



## BIRD FEEDING

Birds have different preferences for where and what they eat. Some birds like to feed on the ground, while others prefer to eat higher up. You can attract the widest variety of birds by providing several feeders with different foods at various locations.

### FEEDER SELECTION

Feeders are available in many different types and styles. Unfortunately, many are designed for their appeal to humans instead of birds. It is important to select a feeder that best fits the needs of the birds you wish to attract and the maintenance level you prefer. Feeders that work well in one location may not be suitable for other sites.

- Birds usually come to tray feeders first.
- Feeders made from recycled plastic last longer, are easier to clean, and better for the environment.
- Consider if other wildlife like squirrels or raccoons may be able to access feeders and select and place feeders accordingly.

### TYPES OF FEEDERS

- Tray:** Attracts the most birds with a variety of food and offers the best view.
- Hopper:** Classic design stores a supply of seed and attracts a variety of birds.
- Tube:** Holds a supply of seed for smaller birds like chickadees, finches, goldfinches, nuthatches, and titmice but may be used by larger birds.
- Bell:** Can be used with a variety of foods – good for meal worms.
- Suet:** Contains suet cakes for chickadees, jays, nuthatches, titmice and woodpeckers.
- Fruit:** Holds fruit and/or jelly for catbirds, cedar waxwings, mockingbirds, orioles, robins, and rose-breasted grosbeaks.

### FEEDER PLACEMENT TIPS

- Place feeders less than 3 feet or more than 30 feet from a window to prevent collisions.
- Mount or hang the feeder about 5 to 6 feet above the ground.
- Place evergreen shrubs and trees about 8 feet from the feeder so birds have a place to escape from hawks.
- Keep the ground clear around the feeder for about 8 feet so cats and predators do not have a place to hid.

### SQUIRRELS

Love them or hate them, squirrels are a source of entertainment or frustration – or some combination thereof. No feeder is 100% squirrel proof; however, the following steps can significantly deter squirrels.

- Buy a feeder that has squirrel deterrents like spring-loaded perches that close with the weight of a squirrel.

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- Place the feeder 6 feet above the ground and 8 feet from any place a squirrel could jump from to the feeder.
- Put a baffle above the feeder if it is hung or below if it is pole mounted.
- Use safflower seed – it is the least favorite of squirrels.
- Surrender and place peanuts or sunflower seeds on the ground or in a separate squirrel feeder in another place away from feeders.

**Do not put cayenne hot pepper powder (capsicum) in seed as it is deadly to bees and other pollinators and can irritate birds; eyes.**

## FOOD

You can attract different species of birds by offering varieties of food from seed and suet to fruit and mealworms.

- Blended seed mixes are great for starting out and if you only have one bird feeder.
- Individual seed types like sunflower or peanuts may be offered in separate feeders to attract specific species of birds.
- No mess blends have the shells removed from the seeds so there is no waste and nothing leftover and provide the most value.
- Avoid discount blends that are mostly filler grain that the birds do not eat.
- Store seed in an airtight container.

## Types of Seed & Food

**Sunflower seed** attracts the greatest variety of birds from cardinals to woodpeckers. Black-oil sunflower has a higher fat content and is popular with smaller birds from chickadees to finches.

**Millet** attracts small ground-feeding birds from sparrows and juncos to doves and red-winged blackbirds.

**Cracked corn** especially attracts ground-feeding birds from quail to towhees.

**Safflower** will be eaten by cardinals, chickadees and tufted titmice but is not appealing to squirrels.

**Nyjer (Thistle)** is preferred by finches.

**Peanuts** are very popular with many birds from jays to woodpeckers.

**Suet** is fat from cattle and attracts many birds – especially in winter – from robins to wrens.

**Mealworms** are the larvae of the Tenebrio molitor beetle and attract many insects eating birds including bluebirds, chickadees, jays, mockingbirds, thrashers, and tufted titmice and are especially popular during breeding season when the parents will feed them to their young,

**Fruit** like raisins and cranberries attract bluebirds, catbirds, cedar waxwings, robins, and mockingbirds. Oranges and grapes are popular with catbirds and orioles.

## BIRD TREATS

### Suet Cake Recipe

Ingredients:

1 cup rendered suet

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- 1 cup chunky peanut butter
- 4 cups ground yellow cornmeal
- 1 cup unbleached whole-wheat flour
- 1 cup of raisins or cranberries
- 1 cup birdseed or nuts (hulled sunflower and pumpkin seeds)

Directions:

- Mix together yellow cornmeal, unbleached whole-wheat flour, dried fruit, and birdseed or nuts in bowl
- Heat suet over low to medium heat until melted
- Slowly add rendered (melted) suet to ingredients in bowl
- Fold in peanut butter
- Let cool
- Shape into large palm-sized cakes on ungreased baking sheet
- Freeze until hard
- Store individual cakes in resealable freezer bags.
- Makes about 1 – 2 dozen suet cakes.

## **Peanut Butter Pine Cones**

Supplies:

Pine cones

String

Peanut butter

Bird seed

Directions:

- Attach a 10-inch piece of string to the top of the pine cone
- Spread peanut butter on pine cone
- Roll pine cone in bird seed
- Hang from tree

## **CLEANING**

- Clean and disinfect feeders regularly with either a solution of 1 part water and 1 part hydrogen peroxide or 1 part vinegar and 4 parts water – rinse well.
- To keep from attracting rodents fill your feeders in the morning with only enough food that your birds will eat by sunset.

## **RESOURCES**

[Audubon Guide to Bird Feeding](#)

[North American Birdfeeder Handbook](#)

[The Joy of Bird Feeding](#)

[Wild Birds Unlimited](#)