

Fall Is for Berries: Fruiting Shrubs for Wildlife

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Plentiful rainfall can lead to an abundance of fall fruits on the shrubs in my yard. While I enjoyed looking at them, the birds enjoyed eating them. Native plants are particularly valuable to birds and other wildlife which is familiar with and adapted to eating the berries found on these shrubs. A few native shrubs that bear beautiful fruits attractive to birds include red chokeberry (*Aronia arbutifolia*), American beautyberry (*Callicarpa americana*), winterberry holly (*Ilex verticillata*), possumhaw viburnum (*Viburnum nudum*), flowering dogwood (*Cornus florida*), strawberry-bush (*Euonymus americanus*), and coralberry (*Symphoricarpus orbiculatus*).

The dogwood, strawberry-bush, and coralberry, all understory plants tolerant to dry conditions, were on my property originally. The others, while native to Virginia, I bought and planted. Possumhaw viburnum, chokeberry, winterberry holly, and beautyberry prefer moist soils but have adapted to drier conditions with some supplemental water. The first three grow in full sun to part shade, but beautyberry requires at least part shade. The beautyberry is unique with its beautiful magenta fruit. In the fall flocks of robins and migrating birds devour the berries. I think my favorite, though, is the strawberry-bush, also known as hearts a-bustin, with its five orange seeds hanging from a hot pink cap. Where deer pressure is heavy the fruit is hard to find because deer eat it to the ground before it has a chance to bear fruit.



Possomhaw Viburnum



American Beautyberry



Strawberry-bush or Hearts a-bustin