

**What is the Atlanta BeltLine and Arboretum?**



The Atlanta BeltLine is being implemented to connect 45 Atlanta neighborhoods and 40 city parks with transit,

trails, greenspace, and new development along 22 miles of historic rail segments that encircle the city's urban core. The BeltLine is attracting and organizing some of the region's future growth around transit, trails, and parks, helping to change the pattern of regional sprawl and leading to a vibrant and livable Atlanta with an enhanced quality of life. The Atlanta BeltLine Arboretum is an outdoor, living tree museum following the path of the BeltLine around Atlanta's city center. The BeltLine Arboretum will include planting and care of fourteen unique tree collections; provide educational programming to all neighborhoods and constituents; and serve as a corridor of scientific research and education. The first section of BeltLine Arboretum is open in Atlanta's West End; the balance will be built over the next twenty years. The BeltLine Arboretum will be a success when everyone in Atlanta can identify their neighborhood by the trees that surround them, and therefore understand the value of trees in an urban environment.

[www.beltline.org](http://www.beltline.org)



**Exploring YOUR Natural Neighborhood**



**What is Unique About the Southern Way Natural Neighborhood ?**

The Southern Way natural neighborhood includes many historic resources and includes important Atlanta neighborhoods like Peopletown, Summerhill, Grant Park, Englewood Manor, Chosewood, South Atlanta, Carver Homes, High Point and Joyland. The Beltline Arboretum in this area focuses on the plants of the Piedmont Uplands which highlight the importance of our own special piedmont region in Georgia.

This special natural neighborhood not only provides trails and an important tree canopy (see "What are the Benefits of the Trees in My Neighborhood?" inside), but it gives birds and wildlife suitable green space to thrive and flourish. Spring and fall migrant species of birds will rest and refuel here before traveling on. Birds and other wildlife that make this area their home year-round will also benefit from the Southern Way natural neighborhood. You will find many common birds here including Northern Cardinals, Carolina Wrens, Gray Catbirds, and Red-headed Woodpeckers. Other wildlife might include deer, foxes, beavers, squirrels, chipmunks, raccoons, opossums, along with various types of reptiles and amphibians. Kudzu is taking over much of the forest in South Atlanta. If wildlife does not like to eat kudzu, what will they eat? Take a walk at different times of the day and observe wildlife foraging for food, sharing your natural neighborhood.

**Southern Way Symbolic Bird**



**Northern Mockingbird**

The Northern Mockingbird, *Mimus polyglottos*, is a common and widespread bird in the eastern United States. However, in the early nineteenth century this bird was a prized cage bird due to its extraordinary singing capabilities, and it disappeared from many residential areas.

The Northern Mockingbird has a slender body and beak with long legs and tail. It is a gray bird with a lighter underside, white outer tail feathers and distinct white wing bars, which are advertised during flight. Mockingbirds learn songs and other sounds throughout their lives, compiling an extensive musical collection. These songs can include the songs of other bird species and sounds from the environment, such as cars and machinery. Both males and females sing throughout the day. Unmated males often sing throughout the night as well, to many sleeping individuals' dismay.



Northern Mockingbird by Jim Wilson

The male and female construct the nest, and after thirteen days, young birds hatch from the blue-green eggs. One pair can produce up to four broods of young per nesting season.

This species has adapted well to urban environments and enjoys catching insects in manicured lawns. The Northern Mockingbird aggressively defends its territory from other birds and domestic animals. The behavior and conspicuousness of this species has led it to become a popular subject for behavioral studies. It always has an interesting song or an entertaining gesture to offer for our viewing enjoyment.



