

BIRD-SAFE PLANTS GUIDE

Indoor herbs and houseplants
that keep your birds healthy



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FREE DOWNLOADABLE GUIDE

Welcome to your **Bird-Safe Plants Guide**, created to help you choose beautiful greenery that keeps your feathered friends safe and healthy. Many common houseplants are harmless, but others can be toxic, so knowing the difference is essential for every bird-friendly home.

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In this guide, you'll find clear profiles of safe plants like bamboo, basil, dill, phalaenopsis orchids, and rosemary, including light, watering, soil needs, and how to offer them safely around birds. You'll also see general tips on avoiding pesticides, recognizing toxic species, and creating an enriching indoor "jungle" your bird can explore without risk



1. Bamboo (Non-Lucky Bamboo)

Bamboo is a hardy, fast-growing option that provides natural perches and visual enrichment for birds. It tolerates a range of indoor conditions and can be grown in pots or large containers.

- **Safety for birds:** Natural bamboo (not “lucky bamboo,” which is a *Dracaena* and toxic) is widely considered safe for birds to perch on and chew, as long as it is untreated and pesticide-free.
- **Light:** Prefers bright, indirect light; strong direct sun through glass can scorch leaves. A spot near a bright window with filtered light is ideal.
- **Water:** Keep the soil lightly moist but never waterlogged. Water when the top 2–3 cm of soil feel dry, and ensure the pot has drainage holes.
- **Soil:** Use a well-draining potting mix; avoid heavy garden soil that holds too much moisture.

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Maintenance tips:

- Trim older, yellowing canes to keep the plant neat and encourage new growth.
- Rinse stems and leaves periodically to remove dust and potential residues before placing near birds.

Bird-safe placement: Place pots outside the cage but within reach for supervised chewing, or offer cleaned, cut sections as natural perches.



2. Basil (*Ocimum basilicum*)

Basil is an easy-to-grow culinary herb that many birds enjoy nibbling in small amounts as a fresh treat.

- **Safety for birds:** Basil leaves are non-toxic and commonly offered as part of a varied fresh food rotation.
- **Light:** Needs 6–8 hours of strong light per day. A sunny south- or west-facing window works well; in low-light homes, use an LED grow light 10–15 cm above the plant.
- **Water:** Keep soil evenly moist but not soggy. Water when the top 1–2 cm of soil is dry; droopy leaves often signal either underwatering or overwatering, so always check soil first.
- **Soil:** Loose, fertile, well-drained potting mix. A herb or vegetable mix works well.

Maintenance tips:

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- Pinch off the top 2–3 sets of leaves regularly to encourage bushy growth and prevent the plant from becoming tall and spindly.
- Remove flower buds as they appear, once basil flowers heavily, leaf quality and flavor decline.

Feeding to birds: Offer washed leaves in moderation, mixed with other greens, and remove uneaten pieces after a few hours to prevent spoilage.



3. Dill (*Anethum graveolens*)

Dill is a delicate, feathery herb with a mild aroma that can enrich your bird's environment and diet.

- **Safety for birds:** Dill is generally regarded as safe and is often recommended among bird-safe herbs, particularly for parrots.
- **Light:** Requires bright light and does best in full sun; indoors, choose the brightest window available or supplement with grow lights.
- **Water:** Keep soil slightly moist but never saturated. Allow the surface to dry slightly between watering to reduce the risk of root rot.
- **Soil:** Well-drained soil is essential; a light potting mix with some sand or perlite works well..

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Maintenance tips:

- Dill dislikes transplanting—sow seeds directly into the final pot if possible.
- Tall stems may need a small stake or support so they do not flop over.

Feeding to birds: Offer small, washed sprigs occasionally. The feathery texture can be enriching, but do not rely on dill as a main food source.



4. Phalaenopsis (Moth Orchid)

Phalaenopsis orchids are elegant flowering plants that add color and interest to bird areas without adding toxicity risk.

- **Safety for birds:** Phalaenopsis orchids are listed as non-toxic to pets by major plant-safety lists, and are generally considered safe to have around birds if unsprayed and untreated.
- **Light:** Thrive in bright, indirect light. East-facing windows are often ideal; avoid hot midday sun, which can burn the leaves.
- **Water:** Water thoroughly but infrequently. Allow the bark medium to dry slightly; many growers water once every 7–10 days, adjusting for temperature and humidity.
- **Soil:** Use a dedicated orchid mix (bark-based) that allows air around the roots; standard potting soil will suffocate the roots.
- **Humidity & temperature:** Prefer moderate to high humidity and stable, warm temperatures typical of indoor homes.

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Maintenance tips:

- After blooms fade, you can either cut the spike back to the base or to just above a node to encourage a side shoot.
- Avoid letting water sit in the crown of the plant, as this can cause rot.



5. Rosemary (*Salvia rosmarinus* / *Rosmarinus officinalis*)

Rosemary is a woody, aromatic herb that can provide pleasant scent and safe greenery near birds.

- **Safety for birds:** Fresh, unsprayed rosemary is widely regarded as safe for birds and is sometimes offered as enrichment or a mild flavor accent in small quantities.
- **Light:** Needs full sun to thrive aim for 6 or more hours of direct light daily. In low-light homes, a strong grow light is very helpful
- **Water:** Allow soil to dry out between waterings. Rosemary is drought-tolerant and is more likely to suffer from overwatering than underwatering.
- **Soil:** Prefers sandy or very well-drained soil; a cactus/succulent mix or a standard mix heavily amended with perlite or sand works well.

Maintenance tips:

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- Avoid letting water sit in saucers for long periods.
- Lightly prune tips to keep plants compact and to encourage bushy growth.

Feeding to birds: Offer small, washed sprigs occasionally as enrichment; the strong aroma is stimulating, but it should not be a staple food.

