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The BIRD CALL

Newsletter of the Bronx River-Sound Shore Audubon Society, Inc.

Fall is for Planting—Native Shrubs for Birds

By Cece Fabbro

When we moved to Westchester County we purchased an older home situated on a partially wooded lot with a stream. We were fortunate that these woods included many wildlife friendly native species: very large canopy trees (Tulip Poplar and American Beech), and numerous understory trees and shrubs (Pagoda Dogwood, Spicebush, Witch Hazel). Unfortunately, we also inherited many invasive shrubs, vines, and perennials which needed removing – but that's another story.

One of the landscape projects I set out to undertake was to increase the number and diversity of shrubs that would provide a seasonal spread of berries for resident and migrating birds. My criteria for selecting the plantings: 1) they needed to be native to the Northeastern US; 2) they needed to tolerate partial shade; 3) they needed



Elderberry produces showy flowers and juicy berries, eaten by many birds.

to produce nutritious, tasty fruits prized by birds, and 4) they needed to exhibit good to excellent fall color.

Following is a list with brief descriptions of five deciduous shrubs/understory trees and one vine that I planted and found to be bird magnets. They are listed in order of time of year that the berries ripen.

Shadbush (*Amelanchier spp*) is a small tree or multistemmed shrub which might reach 20'. This shrub is covered

with delicate, ethereal white blossoms that emerge, before leaves, in early April. Watch the blossoms when spring breezes blow, do they not remind you of a cloud of hovering white butterflies? The dark blue berries, which ripen in

May/June, are snapped up by chickadees, titmice, wrens, orioles, tanagers, thrushes, mimic thrushes (catbird especially), and waxwings. This spring, I watched a catbird spend several days gorging on the berries. Fall color is



Attract beautiful, colorful birds like this Baltimore Oriole to your garden by planting native shrubs.

spectacular: leaves of intense red, orange, and purple all on the same shrub! You can never have enough Shadbushes...if you have the room for them.

Pagoda Dogwood or Alternate-leaved Dogwood (*Cornus alternifolia*) is a native understory dogwood (10-25') with horizontal branching and white

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Cece Fabbro is an award winning nature photographer and Board member of BRSS Audubon. Check out her website: www.cecefabbrophoto.com.



Doug Bloom, President of BRSS for the past six years, passes the baton to Sandy Morrissey, new President of BRSS.

New Officers Elected at Annual Meeting

Over 50 people attended the BRSS Annual Meeting at Five Island Park in June. Our honoree, Congresswoman Nita Lowey, received many accolades honoring her numerous years of public service and especially for her dedication to environmental protection.

New officers were elected for two-year terms. Sandy Morrissey is President and Doug Bloom, Vice President. New secretary is Diane Morrison, and continuing as Treasurer is Jeff Zuckerman. New to the board is Bonnie Gould of Scarsdale.

Doug Bloom was thanked for his six years of leadership. He will continue his dedicated service to BRSS Audubon as Vice President, Trip Leader and head of our all-important Seed Sale.

Sandy gave a short talk at which she stated one of her goals was to get more children involved with birds and nature in general—"out of the house and into the meadow."

Special thanks to our Hospitality Chair, Diane Morrison, for organizing the delicious refreshments.

BRSS AUDUBON

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*Bronx River-Sound Shore Audubon Society, Inc.
is a chapter of the National Audubon Society
serving the communities of
Bronxville, Eastchester, Edgemont, Hartsdale,
Larchmont, Mamaroneck, Mount Vernon, New
Rochelle, Pelham, Scarsdale, and Tuckaheo*

Plant Native Shrubs

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flower bracts. Although its flowers are not show stoppers like those of *Cornus florida*, the berries — sugary, dark blue berries which ripen in May/June — are. The fruits, however, are so loved by birds — chickadees, titmice, thrushes, wrens, finches, native sparrows, tanagers, mimic thrushes — that they seem to disappear overnight! Fall color is dogwood red/maroon.

Elderberry (*Sambucus canadensis*) is a multistemmed shrub or small tree reaching 5-10'. Fast growing, this shrub has large, showy flower clusters which ripen into small juicy, purple berries in July. The fruits are eaten by cardinals, orioles, tanagers, thrushes, mimic thrushes, wrens, native sparrows, and woodpeckers. This summer I watched as a cardinal fledgling learned how to snap up these berries while on the wing by observing a native sparrow doing so successfully.