**Atlanta Audubon Society**

Atlanta Audubon Society is the region's primary education and conservation group dedicated to birds. Educational programs, conservation initiatives and community outreach are at the heart of the organization. Atlanta Audubon provides the community with important educational opportunities including field trips, workshops, the exclusive

Master Birder Program, birding camps for young people and scholarship programs. Individuals and communities are engaged in unique ways to directly impact the conservation of birds. Atlanta Audubon's conservation work focuses on "Creating, Promoting and Preserving Bird-Friendly Habitat," and includes overseeing the Georgia Important Bird Areas program, monitoring eastern hemlock trees to combat the hemlock woolly adelgid in the North Georgia Mountains, managing the Backyard Wildlife Sanctuary Certification program, and serving as the steward for a 183-acre wildlife sanctuary. Protecting the birds that we love is the most important thing we do. [www.atlantaudubon.org](http://www.atlantaudubon.org)

Answers: Wildlife in Your Neighborhood

1. Eastern Gray Squirrel (often raids the nests of many types of birds)
2. Virginia Opossum (nocturnal and North America's only marsupial—mammals of which the females have a pouch)
3. Green Tree Frog (females can lay up to 400 eggs in shallow water)
4. Eastern Chipmunk (its diet consists of grains, nuts, birds' eggs, small frogs, fungi, worms and insects)
5. Raccoon (walking on all four feet with an arch in its back and non-retractable claws, it uses the whole sole of the foot "heel to toe" as it walks, like humans)

**TREES ATLANTA**

**Trees Atlanta**

Trees Atlanta is a nationally recognized citizens group dedicated to protecting and improving Atlanta's urban forest by planting, conserving and educating. Trees in urban areas provide a number of economic, health and social benefits and are essential for clean air, storm water management, erosion control, noise absorption, bird and wildlife habitat, and more. Since 1985, Trees Atlanta has planted and distributed 75,000 trees. Trees Atlanta programs include *NeighborWoods*, volunteer-based planting and care of trees 6-10 feet tall; *Large Trees*, planting and care of trees 10-15 feet tall; *Forest Restoration*, a program that teaches citizens about the problems of invasive species and how to evaluate, manage and improve community green spaces; *Neighborhood Arboreta*, a program that places identifying markers next to neighborhood trees along with a self-guided walking tour map of the area; and *Education*, offering programming year round to teach citizens about the importance of trees. Trees Atlanta does not just plant trees...we plant communities. [www.treesatlanta.org](http://www.treesatlanta.org)

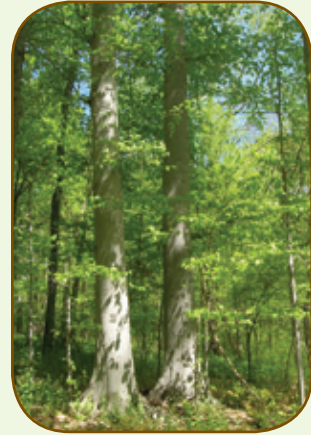
**About the Photos**

**Cover:** Luna Moth, Monarch Caterpillar, Monarch Butterfly and Blue Grosbeak by Dan Vickers; Bald Cypress by Steve Sanchez  
**Inside Left Panel:** Beech and White Oak by Steve Sanchez; Squirrel, Eastern Chipmunk, and Raccoon by Dan Vickers; Green Tree Frog by Darlene Moore  
 Design by Laura Woods

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## Southern Way Symbolic Trees



### Beech

Beech trees, *Fagus grandifolia*, have beautiful, light gray smooth bark and copper-colored fall leaves. This color tends to stay throughout the winter, making an eye-catching site. It is one of the slowest growing trees in an Eastern forest. The nut is edible and is big source of food for wildlife.



### White Oak

White Oak, *Quercus alba*, is often stated as the king of the forest with its broad, round, dense head, and wide, sprawling branches. Its leaf is dark-green in summer, and the tree has an interesting, flaky bark that bats are known for hanging from at night. The acorn was once used for making flour by Native Americans and is prized by wildlife.

