

# The Steward's Backyard

Asotin County Conservation District

January, 2026

Backyard Stewardship and Conservation Newsletter

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



Photos (from top to bottom): Humming bird sipping nectar; American Kestrel in nest; Osprey on nesting platform; Pollinator plot in bloom.

## Creating Wildlife Habitat in Small Spaces: It's easier than you think!

Backyard conservation techniques can enhance wildlife habitat, prevent soil and pathogens from entering our watershed, and contribute to overall ecosystem health. Most practices are low-cost, and can be easily built and installed by homeowners. Backyard stewardship not only benefits our environment, but can also enhance the beauty and functionality of your yard. Check out these conservation techniques:

### **Plant Native:**

Native plants are adapted to our climate, and can handle the stress of our intense summers and chilly winters. Planting native or drought-tolerant plants promotes pollinator diversity, creates habitat, reduces soil erosion, and could save you time and money on irrigation. Native plants also compete with noxious weeds by providing less open space for new weeds to germinate. Planting a variety of native vegetation or adding "pollinator plots" can beautify your yard and provide our beneficial insects critical habitat and forage.

### **Create "Critter-Condos":**

Supplementing habitat by building bird-boxes, raptor perches, nesting platforms, bee hotels, bat houses, log surrogates, and small brush piles will create spaces for wildlife right in your own back yard. "Critter condos" provide songbirds, hawks, owls, chipmunks, squirrels, rabbits, salamanders, frogs, snakes, and insects the habitat components they need to survive. Room for nesting, space to shelter from bad weather, hiding spots to escape predators, and places to store food are critical elements of wildlife habitat.

### **Rainwater Collection and Stormwater Control:**

Adding rain barrels, rain gardens, and runoff control structures to your property will protect our watersheds from soil erosion and keep pollutants from getting into stormwater. Water control techniques can save you from the muddy-mess of rainy days, could direct more water into your garden, and also protects our water supply from sediments and contaminants.

Rainwater collection is a fun technique to control your storm water, prevent mud and ponding, and can supply irrigation water for your trees and yard. You might be surprised at how many gallons of water you can collect off your home... A 1200 sq. ft. home in a 9" rainfall zone can yield 6480 GALLONS of rainwater catchment in one year!

### **Looking for More Information???**

Contact ACCD for FREE habitat guides, plant lists, rainwater control designs and more stewardship techniques. We would love to check out your space and help you with your backyard conservation!

[www.asotincd.org](http://www.asotincd.org), or give us a call: (509) 552-8117

# Natives and Drought-Tolerant Plants

Not sure what to plant? Check out these lists of native and drought-tolerant plants that are great for backyard stewardship, windbreaks, and landscaping.

Not every plant grows everywhere, and not every plant is for everyone... these plants are hardy, adapted to low-precipitation, and most likely to survive our hot-dry summers **WITHOUT** running up your water bill.



## Trees:

Ponderosa Pine  
Douglas Fir  
Western Larch  
Austrian Pine  
Oregon White Oak  
Chokecherry  
Honey Locust  
Black Hawthorn  
Hardy Apricot  
Crabapple  
Amur Maple  
Netleaf Hackberry  
Giant Sequoia  
American Plum



## Forbs and Flowers:

Western Yarrow  
Arrowleaf Balsam Root  
Silky Lupine  
Columbine  
Purple Coneflower  
Blanket Flower  
Biscuitroot  
Snow Buckwheat  
Alfalfa  
Lewis Flax  
Small Burnet  
Prairie Smoke  
Birdfood Trefoil  
Showy Milkweed  
Cusick's Sunflower  
Hoary Aster  
Upland Larkspur  
Rocky Mountain Bee Plant



## Shrubs:

Golden Currant  
Serviceberry  
Common Lilac  
Hazelnut/Filbert  
Blue Elderberry  
Mock Orange (Syringa)  
Nanking Cherry  
Big Sagebrush  
Green/Gray Rabbitbrush  
Mountain Huckleberry  
Wood's Rose  
Siberian Peashrub  
Fourwing Saltbush  
Kinnikinnick (Bearberry)

## Grasses:

Bluebunch Wheatgrass  
Sandberg's Bluegrass  
Idaho Fescue  
Tall Fescue  
Hard Fescue  
Needle-and-Thread  
Prairie Junegrass  
Giant Basin Wildrye  
Sand Dropseed  
Sheep Fescue  
Siberian Wheatgrass



## PLANTS TO AVOID:

Be cautious of these plants, as they tend to be invasive, highly flammable, or demand excessive amounts of water.

