Case study:
Brooklyn Botanical Garden’s Visitor Center

Architects:
Weiss/Manfredi Architecture/Landscape/Urbanism
Marion Weiss and Michael Manfredi.
Opened: May, 2012
22,000-square-feet $28 million exhibit and event space with 10,000 square foot green roof, connected by breezeway to gift shop (with copper roof).

Photo © Alber Vercerka, ESTO
Bird-friendly glass

Botanical gardens of necessity have glass buildings that can be dangerous for birds. Throughout the Visitor Center, the glass has an elegant pattern of vertical lines spaced to signal ‘no fly zone’ to birds. The pattern is made of frit – small ceramic dots applied to the glass when it is manufactured.
Signage explains environmental strategies used in the center, including the fritted pattern on the glass, which is designed to deter bird collisions. The pattern on the glass also helps control heat and light.

Photo: Christine Sheppard, ABC
Visitor center glass is insulated for thermal control and the fritted pattern is on an inside surface. Under some conditions reflections may obscure the frit pattern. The building will be monitored for collisions over its first year to evaluate this risk and the general success of the glass.
Situations like this one, where birds can see through a building, can be collision hazards. Here, the frit pattern on both glass walls is visible, reinforcing the ‘do not fly’ signal.

Photo: Christine Sheppard, ABC
Green roofs can attract birds near glass but can also provide feeding and even nesting habitat. This roof includes over 40,000 plants.
Gift shop glass is not patterned but birds are unlikely to frequent the breezeway location.

Photo: Christine Sheppard, ABC
Reflection of this striped glass could reinforce the ‘no fly’ signal

Photo: Christine Sheppard, ABC