

**For Immediate Release**

## **Breaking Ground on Bird-Friendly Demo Garden @ Steinberg Nature Center — planting a better county for birds, other pollinators & people, too**

**MIAMI, Fla.** — Tropical Audubon Society's Steinberg Nature Center will soon host a new Bird-Friendly Demonstration Garden designed to inspire and empower Miami-Dade County residents to create wildlife habitat for birds, bees and other pollinators in their yards, or on patios and balconies, helping to re-green urban areas. Groundbreaking took place on Saturday, February 15 (see attached photos) with shovel-wielding volunteers potting up the native plants that will be retained; as installation continues over the next three months, there will be many more opportunities to dig in.

The Bird-friendly Demonstration Garden project is being led by Tropical Audubon Society's Volunteer Coordinator Amy Creekmur and Board Member Kirsten Hines. Creekmur is a master gardener and former director of Tree-mendous Miami; Hines, also on the Audubon Florida board, is a nature writer and photographer with an M.Sc. in biology who co-authored the gardening reference book "[Attracting Birds to South Florida Gardens](#)."

"We've designed the Demo Garden to show people that wildlife-friendly landscaping is beautiful, cost-effective and doesn't have to be complicated to design and implement," Hines says. "Native plants and a little diversity can convert any garden into an oasis for birds and other wildlife, which is critical to the overall ecological health of increasingly urbanized Miami-Dade County, particularly as we mitigate for the impacts of [climate change](#)."

Dr. John Rowden, National Audubon's Director of Community Conservation, further notes, "Birds are the most common visible wildlife on the planet, and 47 million Americans say they enjoy birdwatching ... In essence, birds are relatable to nearly everyone. As ... natural habitats disappear, native plants can go a long way to restoring the environments [birds] need." *Cont. >*

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To be situated in the front yard of Tropical Audubon Society's historic Doc Thomas House headquarters on Sunset Drive, the Bird-Friendly Demonstration Garden project is supported by the National Audubon's "Plants for Birds" Burke Grant and Miami-Dade County's Environmental Education Community-based Organization Grant.

"Birds depend on native plants for food, shelter and places to nest," Creekmur explains. "A manicured lawn is a monoculture, it's like a desert to birds and other pollinators, and non-native landscape plants are generally a poor food source for birds and other wildlife."

Tropical Audubon's Bird-Friendly Demonstration Garden will feature native plants whose resilience and inherent qualities allow for reduced lawn and landscape care, and the elimination or reduction of irrigation and chemicals, including pesticides, herbicides and fertilizers.

Hines adds "Much of South Florida's upland habitat, critical to birds, especially migratory species, has been developed for human occupation. That's a big loss, but we hope our educational garden will spark a community movement — we'd love to see Miami-Dade County residents help recreate habitat one yard at a time, re-greening the urban corridor through bird-friendly landscaping."

When complete, the new garden will feature interpretive signs to direct visitors through the space, describe the plants, their value to the environment and specific bird and butterfly species, and their role in the home landscape. A "Do-it-Yourself (DIY) guide will be available on-site in print and online. Visitors will be empowered to turn their own yards into havens for birds and other wildlife, and encouraged to share their stories with the community via a "Plants for Birds" social media campaign on our Facebook, Twitter and Instagram channels.

Area residents can learn to garden for birds and other pollinators by joining our Planting-for-Birds Eco-Restoration Days on the third Saturday of every month from 9am until noon. *Cont. >*

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The community's help will be essential to further transforming the Steinberg Nature Center into a food-rich oasis for birds and other wildlife. (Additional volunteer days will be added as needed.) To participate, contact Amy Creekmur at [volunteer@tropicalaudubon.org](mailto:volunteer@tropicalaudubon.org).

Every newly planted native species helps tip the scales for birds toward survival. In hand with Tropical Audubon, bird lovers and budding naturalists across the county can restore a natural, nurturing and sustainable native landscape. Where birds thrive, people prosper.

**Circle the Date:** A formal Bird-Friendly Demonstration Garden dedication ceremony is slated for Saturday, June 6, to coincide with Tropical Audubon's annual Native Plant Sale on the same date.

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## **Planting a Better County for Birds & People, Too**

**Social:** #TASPlantsforBirds, #TASDemoGarden #TASBirdGarden  
#TASPlantaBetterWorld #TASBirdFriendlyGarden

FacebookLink: <https://www.facebook.com/events/852111921928703/>

### **Contacts:**

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**Tropical Audubon Society Mission:** Tropical Audubon Society works to conserve and restore natural South Florida ecosystems, focusing on birds, other wildlife and their habitats through advocacy and education for the benefit of biological diversity and humanity itself. Tropical Audubon Society facilitates its Mission via Conservation, Education, Historic Preservation and Recreation.