Spicebush (*Lindera benzoin*). Is another understory, multistemmed shrub or small tree (8-15') that comes into flower in early April. This shrub's soft yellow blossoms appear along its branches before the leaves. The flowers emit a subtle spicy/woody fragrance. (Think of this shrub as a native alternative to the much overused and invasive showy forsythia.) The bright red berries, which ripen on the female plant in August/September are a favorite of the thrush family. Just the other day I watched an elusive wood thrush visit my spicebushes in search of ripening berries. This bird, along with many others of its kind, will soon take wing and migrate south to its winter quarters in Mexico or Central America. Spicebush colors early — a bright, clear yellow — before many other shrubs do in fall.

Virginia Creeper (*Parthenocissus quinquefolia*) is a creeping vine (4-40' depending on support) that produces purple-blue fruits which ripen in September and are a favorite of woodpeckers, thrushes, mimic thrushes, and grosbeaks. Plant in full sun and the birds, especially the red bellied woodpeckers, will enjoy masses of berries while you



Shadbush has beautiful white blooms in spring, dark blue berries in summer and then intense red, orange, and purple leaves in fall. Besides its beauty, it is a top food-producing plant for birds.

enjoy the brilliant crimson/cherry red fall color of this vine.

Winterberry Holly (*Ilex verticillata*) is a multistemmed shrub, small tree (6-10') with small white (insignificant) flowers but bright, red fruits that persist after the leaves fall. Winterberry fruits, which ripen in September, are favorites of thrushes and waxwings. It is reported by some that Eastern bluebirds adore these fruits, but I have yet to see one feasting on my ilex berries. A note of caution regarding this plant: there are many cultivars of Winterberry available in the nursery trade and not all of them are palatable to birds. To be safe, stick with the straight species or bird approved cultivars like "Winter Red".

Black Haw Viburnum (*Viburnum prunifolium*) is an 8-15' understory shrub with creamy white flowers and blue-black fruits which ripen in September/October. Thrushes, mimic thrushes, woodpeckers, flycatchers, native sparrows and gallinaceous birds enjoy the fruits of this shrub. Fall color is a spectacular rich burgundy red. All the native viburnums have high wildlife value and I will be adding Arrowwood (*dentatum*) and Mapleleaf (*acerifolium*) viburnum to my landscape this fall. Check out the native viburnums when you get a chance to see which one(s) work best for your location. There are many to choose from.



Winterberry Holly attracts thrushes and waxwings.

Fall is a great time to plant. So, as the weather cools down (hopefully), think about sprucing up your landscape with some beautiful, bird approved shrubs. Any questions, e-mail me at cecefab@aol.com.



Clare Gorman and Jeff Zuckerman inform the public of BRSS conservation and education efforts.

BRSS Participates in Eastchester Green Day

Throughout Westchester County in the past few years, Green Day Celebrations and Environmental Awareness Days have become more and more frequent. On Saturday, June 12, there was a wonderful collection of public and private organizations that gathered at Eastchester Town Hall for just such a Green Day Celebration. The event was sponsored by the Town of Eastchester, along with the Villages of Bronxville and Tuckahoe and their respective citizens' Environmental Committees. The day's festivities included exhibits and interactive demonstrations on local ecosystems, energy efficiency, composting, and alternative fuels. Live entertainment was provided by Solar Punch, an all solar-powered band, Annie and the Natural Wonder Band, and many more who offered their talent to support the efforts of those who worked so hard to put the day together.

The Bronx River Sound Shore Audubon Society was honored to be a part of the day, disseminating lots of information on birding, the environment and conservation to all who visited our display. *Jeff Zuckerman*

Help Support our Environmental Mission



Order your Bird Seed today!

Field Trips for 2010 — 2011

Please call Doug Bloom for information on trips and to arrange carpooling at (914)713-0630 days between 10 and 6 Tuesday-Saturday, evenings from about 6:30-10 p.m. All birders welcome, from beginner to expert. All trips are with Central Westchester Audubon.

Hawk Watch - Lenoir Preserve

October 3

Meet at Lenoir at 9:30 a.m. looking for migrating hawks and other raptors.

