



Wild About Birds

Backyard birdfeeding experts!

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BirdChat: Fall

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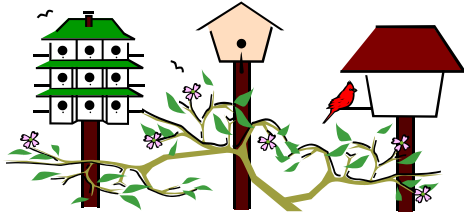
Wild Bird Habitat in Your Backyard

Wild birds require four basic elements for their survival - food, water, shelter and places to raise their young. You will attract beautiful wild birds if your backyard meets their needs. Birdfeeders, properly placed and stocked with seeds, nuts and suet, will attract a wide variety of wild birds. A year round source of water, like a birdbath or small pond, is also a necessary part of your wild bird habitat. Cavity nesting birds may be attracted to your yard if you provide birdhouses. Birds will use the trees and shrubs in your landscape for shelter and places

to build nests.

Food

Establishing different feeding stations is the best possible



way to attract the widest variety of wild birds. There are several types of feeders commercially available – tube feeders, hopper style, platforms, window type, ground feeders, peanut feeders, suet holders, nyjer (thistle) feeders, hummingbird feeders, oriole feeders. The wild birds you attract will be determined

by the variety of feeder styles and food types you provide.

Water

All wildlife, including birds, need a permanent source of water. There are many different types of birdbaths available. Make sure the one you choose is shallow enough (1"-2") and it's a good idea to place a few small rocks in the bottom to help birds get a foothold. A small pond with a shallow, rocky wading area will also attract birds and other wildlife. Make sure shrubbery or other cover is nearby for protection but not close enough to hide predators!

continued on back page

In this issue:

Wild Bird Habitat in Your Backyard

Why Should We Care?

Time to Clean Up

Sunflower Seeds—Not Just for the Birds

This is the last 2010 issue of BirdChat.

Look for the 2011 Winter issue of BirdChat in early February.

Why Should We Care? an editorial by Peggie Flierl

Ithoroughly enjoy watching the birds in my backyard – I love to hear them sing, I'm fascinated by their behavior, and their beautiful colors brighten my day! The birds continue to visit my yard year round because I feed them year round.

I think we owe it to them! Every time man removes trees to build subdivisions, shopping plazas, or office complexes, wild bird habitat is

destroyed. If we provide a safe and clean feeding station and landscape our yards with trees that produce fruit and

"No suitable habitat...means no birds."

shrubs that provide cover, we are replacing some of that lost habitat.

Healthy bird populations indicate a healthy environment. No suitable habitat for

feeding and nesting means no birds. Birds are essential for pollinating flowers for fruit production, for perpetuating plants by eating the fruits and dispersing the seeds, and for feeding on insects which, left uncontrolled, could damage the environment. Birds devour wood boring insects, saving the timber industry millions of dollars.

So do the right thing for the environment and for your enjoyment: feed the birds!



Time to Clean Up

Cleanliness is important to the success of your backyard bird-feeding program.

Dirty birdfeeding stations can be a source of avian disease. Feeding the birds and providing housing and birdbaths comes with some responsibility; you must provide a safe and healthy environment for your feathered friends.

This is a great time of year, before the cold weather sets in, to clean all your bird feeders. Acrylic feeders should be washed in hot soapy water to which you've

added a splash of bleach; rinse thoroughly and dry them before you refill with fresh seed. Wooden feeders can be cleaned using a garden hose and a stiff brush.

It's time to clean out the



nesting boxes now that breeding season has passed. With a gloved hand, remove the nest and brush out the inside of each box. Add a 3"

layer of dried grass to provide insulation for winter roosting.

Birdbaths should be kept clean throughout the year. Help minimize contamination by not placing baths where birdseed and bird droppings can fall into the water. In warm, fall weather, algae will continue to develop in your birdbaths so they should be cleaned daily. You can scrub birdbaths with a light bleach solution. I use straight, white vinegar; it's safe and it works great! *Wild About Birds* carries birdbath cleaner, brushes, and protecting enzymes to retard the growth of algae.

"Cleanliness is important to the success of your backyard birdfeeding program."

Sunflower Seeds - Not Just for the Birds

Did you know that the sunflower is the world's largest family of flowering plants? It is estimated that there are over 25,000 named species. Some common garden plants that are in the sunflower family are: artichoke, aster, chrysanthemum, daisy, dandelion, ragweed, goldenrod—just to name a few!

Archaeologists have found evidence that prehistoric native Americans of the

southwest used sunflowers for food, religious rituals, and decoration. In the 16th century, Spanish explorers took sunflowers to Europe where they were used for ornamental purposes. In the 19th century the Russians recognized the sunflower's food value; today Russia is among the world's leading producers of sunflowers. In the U.S., North Dakota, South Dakota, and Minnesota lead the country in production.

Although sunflower seeds

are the single most popular birdseed, that's not what they're grown for. The seeds we use in our birdfeeders are a by-product of the confection seed and oil seed market. Three fourths of the sunflowers grown are black oil seeds, which are used for sunflower oil; stripe sunflower, used for confectionery purposes, makes up the balance. The wild birdseed market gets the sunflower seeds that are too small for human use.



Wild Bird Habitat in Your Backyard *continued*

Shelter

Birds seek cover for protection from predators (the neighbors cat!!) and for a place to rest. Dense shrubs and evergreens will provide shelter all year. Brush piles and dead or dying trees (snags) are also used for cover by birds and other wildlife. Roosting boxes can be

purchased or constructed in the absence of snag.

Places to Raise Young

There are many cavity nesting birds – chickadees, titmice, bluebirds, wrens – that would use a nesting box. Birdhouses, either purchased or made in your own workshop, should be built to "spec" for the

birds you wish to attract. The dimensions vary and the hole size is different for each species. For the details you can refer to any of the several books available about building birdhouses. Shrubs, trees, and snags of varying sizes and density in your landscape will also provide places for wild birds to raise their young.

Wild About Birds is owned and operated in Milford, Ohio by Peggie Flierl. *BirdChat* is a periodic newsletter written by Peggie for customers of *Wild About Birds*. Material appearing in *BirdChat* may not be reprinted without permission. Any comments should be directed to Peggie at:

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