Western Juniper

Indigo Bush

Pompas Grass

Russian Olive

English Holly

Saltcedar

English Ivy

Tree of Heaven

Butterfly Bush

Himalayan Blackberry



# Habitat at Home:



## TREE Sale

**Tree Sale Dates:  
March 23-24, 2026**

**Pre-orders Open:  
Feb. 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2026**  
Submit pre-orders  
on the ACCD website:

[www.asotincd.org/treesale](http://www.asotincd.org/treesale)



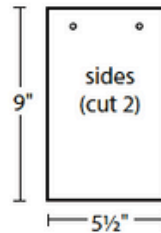
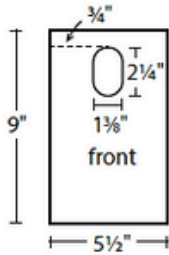
**ACCD Annual Meeting:  
March 12, 2026**

### Nest Box

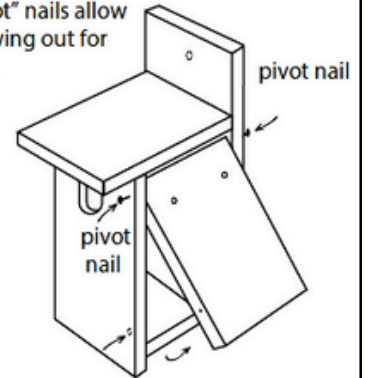
Eastern, Western, and Mountain Bluebirds;  
Tree and Violet-green Swallows



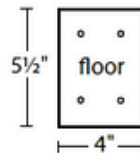
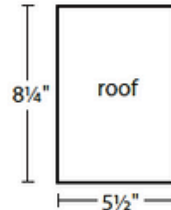
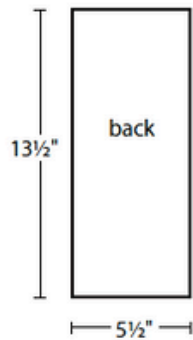
Note: Western Bluebirds need a 1½" diameter round entrance hole and Mountain Bluebirds need a 1⅞" diameter round entrance hole. Swallows are smaller than bluebirds and will be able to enter holes 1 ¾" or larger.



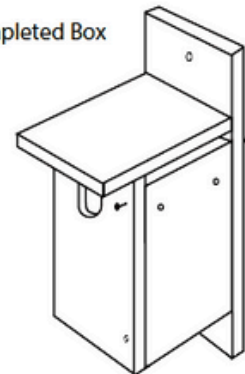
Two "pivot" nails allow side to swing out for cleaning.



Use a nail or screw at bottom to keep side closed.



Completed Box



Note: these dimensions are for ¾" thick board. Some cedar boards are ⅝" thick. If so, the floor must be 3¾" wide, not 4".



Lumber: 1" x 6" x 6'

## Important Upcoming Dates:

ACNWCB Weed List Adoption Public Hearing: Jan. 26th at 9am

ACNWCB Meeting: Feb. 3<sup>rd</sup> at 1pm

ACCD Board Meeting: Feb. 5<sup>th</sup> at 12pm

### ACCD Board of Supervisors 2026 Election Dates:

Deadline to File Candidate Interest: Feb. 9<sup>th</sup> at 4:30pm

Deadline to request absentee ballot: Feb. 19<sup>th</sup> at 4:30pm

Election Polls Open/Close: March 12<sup>th</sup> from 2:30-7:30pm



**Asotin County**  
CONSERVATION DISTRICT

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Website: [www.asotincd.org](http://www.asotincd.org)

### ACCD Office Closures:

JAN. 19<sup>TH</sup> - MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. HOLIDAY

FEB. 16<sup>TH</sup> - PRESIDENTS DAY