Questions to Ask Yourself Before Choosing Plants

- Where will the plant be placed? What conditions occur in that spot? 

- Is there shade for part or all of the day? Harsh mid-day sun or angled morning/afternoon sun? Deep or dappled shade? 

- How much space is there? Height? Width? 

- Will the container be subject to drying winds? 

- Will it remain in the same place year round? If so, how will the seasons affect it? 

- Will it get more or less sun in the winter vs. summer? 

- Is it exposed or protected from freezing? 

- Will people walking by damage brittle stems or be injured by sharp spines? 

- How wet is the area? Realistically, how often will the plants get watered? 

- What specific wildlife do I want to attract? 

Other Considerations

- Clay/porous containers dry more quickly than plastic/watertight ones, and are more susceptible to freezing. Get the best pot for your budget. Do not overwater, especially in winter. 

- Most plants will rot without good drainage – make sure pot has a hole in the bottom. 

- Consider the full-grown size of the plant. You may need to transplant as it grows. 

- Choose a variety of colors, textures, forms, heights, and evergreen/deciduous/herbaceous. 

- Plan for 3 seasons of bloom and 4 seasons of wildlife food sources – berries, seed heads, nectar. 

Container Assembly

- Start with a layer of gravel or other porous material in the bottom of the container. 

- Add potting mix, pressing down to eliminate air pockets. 

- Arrange plants as you get close to the top, allowing adequate space for growth. Be sure to loosen the root ball. 

- Plant’s base (where roots meet stem) should be 1” from rim of container to create a water reservoir. 

- Never bury the plant’s stem or leave the roots exposed! 

- Mulch is optional. Best to fill the pot with plants! 

- Water thoroughly – allow first dose to soak in, then water again.
Additional Resources

Books
The Living Landscape: Designing for beauty and biodiversity in the home garden by Douglas W. Tallamy and Rick Darke
Nature’s Best Hope: A new approach to conservation that starts in your yard by Douglas W. Tallamy
Planting in a Post-Wild World by Claudia West and Thomas Rainer
Garden Revolution: How our landscapes can be a source of environmental change by Larry Weaner
Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children From Nature-Deficit Disorder by Richard Louv

Find a list of more helpful books here:
http://pa.audubon.org/good-books-and-booklets

Online Resources
Patterson Park Audubon Bird-Friendly Communities
National Audubon Society Bird-Friendly Communities
www.audubon.org/conservation/bird-friendly-communities
National Audubon Society Plants for Birds Database
www.audubon.org/plantsforbirds
Ladybird Johnson Wildflower Center
www.wildflower.org
Maryland Native Plant Society (MNPS)
www.mdflora.org