



Cardinal Corner's Chatter

A Wild Bird & Gift Store

"Keeping you in touch with nature"

February 2017

- ⇒ White Breasted Nuthatches can be heard calling and performing mating behaviors.
- ⇒ Put out raisins, dried fruit or cranberries for cedar waxwings and robins.
- ⇒ Start cleaning up those bird houses!
- ⇒ Grackles may start to return along with robins.
- ⇒ Male goldfinches will slowly start to molt into mating plumage.
- ⇒ Keep Nyjer thistle feeders up all winter!
- ⇒ Wood duck houses should be up in March.
- ⇒ Woodpeckers can be heard drumming.
- ⇒ Increasing activity at the feeders as Juncos start to return north.
- ⇒ Listen for spring songs.
- ⇒ Birds love mealworms!
They need the protein! Birds will keep coming back to check if you have refilled it with the worms. Good way to keep them returning. We also have dried mealworms.

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February is National Wild Bird Feeding Month

Help spread the word! Keep feeding the birds! It is the time of year that that they really need you now.

In January 1994, Illinois 10th District Congressman John Porter read a resolution in the Congressional Record making February National Bird Feeding Month. The observance was established because it's one of the most difficult months in much of the U.S. for birds to survive in the wild.



Consider that:

- A typical backyard bird doesn't weigh as much as two nickels.
- Birds spend most of their waking hours searching for food -- without the help of "hands" and "fingers."
- They may consume 15% of their body weight overnight just keeping warm enough to survive.
- Like mail carriers, they're outside in sleet, snow, wind and cold.

The resolution noted that one-third of the adult population feeds wild birds in their backyards. Providing food, water and shelter helps birds survive, benefits the environment and supplements wild birds' natural diet of weed seeds and harmful insects which are not available until spring.

Backyard bird feeding is an entertaining, educational and inexpensive pastime that can be enjoyed by children and adults. It provides a needed break from today's frantic lifestyles that pull families apart.

Feeding wild birds in the backyard is an easy hobby to start, and can be as simple as mounting a single feeder outside a window and filling it with a good-quality birdseed mix or just straight oil sunflower. This feeder can be a hopper, platform or tubular variety, or one that sticks to the window. For many people, the hobby progresses from there. They discover the relationship between the type and location of feeders, and the seed offered in them, and the number and varieties of birds attracted. Bird feeders make great gift ideas.

If you offer water, particularly if it's dripping or running, you may attract birds that do not visit the feeders. Many interesting and eye-catching species are not seedeaters, preferring insects or berries to seeds. Adding a bird bath warmer to keep the water from freezing in northern states during winter creates an oasis for bird watching.

To round out the family's backyard birding program, birdhouses can be purchased or constructed. Also known as nest boxes, these can provide shelter in winter and breeding sanctuaries during spring for cavity-nesting birds.

Feeding backyard songbirds is the most popular wildlife-related recreational activity around the home. A stress-free activity, it brings a welcome flash of color, dash of motion and splash of sound into the backyard, particularly during gloomy northern winters.

“Is Cheap Bird Seed A Good Deal?”

Ever wonder how black sunflower prices can be so different at stores? Recently Sharon Stiteler, the Bird Chick, stated the question, “Is Cheap Bird Seed A Good Deal?” on her blog. Here are a few excerpts with a conversation with Dennis Donath, a volunteer at Carpenter Nature Center. Many wild bird specialty stores insist on fresh bird seed. Black sunflower from specialty stores is purchased from the most recent crop, it’s rarely more than a year old. Once the new crop comes in the distributor must find someone else to purchase the old crop, the grocery stores, garden centers, big box stores at a reduced price.



Sunflower prices have steadily increased in the last five years because:

1. Frito Lay switched to sunflower oil for their chips leaving less sunflower available to be used as bird seed.
2. Fewer Farmers have been growing sunflowers because of the ethanol boom.

Dennis worked before retirement at the USDA Seed Research Lab in Madison, WI. A test that he repeated 3 times discovered that the sale priced seed weighed **12.8%** less than even the **old** crop seed. He did a visual exam of both seeds. He wrote “I noticed that the sale price seeds were generally a little smaller. I also observed about **1%** of the sale price seeds had tiny holes drilled in them, indicating insect damage. I did not observe any evidence of live insect infestation, frass or webbing. My guess is that the infestation occurred in the field, not in storage”. Dennis broke open several of the “drilled” seeds and found the nut meats were damaged. He estimated that 30-40% of the kernel weight had been consumed before what ever insect larvae left the shell. (That is why there is a hole– the larvae bored through the shell). He summed up his research that the seed on sale was **NO BARGAIN!** Be aware when you see sunflower or any bird seed on sale at an unusually good price. Chances are the seed is old or of little feeding value to the birds filled with empty shells.

There are different grades of black sunflower seeds. There are bags of sunflowers seeds loaded with sticks, chaff and other surprises. It is lightweight and grayish in color. There is sunflowers called 99’s that are heavy, black, oily and beautiful. Cardinal Corner carries the highest quality.

Did you know that Cardinal Corner’s mixes are our own recipes and our seed supplier adds **extra** oil to these bird seed mixes. Provides lots of fat for our birds.

We just returned from The Las Vegas Gift Show. We found many gift and garden items. They are starting to arrive already!



Almost Bear Season! Bear Proof Feeder

5 seed-viewing windows on 2 sides. Heavy Duty holder, 6 perches. Brown Coated steel. Holds 3.5 quarts. Fills from the top bottom removable for clean out
25.5 high x 8”W. weighs 9 lbs.



Squirrel Proof Peanut feeder

Openings in the bottom of the metal mesh shroud are aligned with the seed tray and allow the birds access to the seed. When a squirrel climbs onto the feeder, its weight automatically forces the shroud down, closing the seed ports. Dismantles for Easy Cleaning.
Lifetime hassle free warranty

