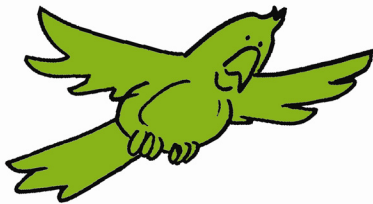


# Feeding Wild Birds

## A Mixed Bag of Feeds

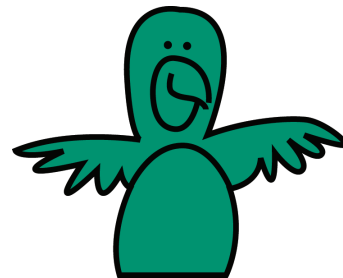
To help you plan your bird-feeding program and begin bringing the birds to your place, here's a snapshot of the types of food different varieties of birds like best. All are widely available; every Complete Petmart carries them. You can buy them in small packages or in bags as hefty as 30 pounds. Now, this is the secret: By mixing feeds, you can attract some birds while inviting others to stay away. So again, which birds would like to have visit your yard?



- Sunflower seed attracts, among other things, different types of black-capped chickadees, goldfinches, cardinals and blue jays.
- Thistle draws finches and sparrows.
- Millet brings out doves, various sparrows and red-winged blackbirds.
- Cracked corn is good for drawing mourning doves, blue jays, sparrows and red-winged blackbirds.
- Suet attracts woodpeckers, starlings and chickadees. So, with the menu in mind, it's time to turn to the presentation: the bird feeder. This can be nearly as important in attracting birds as the food itself. Again, different types of birds prefer different types of feeding devices.
- Tube feeders, for instance, tend to be tidy and their small perches are perfect for small songbirds, while they discourage larger birds.
- Hummingbirds drink sugar water from a liquid feeder.
- Finch feeders are just tube feeders with extra small perches and feeding holes.
- Tray feeders are terrific landscaping additions but they have a big drawback--birds will often spill more than they eat.
- Suet feeders can have disastrous results if the mesh tears and birds get tangled. Better to buy or make a wire mesh container.

## Protect Against Pests

You're not the only one who's glad to see the birds come back. Their scraps are eagerly awaited by your friendly neighborhood squirrels and chipmunks. They sneak into the bird feeder at any opportunity. But you can take steps to prevent that kind of theft.



One is to put the feeder out of reach--including away from tree limbs. Squirrels are pretty good jumpers. Here's another: If you mount the feeder on a pole, buy or make a baffle to keep the varmints from getting to the top. Make sure you put

it high enough on the pole that they can't jump past it. If you hang your feeder from a wire, you could put a baffle over the feeder to block pests out.

Don't forget to protect against cats, too, and birds of prey. Place your feeder so that your invited birds can see danger approaching.

With these points in mind, plan the party. Set out the food--not only now, but also when the weather turns cold again. Your fine feathered friends will be glad you did, and they may just bring a splash of color to brighten the gray next winter.