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The Intuitive Connection

Attracting Wildlife

Our family loves it when we are visited by wildlife. We appreciate the beauty of nature. Although we live in the city limits, we have quite the assortment of critters in our area. In addition to the standard birds and butterflies, there are turkeys, ducks and hummingbirds. We also have an assortment of frogs and toads, plus voles (small mammals related to moles), raccoons, lizards, and yes snakes.



The key to living with wildlife is respect. If you respect them and provide space, they in turn will respect you. We have quite a large raccoon that comes by in the evenings. He likes to help himself to the water and dry dog food that we keep in the garage. It drives our pup nuts, and we have to be careful when we let him out at night so that we don't have a bad encounter. I recall one evening I let the dog out into the garage, and he took off running through the doggy door after the raccoon. However, instead of running outside, the raccoon ducked behind the shelves in the garage. I immediately retrieved the dog and put him back inside the house, but the raccoon was not coming out. I waited quietly, and after about 10 minutes, he finally came out of hiding. We made eye contact, both staring at the other. He proceeded to help himself to a few more pieces of kibble as I watched. I told him it was time to go, so he exited through the doggie door. As I opened the side door, I noticed him sitting on top of the fence. He turned around one last time to look at me, then took off.

You may not want to attract a raccoon, but there are some things you can do to attract wildlife into your yard. The basics include food, water and of course shelter. Food can be provided in a couple of ways. You can put food out in feeders, dishes or just have an area where you place the food. Or you can plant animal friendly shrubs, trees and foliage. According to the BBC's Nature Features, use the charts on page 3 as a guideline for the types of food you can provide for attracting specific wild animals. Make sure you do some research, as there are also foods to avoid such as cooked oats, sugary treats, and whole peanuts. The experts suggest providing natural food, and only every so often so that the animals don't become too dependent on your snacks.

Hygiene is important too. If there is leftover food that has accumulated, clear the excess food and decrease the amount. Dispose of moldy food and droppings. Foods high in fat can go bad quickly in hot weather, plus rainy weather can rapidly soak and spoil food. Make sure to disinfect food dishes and water bowls on a regular basis.

Water is an important resource for any living being. Make sure there is a fresh source of water available year round. During the winter, you may have to break ice if the surface of the water is frozen. During the summer, try moving the water to a shady spot to help keep things cool.

Shelter is the third important thing to consider when trying to attract wildlife. It can be as simple as planting trees or bushes, or even hanging a bird house or two. Or try all three for a variety. Shelter not only helps protect them from extreme weather, but from predators too. In addition, shelter provides the perfect place for the next generation of wildlife to be born and raised.

There are some things to consider before you decide to begin attracting wildlife to your yard. The first thing to consider is safety. Not only you and your pets safety, but the wildlife's safety as well. Dogs and cats are predators, so make sure there is plenty of cover for the wildlife to escape to. If you live in a busy area, you could be compromising the safety of the wildlife with busy roads or even unfriendly neighbors.

Keep in mind you may not end up attracting the animals you are trying to. In addition to attracting the cute and fluffy ones, you might also attract larger, invasive, and predatory animals. Another possible side effect of having predators is that it pushes the smaller animals (such as mice) to seek safe shelter (such as inside your garage or house), or you could end up with remains of dead animals in your yard. Let's face it, animals can be messy. Many can be destructive as they dig, damage trees and gardens, and leave refuse.

When bringing wild animals into your yard you also need to consider communicating with them. There is important information that you need to relay, especially when making changes. If you need to do yard work (mowing or weeding, especially if chemicals will be used), you need to communicate this in advance. What may be annoying weeds to us is the home and food source for those animals. Give them advance warning of what will take place so that they will have time to move to safety. Also consider using non-toxic, natural alternatives to chemicals. Not only will this be safer for the wildlife, but for your own pets as well.

The benefits of having wildlife visit your yard can also be amazing. My family has had a number of animals that come to our yard for sanctuary or assistance. We've rescued at least 5 snakes, several voles, toads, and numerous birds. The most fond bird rescue I recall was a hummingbird. It was dusk when my son came into the house asking for help. He found a tiny emerald green hummingbird lying on our patio. It was barely moving, and the temperature outside was dropping quickly. We gently scooped the little guy up into a towel and brought him in the house. We placed him into a cardboard box and put a shop light on him to provide heat. His breathing became stronger, and he began stretching his wings. We decided to put a lid on the box to make sure he was secure. After about 15 minutes, we understood why they were called hummingbirds. We could hear a humming sound as he flapped his wings too quickly to be seen. He had warmed up sufficiently and was ready to be released. We took the box outside, removed the lid, and the little guy flew up and away into the night. That wasn't even the best part. The next day, we were visited by a beautiful emerald green hummingbird who stayed in our yard for quite a while, as if to say thank you.

Attracting wildlife may not be for everyone, but when done correctly it can be an enjoyable and rewarding experience. A healthy environment outside your house, can help create a healthy environment inside your soul.



Birds in summer and winter



Badgers, hedgehogs, foxes and more



Upcoming Events

Turlock Holistic Expo

Stanislaus County Fairgrounds
900 N. Broadway, Bldg E-2
Turlock, CA
Saturday, January 21st
10:00-6:00

Vallejo Gem & Mineral Show

Solano County Fairgrounds
900 Fairgrounds Dr.
Vallejo, CA
Saturday, February 25th
Sunday, February 26th
10:00-5:00

Available Workshops

Beginning Animal Communication

Advanced Animal Communication

Beginning Wire Wrapping



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