

Lamorinda

OUR HOMES

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Digging Deep with Goddess Gardener, Cynthia Brian

Fall flying

By Cynthia Brian



Keep bird feeders full to nourish migrating birds. Photos Cynthia Brian

This is what you shall do: Love the earth and sun and animals. ~ Walt Whitman, *Leaves of Grass*

This past year I downloaded a phenomenal app designed by Cornell Lab of Ornithology called Merlin. It is a sound identification app whereby I record the bird-song, the app analyzes it and indicates what species is singing. The sounds can be saved, photos can be taken, and my knowledge of the avian world increases. Birds have always fascinated me.

My grandmother was a birder and an animal handler. In addition to her dogs, horses, and barn-

yard critters, she had aviaries where she bred canaries, cockatiels, and raised parrots. As a child, I spent copious amounts of time with her taking care of her feathered and furred friends. When my husband and I purchased our first home, my grandfather built me an aviary and gifted me a pair of cockatiels. That aviary has traveled with me to three different homes and the male cockatiel is still the senior resident. Throughout the years, I've adopted a plethora of injured birds or those in need of a new home including pheasants, ca-



Birds splash in the gurgling fountain

naries, doves, finches, quail, pigeons, and parakeets. I love my birds.

Wild birds are my garden helpers and I enjoy watching their aerial antics, listening to their chatter, and observing their feeding frenzies. My landscape is a haven for orioles, finches, waxwings, bluebirds, warblers, sparrows, mockingbirds, bluejays, doves, hummingbirds, and a host of other species that I am just learning. Owls hoot from the trees at night, and the sky boasts hawks gliding on the currents. I plant my garden so that it provides food,

shelter, water, and refreshing baths for the birds.

Fall is the flying season. Millions of birds are migrating. It's perilous. Many make thousand-mile journeys twice a year: spring and autumn. They migrate because of the change in weather, availability of food, and breeding cycles. In North America, many birds migrate south to find a warmer climate, flying to Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean. Warblers, orioles, and hummingbirds may migrate as far as South America.

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