket Backyard Birdwatch.



On the Walk

- Explain to the kids that they'll see the most birds if they keep quiet. Have them move slowly and try to blend in with the surroundings. You might choose to have them sit for a while, too. Learning to be still in order to tune into the natural world is one of the greatest lessons kids can learn.
- Encourage your kids to observe the different kinds of birds they see.
 - What color is the bird?
 - How big?
 - Does it have long legs or short legs?
 - What kinds of noises does it make?

- Also encourage your kids to note aspects of the birds' behaviors.
 - Are they singing?
 - Perching?
 - Walking?
 - Swimming?
 - Making nests?
- If you like, keep notes about the birds you see. Encourage your kids to sketch some of them.
- Celebrate every observation and discovery. It doesn't matter how many birds you see. Sometimes watching one bird for a long time yields the greatest rewards.

After the Walk

- Encourage your kids to look for the birds they saw in a field guide. If they want, they can go back and label their sketches.
- If your kids become hooked on birding, encourage them to begin keeping a Life List of all the birds they've ever seen. You can find a list of North American birds on the website of the Baltimore Bird Club at <http://www.BaltimoreBirdClub.org/nabirds.html>.
- Have your kids help pick the next place you'll go for a bird walk.
- Be sure to compare the kinds of birds you find in different places. Ask your kids to think about why some birds are found in certain places and not others. (Proximity to water, preference for fields or forests, adapted to cities or suburbs, etc.)
- For more information on birding, check out Audubon's resources on birding basics: http://www.audubon.org/bird/at_home/bird_watching/index.shtml

Did you know?

Birding is the number one sport in America? According to US Fish and Wildlife Service, there are currently 51.3 million birders in the United States alone, and this number continues to grow!

This article is part of the Family Time Series on the Audubon website:

<http://education.audubon.org/family-time>.

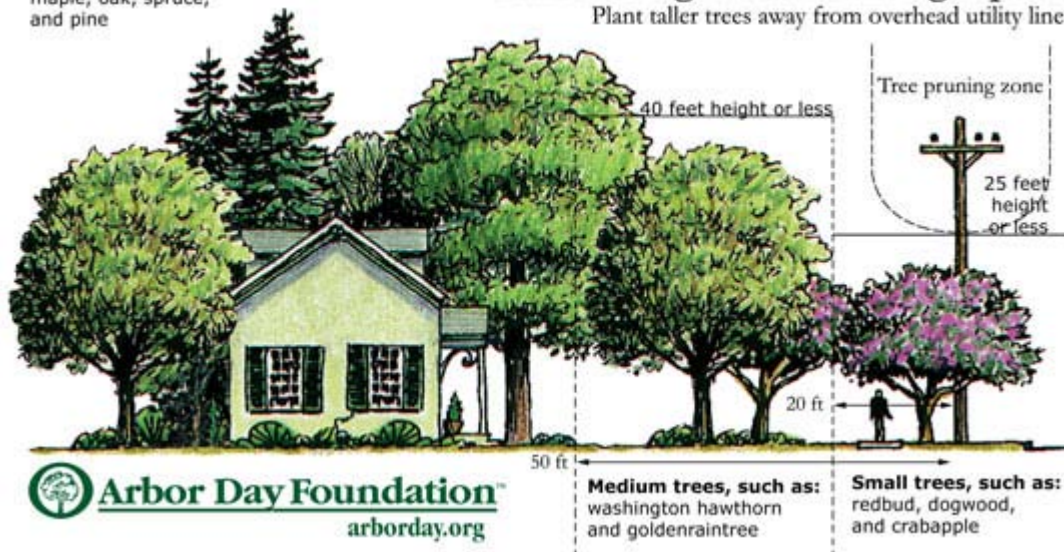
Visit the [Audubon website](#) for even more ideas about how families can enjoy the nature together.

***"Learning to be still in order to tune into the natural world
is one of the greatest lessons kids can learn."***

Tall trees, such as:
maple, oak, spruce,
and pine

Plant the right tree in the right place

Plant taller trees away from overhead utility lines



Use Trees to Attract Wildlife

- Plant a variety of tree species.
- Try to arrange trees and shrubs in groups together or in [hedgerows](#).
- Try to avoid planting trees and shrubs singly in isolation from other vegetation, following your nurseryman's advice on how far apart your trees should be planted.
- Try to plant some trees that grow tall and some that are not so tall, some that have bushy crowns with relatively bare trunks and some that have thick leaves and branches from the ground up.
- Wildlife species and insects sometimes will use special food and shelter sources found only in certain parts of trees.
- Planting trees with vertical diversity increases your chances of having a greater variety of species on your property.
- Be sure to plant some evergreens. For wildlife, evergreens provide shelter all year long, especially in winter when other trees have lost their leaves.
- Remember that trees take time to grow. Fast growing species include sumac, red maple, alder, and white pine. Consider the time it will take your trees to grow when preparing your tree planting plans.
- If you do not have mature trees nearby, nest boxes for birds and other wildlife can help provide shelter for those species, which use hollows or cavities in trees for nesting.



[Marylanders Plant Trees](#)

If you enjoyed this issue of Habichat, you might want to check out the [Online Habichat Archive](#) and the [List of Habichat Articles](#) by Topic.

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- Photograph of Red Osier Dogwood Fruit, appearing in the Habichat header, Richard A. Howard Image Collection, courtesy of Smithsonian Institution, USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database
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 - Photographs of Eastern Box Turtle, I-Stock images.
 - Illustration of "Right Tree - Right Place" courtesy of the Arbor Day Foundation
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We want to hear from you!

Letters, e-mail, photos, drawings. Let us know how successful you are as you create wildlife habitat on your property.

Write to Me!

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