

Winter Song

FEB. 1996 by Joan Sargent

It's been a long time since I heard a Towhee scratching or saw a Rosebreasted Grosbeak, both common in my garden years ago. Times and birds have obviously changed as I recently watched a family of Wild Turkeys sitting in a Crabtree eating all the fruit before the Cedar Waxwings got their share. Well perhaps every bad has a good. Bluebirds increase every year and four houses hardly seem enough in my garden. The misnamed Redbellied Woodpeckers are here to stay and even Harys [Hairy Woodpeckers?] are more abundant. Also a Carolina Wren was seen emerging from a boot print in a snow drift munching a nut. The birds took berries much earlier than usual here and the Cardinal matched up well with the Pyracantha. However, the purple colored Callicarpa and yellow fruited Holly have so far been ignored.

By planting more berrying shrubs, especially those that also offer shelter, you can make a real contribution to the birds, and if less pesticides were used perhaps we would hear the return of the Towhees scratching once again.

Second Thoughts

FEB. 1997 by Joan Sargent

I've been reconsidering my dislike of yellow-needled evergreens after a trip to Twombly's Winter garden in Monroe. There they look marvelous mixing with broadleaved evergreens, colored stems and interesting bark. Hellebores and heathers. Some are tall, some ground covers and some little golden buns, but where to put them is the problem. Most need sun and many are eaten by deer (unfortunately) and some turn pea green in summer. I know I like them best in winter. Now I have to decide how to fit them in, a much more difficult decision than my usual February chore of ordering seeds, fertilizing evergreens and searching for signs of spring.



Eastern Towhee.



Redbreasted Grosbeak



Pyracantha Berries.

Joan Sargent, a longtime member and master gardener who passed away in August 2012; wrote many gardening columns through the years for our newsletter. We are reprinting them again- this time with photos researched on the internet.