GARDEN FOR WILDLIFE™

Bird Feeders

Bird feeders are a great way to supplement the natural food sources provided by native plants and insects. They also create a fun and entertaining opportunity to observe birds up close and connect with nature right outside your door every day.

Follow these tips to safely feed birds and to attract the most diversity of species to your wildlife habitat garden for you to enjoy.

Learn more about providing natural food sources for birds at nwf.org/Garden-For-Wildlife/Food.aspx

NATIVE PLANTS ARE THE BEST AND MOST NATURAL BIRD FEEDERS. THEY PROVIDE THE SEEDS, BERRIES, NUTS AND INSECTS THAT BIRDS NEED TO SURVIVE, AND BEST OF ALL, ONCE YOU PLANT THEM, THEY'LL FEED THE BIRDS FOR YEARS TO COME, NO CLEANING OR REFILLING REQUIRED.

Learn more

Tips & Info

Bird Feeding Tips

1. **There are many different types of feeders** designed to offer different kinds of food. Tube, hopper or tray feeders are great for offering seeds. Nectar feeders attract hummingbirds and orioles. Suet can be offered in metal cages for woodpeckers, nuthatches and insect-eating birds. Birds that don't feed on seeds can be offered dried mealworms in special feeders. Get National Wildlife Federation approved feeders at shopnwf.org/Garden-for-Wildlife/Food/index.cat.
2. **Feed in moderation**, with no more than a few feeders per acre. Too many feeders can cause stress and foster the spread of disease. Spread feeders out to disperse bird activity.
3. **Empty and wash them regularly** to prevent spread of disease. Disinfect in the dishwasher or by soaking feeders in a 20 percent solution of white vinegar and hot water. Use scrub brush if needed and be sure to let them dry thoroughly before refilling.
4. **Store seed in a container** with a tight-fitting lid to keep it clean and dry. Seed can spoil if not stored properly. Metal containers will keep out rodents.
5. **Black oil sunflower** is your best option for seed feeders. All seed-eating birds relish it. Avoid cheap seed mixes with high percentage of "filler" seed such as milo, sorghum, corn or millet, which are often rejected by birds and end up wasted on the ground.
6. **Keep areas below feeders cleaned** to avoid attracting rodents. Pre-shelled sunflower seeds called "sunflower hearts" will minimize mess below the feeder.
7. **For nectar feeders, mix your own solution** by dissolving one part white sugar in four parts hot water, which most closely matches the nectar in flowers. Never use honey, which spoils easily when mixed with water, or artificial sweeteners, which have no food value for birds. Red food coloring is not necessary and may be harmful to birds. Let the solution cool to room temperature before putting it in your feeder. You can store homemade nectar for up to a week in the refrigerator. Use a feeder with insect guards to discourage ants and wasps.
8. **Orioles can be attracted** by offering slices of oranges or other fruit, either in feeders designed for this purpose or by attaching fruit to tree branches.
9. **Place feeders close enough to dense trees,** shrubs or a brush pile to provide cover for feeder birds fleeing from predators, but not so close that predators can ambush birds visiting the feeders. Ten to twelve feet is a good distance.
10. **Keep your cat indoors.** Free roaming domesticated cats kill between one and four billion birds annually and will stake out feeders as places to make an easy kill.
11. **Place feeders close to windows** to allow the best viewing opportunity and to minimize the chance that birds flying from the feeder with crash into the reflection in the window. You can also place decals on windows, hang mobiles to break up reflections, or simply keep the blinds drawn to prevent window strikes.
12. **Don't spray pesticides.** Most birds, including hummingbirds, rely on insects as a key food source for themselves and their babies. A garden without a healthy insect population will not attract and support birds.

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Join the Garden for Wildlife Movement!

Join the growing movement of people making a difference for wildlife where they live, work, learn, worship, and play! Just go to nwf.org/garden.

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Page 2: Hummingbird - Ximena Gallego