Jones Beach

October 24

Meet at 9:00 a.m. at Coast Guard Station west end. Looking for late fall migrants. With Hudson River Audubon.

Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge

November 14

We will look for waterfowl and other late migrants. Meet in parking lot at Jamaica Bay at 9:00 a.m.

Christmas Bird Count

December 26

All day, but if you can only do part of day, that is fine.

Montauk All Day Trip

January 9

Looking for wintering ducks, alcids and other winter birds. Meet at 6:15 a.m. at Scarsdale Village Hall.

Eagle Walk

February 12

Our annual search for Bald Eagles. Meet at 8:00 a.m. at Wild Bird Center store, Central Ave., Hartsdale.

Costa Rica (in planning stage)

February

For details contact Andrew Block at (914)337-1229.



You see more birds with more eyes on the watch! Join our field trips. All are welcome.

Larchmont Reservoir

April 10

Looking for early spring migrants including warblers and vireos. Meet at Reservoir at 8:00 am.

Central Park

May 1

Meet at 7:30 a.m. at West 72nd Street at statue across from Museum of Natural History. We'll be looking for spring migrants including warblers, vireos, grosbeaks.

Doodletown Road

May 15

Meet at 8:00 a.m. at Doodletown. Looking for spring migrants including Cerulean Warblers and other warblers.

Walkkill

May 22

Looking for spring migrants including Grasshopper Sparrows and Bobolinks.

Join the BRSS E-List

Get notified of upcoming Field Trips and Programs

Get the newsletter in full color online

Send your email address to brssaudubon@gmail.com

Welcome New Members

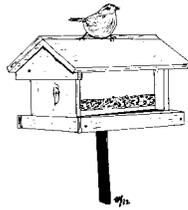
Bronxville: Robert Anderson, Constance Welling. **Larchmont:** Marylee Bernidge, Lester Parower, Boris Rauls, David Stein. **Eastchester:** Janice Groth. Hartsdale: Jim Baker, Pauline Herman, Manfred Meisels, Antonios Pappantoniou. **Mamaroneck:** Charlotte Potter. **Mount Vernon:** Gregory Hallerdin, Haley Main, Mia Stephenson. **New Rochelle:** Luise Collins, Lauren Curtin, Lynn Johnson, Ruth Rosner. **Pelham:** Leroy Cornman, Barbara Gallo, Julia Marrero, Andrew Vitolo. **Scarsdale:** Geoffrey Ballenger, Emily Cobelli, Divya Deshpande, Mrs. Dominick Dorata, Jeffrey Katz, Emily & James Kronenberg, Linda Lee, Kate & Chris Levy, Lauren Mayer, Malcolm Miller, Thomas Niles, Christiane Quinif, Kerri Reynolds, Steven Skolnik, Terry Sullivan. **Yonkers:** Lynda Metakes.

Bronx River-Sound Shore Audubon Society, Inc.

(formerly Scarsdale Audubon Society)
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**Deadline for orders is October 6
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Support our environmental mission and receive our newsletter with information about all our programs and field trips. Annual dues are \$20 and include membership in the National Audubon Society, plus its magazine. Please allow 4-6 weeks for processing.

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Upcoming Programs

To Eat and Be Eaten Life and Death on the Plains of the Serengeti

Speaker: Mickey Maxwell Cohen

Thursday October 21, 7:30 p.m.
Refreshments 7:00
Church Street School
295 Church St., White Plains



Join Mickey Maxwell Cohen, well known naturalist, educator and East Africa tour guide as he takes us on a slide-illustrated tour of the plains and savannahs of Tanzania where he will uncover the intricacies of the complex food web of one of the most exciting ecosystems on Earth. Co-sponsored by Central Westchester Audubon.

Live Raptors with Master Falconer Jim Eyring

Thursday, November 18, 7:00 p.m.
Church Street School
295 Church St., White Plains, NY



Jim Eyring, Assistant Director of the Pace University Environmental Center in Pleasantville and master falconer, returns to thrill us with his presentation of live owls, hawks, and falcons in a free-flying demonstration.. Jim's enthusiasm and story-telling skills will capture the attention of children and adults alike. So come, bring the kids and enjoy! Co-sponsored by Central Westchester Audubon.