



SAFE BIRD FEEDING GUIDELINES



WINTER

In the winter feed *black oil sunflower* as primary seed, high fat content and many species eat it. Other seeds include *white safflower*- cardinals like it and it keeps starlings and grackles away (pesty birds).

If you have a patio- use *shell free mixes or sunflower chips* to avoid shell mess under feeders.

AVOID CHEAP SEED MIXES FROM BIG BOX STORES! They contain wheat, corn, red millet and other fillers that will be kicked out of feeders by birds and make piles under feeders- attracting pests and sometimes sprout into little grassy strips between your deck cracks.

There is a reason these mixes are cheap.

CLEANING

Rake or sweep up shell mess (can be composted) at least once every two weeks in winter to avoid spreading illness and/or attracting rodents.

Spray a 10% bleach solution on deck or under feeders after cleaning to keep the area more sanitary.

We suggested folks take feeders down and thoroughly clean them in a bucket of 10% bleach solution monthly to prevent spread of finch eye diseases and other illnesses. Let the feeder dry before putting back up.

FINCHES

Finch feeders use a mix of *niger/finch seed* and *sunflower chips* and your finches and siskins will be happy. If the seed gets very wet, it should be removed from thistle feeders and composted.

Wet seed goes rancid. Feeder perches can be sprayed with bleach solution if a finch is seen with eye problems. Very contagious to other birds, so keep the feeding area clean.

SUET

Suet cakes- look for ones called high energy cakes or woodpecker cakes. Often cheaper to buy by the box of 5-8 cakes. They can be frozen for safekeeping. Upside down or caged suet feeders are the best to keep out blackbirds and House Sparrows.

SPRING AND SUMMER

I suggest folks reduce the number of feeders in their yards in the warm months. There is more wild food for birds and it helps reduce attracting rodents. I suggest suet feeders and Hummingbird feeders for summer time.

Suet can be fed year-round- *Suet Dough* melts less in higher temperatures of Summer.

Whole unroasted unsalted peanuts can be put out. Fun to watch the jays, titmice, nuthatches and woodpeckers carry them off to stash!

FRUIT AND MEALWORMS

Other fun feeders in summer include Fruit feeders, grape jelly feeders and mealworm feeders.

These are foods to attract Orioles, Catbirds and Bluebirds. The birds do not always come to your habitat but it is your choice to try to attract them with special feeders and food supplements. Keep the feeders clean to prevent ants and bees.

HUMMINGBIRDS

Hummingbird feeders can be put up April 15-Nov 15 -used to be the time frame.

(Climate changes have extended the hummer season)

These feeders need to be kept clean. Wash with hot water. Glass and heavy plastic are easiest to clean. Don't buy feeders that you cannot easily clean the feeding ports with a pipe cleaner or tiny cleaning brush.

MOLD KILLS BIRDS.



HUMMINGBIRD NECTAR RECIPE

Recipe is 4 parts hot or boiling water to 1-part white sugar.

I boil my water, mix the sugar in to dissolve and let it cool.



Fill feeders and store rest in the fridge for the week. Avoid Red coloring in nectar as it is artificial and may harm hummingbirds.

If the fluid is cloudy, throw it out and make new. Not hard and keeps hummingbirds healthy.

Also buying red colored feeders or hanging baskets with red colored flowers or bows helps attract the hummers.

Plan on 2-3 feeders for an average yard so the birds don't spend all their energy patrolling and defending feeders!

ANTS

Use a water filled ant moat to keep ants off feeders.

DO NOT USE VASELINE or GLUE TRAPS near hummingbird feeders to keep ants off- birds will get stuck and perish, they cannot clean the gunk off their feathers.

TIPS

Of course, plant native flowers that produce seed such as coneflower or sunflowers for natural feeding of birds.

Provide clean water for bathing and drinking. Moving water like a waterfall or a dripper is very attractive to birds.

Provide shrubs and nearby trees for shelter, escape from hawks and cat predators and for nesting!

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