

Saving Birds, One Window at a Time

At Jenkins, we know that small actions can have a big impact. A garden teaches us this every day: an acorn grows into an oak that shades generations; a patch of wildflowers provides nectar and pollen for countless pollinators; the deep, fibrous roots of native plants anchor soil, slowing erosion for years to come. Step by step, incremental changes build the foundation for a healthier, more resilient ecosystem.

In 2025, we took our next small step, applying a simple grid of white dots to the expanse of windows that wrap our John J. Willaman Education Center. Though subtle, these dots represent one of the most important conservation projects in our garden's history, helping to protect our feathered friends from an often-overlooked threat.

Unlike people, birds don't "see" glass. Instead, they see reflections of trees, sky, and habitat—and hurtle head-first into what looks like safe passage. If you have ever heard the heavy *thunk* of a bird hitting glass, you won't be surprised to learn that most strikes are fatal. Even birds that survive the initial collision are likely to die later from internal injuries or predation. The magnitude of the problem is devastating: each year, more than one billion birds are killed by window collisions in North America alone.

As gardeners, we take pride in cultivating spaces that support wildlife, not endanger it. So when birders from our community voiced concerns about

the windows on our property, we listened. In conversation with Bonnie and Phil Witmer, trained experts who share a deep love for birds and Jenkins, we committed to retrofitting our windows with deterrent markers from Feather Friendly®, a proven leader in bird-safe technology. Spaced in a 2" x 2" grid, these small markers break up reflections, helping birds recognize glass as a solid surface to avoid.

Last winter, we invited our community to support this effort by making a donation. The response was extraordinary. Dozens of donors came together to fund the purchase of materials and the installation of markers on our highest-risk and hard-to-reach windows. In July, a skilled crew from NGS Films and Graphics treated the windows along our tree canopy deck, back lobby, and workshop bay, while staff and volunteers applied markers to the remaining windows later that fall. Together, we treated more than 1,500 square feet of glass, reducing bird-window collisions on site by over 95%.

This accomplishment embodies the best of Jenkins: caring for nature, learning as a community, and collaborating to create lasting change. Step by step, one window at a time, we can all make an immediate, life-saving impact for generations of birds.

As we celebrate 50 years of conservation and education, projects like this remind us that our legacy is not only about the past, but about the choices we make today to ensure a better, more resilient tomorrow.



NGS Films and Graphics using a lift to treat hard-to-reach windows.



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Scan the code to explore solutions from the American Bird Conservancy.

Staff and volunteers treat remaining windows.