

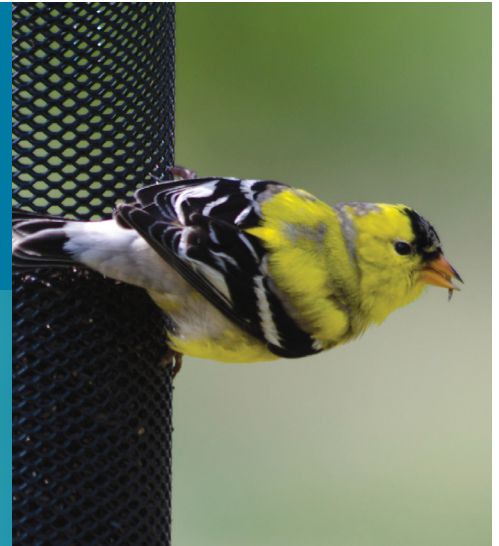


Bird Feeders

Bird feeders come in a variety of designs and cater to a diversity of bird species and diets.

Provides: Food

Supports: Birds (which species will depend on type of feeder and food provided)



Types of Feeders – When selecting a bird feeder, keep in mind which bird species you are hoping to attract as well as the other species already residing in the area. A bird feeder should be sturdy, easy to clean and refill, and lack sharp or pointed edges that pose a threat to the safety of feeding birds.

Hopper or house feeders

Bird seeds like sunflower, safflower, or mixtures containing these and other seed varieties are contained in these house-like structures. Feeder designs vary and may include squirrel-proof options.



EXAMPLES OF BIRDS ATTRACTED: finches, jays, cardinals, buntings, grosbeaks, sparrows, chickadees, titmice

Nyjer/thistle feeders

These are a specific type of tube feeder primarily for nyjer/thistle seed. The tube can either be a clear plastic column or a fine mesh bag known as a “thistle sock.”



EXAMPLES OF BIRDS ATTRACTED: goldfinches, pine siskins, common redpolls

Tray or platform feeders

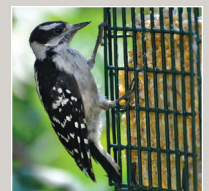
Bird seeds like sunflower, safflower, millet, and mixtures containing these and other seed varieties, as well as grains like corn, can be offered in any flat surface upon which bird seed is spread. Platform feeders can be placed on the ground or raised above the ground on a pole or post. These feeders require a screened (rather than solid) bottom to promote drainage, avoiding fungal and bacteria buildup.



EXAMPLES OF BIRDS ATTRACTED: doves, cardinals, sparrows, finches, juncos, jays, blackbirds

Suet feeders

Wire cages or mesh bags designed to hold suet.



EXAMPLES OF BIRDS ATTRACTED: woodpeckers, nuthatches, chickadees, titmice, jays

Nectar feeders

These are feeders that hold sugar water in a bottle or tube with very small or mesh-covered feeding ports. Because nectar feeders require frequent cleaning, be sure to buy a feeder that is easy to take apart and clean.

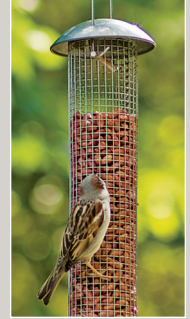
EXAMPLES OF BIRDS ATTRACTED: hummingbirds



Tube feeders

Sunflower and safflower seeds, or peanuts can be offered in a tube with multiple feeding ports and perches.

EXAMPLES OF BIRDS ATTRACTED: depends on size of perches and ports. The larger the perch and feeding port, the larger the bird (like a jay) that will use the feeder.



Bird Feeder Implementation Steps:

1 Feeder types – To attract the greatest diversity of birds to your yard, you should install as many different feeder types as you can.

2 Location, location, location – Feeders should be placed on the ground or up to heights as far off the ground as is manageable. Regardless of height, feeders should be adjacent to small shrubs or trees to provide feeding birds with a quick escape should any predators interrupt dinner. Feeders should also be placed within 3 ft. of windows or more than 30 ft. away from windows to prevent deadly collisions (see window collision information on the following page).



3 Protect your Feeder from Pests – If you put food out, animals will notice, even the ones you weren't planning to invite. Squirrels are likely to be the most common unwanted visitors at feeders.

SQUIRRELS:

- Feeders made from metal will prevent squirrels from chewing on and destroying your feeder.
- There are many “squirrel proof” bird feeder designs (i.e., weight-activated perch bar) on the market that can be effective.
- Squirrel “baffles” – cone-shaped structures hanging below and/or above the feeder – are designed to create physical barriers between squirrels and the bird feeder.
- Install your feeders at least 8 feet away from trees and other perches from which squirrels can jump to your feeders.

Photo credits: two birds in color background, Flickr-Colleen; goldfinch, Flickr-malibusboats; house feeder, Flickr-photopieces; thistle seed feeder, Flickr-tailsandfur; platform feeder, Flickr-Richard Probst; suet feeder, Flickr-likaduck; nectar feeder, Flickr-Andy Simmonds; tube feeder, Flickr-Mark Hughes; squirrel, Flickr-Kevin Doncaster.

Dangers and How to Avoid Them

When setting up bird feeders on your property, be aware of the following dangers, which can be easily avoided with a few precautionary measures:

Disease – When not properly maintained, bird feeders can serve as breeding grounds for disease and disease transmission. Keep your feeders clean as necessary using a hot soapy water mixture or 1 part bleach and 9 parts water. Make sure feeders are thoroughly rinsed and dried before re-filling with food.

Inappropriate food – Make sure the feed you're buying is designed for birds and their dietary preferences and that you are purchasing from a reputable store. A particular concern regarding bird food is aflatoxins: poisons caused by types of fungus that can appear in bird food, especially corn and peanuts. These toxins have the potential to kill birds. To prevent

aflatoxins in bird food, keep your feeders clean and bird food dry.

Window collisions – Improper placement of bird feeders can put birds at risk of deadly collisions with windows. Placing decals on windows is one way to break up the wide open space of an empty window panel and notify birds of the physical barrier before them. Placing bird feeders within 3 ft. of your house will not allow a bird to gain enough speed upon leaving a feeder to fatally collide with a window. Alternatively, placing feeders at least 30 ft. from your house provides birds enough space to alter their flight path and avoid colliding with a window.

Other Resources:

- University of Wisconsin–Extension publication on different types of feeders and feed as well as tips and other information about feeding birds
learningstore.uwex.edu/assets/pdfs/G3176.pdf
- Cornell University's Lab of Ornithology provides information about how to keep bird feeders clean
www.allaboutbirds.org/how-to-clean-your-bird-feeder
- American Bird Conservancy has information about avoiding window collisions
abcbirds.org/get-involved/bird-smart-glass
- United States Geologic Survey's National Wildlife Health Lab has information about diseases affecting birds
www.nwhc.usgs.gov/publications/fact_sheets/coping_with_diseases_at_birdfeeders.jsp
- Wild Bird Feeding Industry has information about preventing aflatoxins in bird food
www.wbfi.org/aflatoxin-in-bird-seed-mixes.htm



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