## What are the Benefits of the Trees in My Neighborhood?

**Trees perform environmental, social, and economic services that directly benefit people and wildlife living in urban areas. They include:**

- Improving air quality
- Removing chemical pollutants in the ground, water and air
- Reducing the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere
- Cooling urban areas by providing shade and retaining moisture
- Assisting in energy conservation as trees intercept radiant heat and block the wind
- Securing or increasing water supplies by recharging our watersheds
- Increasing biodiversity by providing habitats for a diverse population of birds, mammals and insects
- Helping with noise reduction by acting as an effective buffer to screen-out urban noises
- Reducing erosion and soil loss
- Providing a valuable source of both human food and animal feed for urban households
- Calming and slowing traffic
- Reducing the extremes of flooding and drought
- Increasing property values and promoting community pride

## The Importance of Green Space: What Can YOU Do to Make a Difference?

Birds and wildlife need suitable green space to thrive and flourish. In the last 20 years, much of metro-Atlanta's natural tree cover (important habitat for bird and wildlife species) has been replaced with concrete and asphalt. Habitat loss and sprawl have devastated what was once Atlanta's rich heritage of urban green spaces and is the biggest culprit for the decline of bird and wildlife species. Birds like the Brown Thrasher, Common Grackle and Northern Flicker are impacted by the loss of green space. They lose important nesting sites and areas to feed. This also greatly affects migrating birds that no longer have important sites to rest and eat.



You can make a difference for birds and wildlife in your own backyard. Finding ways to provide **food, water, shelter, and nesting sites** for breeding and raising young are critical. You may think that your yard will not make a difference in the larger scheme of things, but you can help provide important individual corridors of vital green space for birds and wildlife. Consider, for instance, planting trees with Trees Atlanta ([www.treesatlanta.org](http://www.treesatlanta.org)) or certifying your own backyard, as a wildlife sanctuary (visit [www.atlantaaudubon.org](http://www.atlantaaudubon.org) for more details). When requirements are met, homeowners receive a sign stating that their property is registered as a "wildlife sanctuary" with Atlanta Audubon Society. Creating a wildlife sanctuary in your backyard is an important way to conserve and protect our environment.

## What Do the Birds and Wildlife in Your Neighborhood Need to Thrive?



### Food

*Feeders and plantings that offer seeds, flowers, and berries for wildlife*

- Feeders placed near your home will give you many hours of enjoyment. Feeders also provide relief to birds during winter weather. Food can also come from trees and plants that produce fruit and seeds.



### Water

*Birdbaths, water gardens, or natural features with flowing water*

- Water is essential. Water sources can be natural (like a stream) or man-made (birdbaths).
- Always provide clean water, replacing it in your birdbaths regularly to avoid disease.



### Shelter

*Active nesting areas or shelters that attract and protect birds and other wildlife*

- Shelter is needed to protect birds and wildlife from inclement weather and from predators. Always try to keep your cat indoors, if possible. Four million birds are killed each day by cats (both domestic and feral).



### Nesting Sites

*Bird boxes, natural cavities, or wood piles and vine tangles*

- You can provide many types of nesting sites, from piles of sticks to dense shrubs. Also, if you have a dead tree and it isn't a safety hazard for people or property, consider letting it stand. It can provide important nesting sites for many types of wildlife.

## Get Educated! Get Involved!

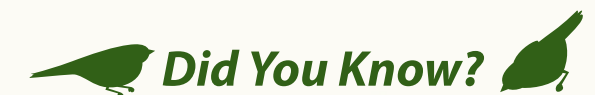
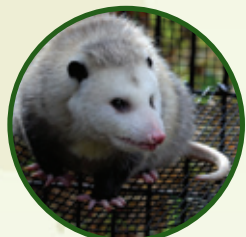
Making a difference for Georgia's environment, including its birds and wildlife, means becoming educated about what is happening in your special neighborhood, in your state, across the country and around the world.

**Making a difference in the world begins with just one person...YOU!**

## Wildlife in Your Neighborhood

Here are just a few of the many amazing creatures you can find in your neighborhood.

Can you name them? Have you seen them in your natural neighborhood and do you know where they live?



Because many birds eat insects, particularly during insect outbreaks, they help protect our forests and reduce our need for chemical pesticides that can negatively impact the environment.