



**Although pedestal style bird baths are attractive, baths closer to the ground tend to attract more birds.**

# A guide to buying and setting up a bird bath

**W**arm weather means more opportunities to spend time outdoors while at home. Whether your favorite form of outdoor recreation includes sitting on the patio reading or digging in the garden, there's a good chance that you will be sharing the space with local wildlife. Optimizing opportunities to view and interact with backyard wildlife can make the great outdoors even more enjoyable. The Cornell Lab of Ornithology indicates that there are around 2,059 bird species on the continent of North America. Red-winged blackbirds, yellow-rumped warblers, American robins, and chipping sparrows are among the most commonly seen birds in North America. Making a backyard hospitable to birds can increase the chances for sightings and hearing their sweet songs. Installing a bird bath can be a step in the right direction. Bird baths can make yards more attractive to birds. Birds require a supply of fresh, clean water for drinking and bathing. By setting up a bath, homeowners can attract not only seed-loving birds, but those that don't eat seeds and wouldn't normally congregate around feeders, indicates All About Birds. Experts surmise that birds may bathe to maintain their feathers. Not all bird baths are constructed the in the same fashion. Many bird baths sold in stores are better suited for decoration than for serving as functional baths.

There are four general types of bird bath: standing pedestal, hanging bath, deck-mounted, and ground-level. In general, the lower a bird bath is to the ground, the more likely birds are to use it. Most natural sources of water birds use are on or near the ground. Therefore, ground-level bird baths may be the best investments. It is important to keep the water in a bird bath shallow (around two inches of water or less). This enables birds to splash around safely and wade in. Birds do not want to slide around, so a material that is coated and slippery, like glazed ceramic or glass, may not be too popular. Rough stone or a bird bath modified with pea gravel or rocks can give birds steady footing. Place the bird bath in the shade if possible to ensure the water is cool and fresh. Locate it by a tree so the birds can hop up to a branch and preen afterwards. All About Birds also says that a bird bath is more attractive if it has a dripping or moving water feature, as this is often irresistible to birds. Another way to ensure the bath will be used is to keep it clean and maintained. Change the water every day or two. Rinse off the bath to remove droppings, bugs and other debris. Once birds learn there is a comfortable bath nearby, they may be more apt to visit a yard and may even become frequent guests.

## Why shop at farmers' markets

A farmers' market is likely coming to a field or open parking lot near you — if there isn't already one operating nearby. The United States Department of Agriculture says that, between the years of 2008 and 2013, the number of farmers' markets doubled across the country. Farmers' markets will continue to thrive and expand as people increasingly realize the benefits of supporting local food providers. Buyers who are not yet familiar with farmer's markets can examine the following seven reasons to break the ice.

### 1. Enjoy fresh, seasonal foods.

Foods at farmers' markets tend to be limited to in-season offerings. Some nutritionists suggest eating seasonally available foods is better for your body, because humans ate seasonal produce for thousands of years before shipping and refrigeration changed how people received the majority of their foods. In addition, many people feel that fresh, seasonal foods taste better than the alternatives.

### 2. Discover new foods.

There's always something new at a farmers' market, and this can entice shoppers to expand their flavor palates. Explore interesting, locally grown items. Even

children may fall in love with colorful fruits or vegetables and their refreshing tastes.

### 3. Embrace organic and non-GMO offerings.

Many farmers' markets offer foods that are organically grown and are produced without GMOs. Farmers' market retailers also tend to give firsthand accounts of where their foods come from and how they are grown or raised.

### 4. Indulge in nutritious foods.

The vivid colors and smells emanating from farmers' markets indicate just how fresh and nutritious the offerings tend to be. Farmers who peddle their wares at farmers' markets adhere to careful farming methods to ensure their foods are as nutritious as possible.

### 5. Learn secrets and recipes.

In addition to fresh produce, farmers' markets may offer baked and other prepared goods. Shopkeepers often mingle with their customers, offering trade secrets and recipe ideas. Additionally, local farm families supported by farmers' markets generally offer supreme customer service to keep shoppers coming back week after week.



### 6. Turn the trip into a social excursion.

A farmers' market can be an exciting and flavorful social gathering place for families and groups of friends, as well as a great place to meet other members of the community. Sometimes farmers also mingle with local artisans, so the market can be a one-stop-shopping locale for locally produced food and art.

### 7. Save money.

Farmers' markets may sell organic produce at a cost comparable or even lower than other retailers. That's because local farmers don't have to transport their items as far as retailers whose foods were shipped from far away places. Any time of the year is perfect for grabbing a tote bag and browsing the wares at a nearby farmers' market, where shoppers are bound to find something fresh, unique and delicious.