MAKE HABITAT FOR SONGBIRDS & POLLINATORS

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Those ancestors practiced stewardship of the land. These are highly dynamic landscapes for us to steward but as we come to know the nature of the plants, it gets easier. Use the four seasons to organize various tasks for our **South Coast Ecoregion.** These tasks assist in developing good habitat. You can provide habitat not just for songbirds and pollinators but for biodiversity above and below the earth.

FALL Light is changing, sun is lower in the sky. Birds are on the move. Little birds are eating nutlets on the Wax myrtles. Birds are also eating Cascara, Elderberry, Pacific Crabapple, Serviceberry, Twinberry, Red and Evergreen Huckleberry, and Salal. Keep a *handy* calendar to build more habitat.

- Seed collection – seeds are food. Need to be in a dry, cool place. Harvest into paper bags and add a strong-smelling herb like mint or pennyroyal to drive away pests.
- Begin to collect cuttings
- Order or dig up bulbs
- Eliminate seed heads of any invasives or unwanted weeds.

Bee housing constructed by humans may present certain challenges, such as the potential to spread pathogens and the requirement for regular cleaning. Hollow stem native plants are a natural version of shelter for cavity-nesting bees. Stems are arranged far apart, and as a part of a large spreading shrub. This makes it harder for pathogens to spread and more difficult for predatory birds to access larvae. Another protection is that the stems do not last but a few seasons. After that, the larvae of the last eggs that were laid will emerge. They will look for newer hollow stems in which to nest. The downside of stewarding stem housing is that this requires long-term planning to implement. Native plants of our ecoregion with hollow, pithy stems: *Red Elderberry, Goldenrod, Cow Parsley, Anjelica, Milkweed and Sunflowers*

Year 1- Late Fall – plants have been in ground about 1 year. Cut the stems back to roughly 12 to 18 inches high. Using a sharp tool, try to make cuts smooth and straight for an attractive, non-threatening nest entrance. Use the cuttings to start new plants.

Year 2 – In Spring of Year 2, cavity-nesting bees find upright hollow stems to hold their nests. Leave the stems standing all year. Certain species can produce brood in late summer but most, including mason bees, will not complete their life cycle and appear until temperatures warm in the Spring. Also, during Year 2, remember or add to your calendar, to cut the hollow stems back to 12 to 18 inches in the Fall. Use shrub cuttings to start more plants for the next season.

Year Three - In the Spring of year 3, bees using your first planting of hollow stems will appear. Some of them will nest in the stems from second-year plants. Now you're on a roll. You just have to keep going and you should have plenty of healthy bees to pollinate your orchard and garden crops.

Late Fall is an excellent time to start a hedgerow, particularly with any of the plant species named above. In late Fall or Winter, plant trees, woody shrubs, perennials or perennial seed, ground covers, and spring flowering bulbs. Or start plants from cuttings for next year's planting plan. Hedgerows are safety areas.

WINTER - Planning Pruning, Planting Use a calendar for these important seasonal tasks.

If incorporating birdhouses, species desired dictates sizes for design. Houses must be appropriate size, have very small entrance holes, no perch and be at high enough to deter predators. Info on specific bird species requirementrs can be found at this Ogden Nature Center website - https://www.ogdennaturecenter.org/images/BIRDHOUSE_SIZE_REQUIREMENTS.pdf

Plant bulbs. Do not plant in muddy ground or areas of poor drainage. Mark area with labeled stones or stakes. Draw maps of where you put specific plants.

Transplant plants in ground to new location after Dec 21. Shorter days mean less stress for plants that have been dug up and moved.

Stratify seeds that you have planted on the north side of a building or deep shade. Keep covered with hardware cloth or another bird and squirrel prevention material. Watch for new growth and then move into appropriate light for growth.

Propagation – tiny seeds need light to germinate. Press all seed into firm contact with mineral soil, as opposed to mulch or compost.

Storm clean-up provides you with materials to redistribute where needed. If you have room, retain any wood or mulch that an arborist creates on your site. Save lichen or moss to set out in March for birds making nests. Likewise with pet fur or horse hair.

SPRING Perennial seed planted in fall should be up and growing. Annual seed can be sown January-end of the rainy season. Cosmos, not native but not invasive, can be used as a filler the first year, Will not re-seed and the winter birds appreciate the dried seed stems.

Provide wet spot, dripping faucet or ? for bees that need mud or butterflies that need minerals.

Perennials and annuals can be propagated for planting out. Fill in areas where seed did not come in well.

Perennials can be planted into May if water is available while they become established.

Emergence or seed comes when ground temperature not air temperature warms. Milkweed is last.

Hydro-seeding of annual and perennial seed and native grass mixes – a very short window in March.

iIf you are not saving fruit for the birds, prune back any flowering shrubs that have finished flowering. Take no more than 1/3 of the plant's branches. Thes plants evolved with deer and elk so pruning will often renew their vigor. Next year's woody shrub blossoms form on 1 year old stems.

Add mulch around plants that get a lot of sun, to protect the soil and roots.

SUMMER Water or no water, it depends. Shrubs or perennials planted after Winter may need supplemental water their first year. Ceanothus and Wax myrtle can be killed in the summer by offering regular watering, particularly drip irrigation. Wetland species will find water if planted in low areas.

Waterfalls or birdbaths should be shallow or layered with small stones to avoid drowning insects.

Start scoping out seed collection plants, mark 6 weeks after the bloom on your calendar to find seed. Get on the map for Homegrown National Park so that our movement to increase habitat can be counted.

Thanks for supporting wildlife and biodiversity!