



Birds Shelter and Nest in Native Plants

plant a tree not only for yourself but also for the future.

Small birds depend upon plants for protection from hawks. They can fly behind dense leaves and hide among thick branches. Shadows of leaves blend their silhouettes into the background. Native plants camouflage birds and their nests in thick foliage so raptors, owls and crows cannot easily find them. Birds fly to the top of tall native trees so that they can look out for predators or sing to declare their territories. Alert calls of birds tell fellow birds that there are predators around and to be careful or to take cover. Songs help birds locate each other when they want to attract a mate. Father birds need to teach the hatchlings how to sing their song. Branches are good places for perching birds to rest or preen (clean their feathers). Sometimes they pick shady places when it is hot and sometimes they pick sunny spots to warm up on a cold morning. Thick bushes protect them from heavy winds and rain. Native plants are used for nests. Some woodpeckers prefer old dead trees that are still standing while others like living trees to drill cavities for homes.

Draw a line from the nest description in the boxes to the nest in the picture.

Mockingbirds use twigs to build their nest in the boughs of Laurel Oak trees. The twigs become the foundation in the shape of a bowl. Male birds start the nest, then females line the bowl with soft grasses.

Hummingbirds start with moss or lichens. Females use down from a dandelion and then line the tiny cuplike nest with soft spiderweb silk. She takes a week to build and lays 2 jellybean size eggs.

Wetland birds like egrets and herons build large stick nests in colonies on an island. They are isolated from many predators. Camouflage isn't as important with close neighbors on the lookout who live in the colony.

Woodpeckers, wrens, bluebirds, owls, flycatchers, chickadees and kestrels nest in holes or cavities of native trees. Sometimes they drill holes in snags (dead trees) that haven't fallen.

Eagles build giant nests high in the tallest, strong trees. They can take 3-5 months to build. Eagles mate for life and use the same nest for several years by adding more branches or repairing it.

