

**Splish Splash**  
**Greg Grant, Tyler Morning Telegraph**  
**July 21, 2024**

One of the simplest and most rewarding additions you can make to your garden is a bird bath. Not only does it provide essential water for birds, but it also brings a host of benefits to your garden ecosystem and enhances your outdoor space's aesthetic appeal.

A bird bath is a magnet for birds. They need water not only to drink but also to bathe in. Watching different species of birds splash around can be a delightful and educational experience. You will likely see a variety of local species visiting your bird bath throughout the year, adding life and movement to your garden.

Clean, fresh water is essential for birds' health. Bathing helps them keep their feathers in good condition by removing dust, parasites, and other debris. This is especially important during dry spells when natural water sources may be scarce.

Birds are nature's pest control. By attracting them to your garden, you can reduce the population of insects and other pests. Birds also help with pollination and seed dispersal, contributing to the health and diversity of your garden.

A bird bath can be a beautiful focal point in your garden. Whether you choose a simple dish or an ornate pedestal bath, it adds an element of serenity and charm. The sight and sound of birds visiting your garden create a peaceful, relaxing environment.

Bird baths come in various materials, including ceramic, concrete, metal, and plastic. Each has its pros and cons. Most bird baths are concrete these days and last for many years. Choose a material that suits your needs and tastes.

The design should be both functional and attractive. A shallow basin with a gently sloping edge is ideal, as it allows birds of all sizes to bathe comfortably. Look for a bath with a textured surface or add some stones or a brick to the bottom to provide secure footing for birds.

Place your bird bath in a spot where it is easily visible from your house, so you can enjoy watching the birds. It should be in a shaded or partially shaded area to keep the water cool and slow evaporation. Ensure there are nearby trees or shrubs to provide birds with cover from predators.

Clean the bird bath regularly to prevent algae buildup and the spread of diseases. Use a scrub brush and a mixture one part bleach to ten parts water, rinsing thoroughly afterward. Refill the bird bath with fresh water daily, especially during hot weather. This ensures birds always have access to clean drinking and bathing water. In colder months, keep the bird bath free of ice by adding lukewarm water daily.

Adding a bird bath to your garden is a simple way to attract wildlife and enhance your outdoor space. It provides essential water for birds, supports their health, and offers you countless hours of enjoyment. My friend Cliff Shackelford, former state ornithologist for Texas Parks and Wildlife even says that bird baths are more critical in Texas than bird feeders.

**Greg Grant is the Smith County horticulturist and Master Gardener coordinator for the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service. He is the author of *Texas Fruit and Vegetable Gardening*, *Texas Home Landscaping*, *Heirloom Gardening in the South*, and *The Rose Rustlers*. You can read his “Greg’s Ramblings” blog at [arborgate.com](http://arborgate.com), read his “In Greg’s Garden” in each issue of *Texas Gardener* magazine ([texasgardener.com](http://texasgardener.com)), or follow him on Facebook at “Greg Grant Gardens.” More science-based lawn and gardening information from the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service can be found at [aggieturf.tamu.edu](http://aggieturf.tamu.edu) and [aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu](http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu).**

**Image caption: *A brown-headed nuthatch takes a cooling sip of water.***