



Tips for Feeding Birds in your Garden

Firstly, what **NOT** to feed the Birds in your Garden.



DO NOT FEED BIRDS BREAD, CRACKERS, CHRISPS OR OTHER HUMAN SNACK FOODS!! Bread has **ZERO** nutrition for wild Birds. These foods are WORSE than feeding Birds nothing. These foods rob Birds of the opportunity to take in nourishment their bodies need to survive. They fill up a small stomach in a hurry. The Bird doesn't know the food is useless, but leaves feeling full and satisfied. This can be deadly to the Bird, considering how many calories Birds need to eat in order to survive. A small Bird can freeze to death overnight, with its stomach full of bread.

Do not put out Seeds that are sold for Human consumption. These seeds contain large volumes of salt, which is harmful to Birds, as they then need more water, which fills up their small stomachs, leaving little or no room for the nutritional food they need to survive.

Do not put out raw meat, as this will attract unwanted guests such as mice & rats. The meat may also go rancid and spoil very quickly once out of the refrigerator.

One thing you can do to encourage birds that do not eat seeds from a table or feeders, is to **STOP** using any type of pesticides and other chemicals in your Garden or anywhere on your property. Once you have done this, why not set aside a little patch of natural habitat, with the native plants that will attract and support a healthy native insect population. This will also have the added benefit of also supporting our endangered native pollinators, like bees and butterflies.



So, Why, What, When and How should we be feeding the Birds in our Gardens?

Why

Due to many factors, such as (but certainly not limited to) Climate Change, Bird numerous have dropped drastically in the last 20 years. Feeding Birds can help to maintain and increase their populations. By giving them a stable source of nutrition, you are helping to support them, especially during the winter months, when food is harder to come by. It also have an effect on Humans... It has been proven that it makes us feel good that we are able to nature a helping hand and gives us a sense of wellbeing. It also gives us an instant connection with nature and allows us to actually become part of the Ecosystem around us. We have done so much damage to the environment, its good to give something back.



What

The more types of foods that you put out for birds – the more types you will attract into your Garden. Seeds – Many types of seeds can be feed to your Garden Birds. During the Winter months High Fat – High Protein seeds such as Peanuts, Sunflower Hearts and good quality fat balls. If you feed Peanuts during Spring, make sure they are in a wire mesh feeders and not loose, as they can become a choking hazard to young/baby Birds. Mealworms are also eaten by many Birds (and of course great for Hedgehogs too!) At other times, a good Wild Seed mix is good for your feeders and Bird Table. Any fruit that falls from Apples or pears that you do use, cut in half and place on Bird tables for Blackbirds and Thrushes – you might get lucky and see a Redwing or Field Fare come for them if it gets cold enough. Something that is often overlooked is water... If you provide clean, fresh water, Birds do not have to fly to a water source, using valuable energy, especially in winter months. Clean out water bowel every couple of days and top up with clean water to prevent it from becoming contaminated.



Sunflower Seeds



Sunflower Hearts



Suet Fat Bals



Peanuts



Wild Seed Mix

When

During the spring and summer months, birds require high-protein foods, especially while they're moulting. Be careful with peanuts/fat during spring and summer. If you want to feed peanuts only do so in rigid mesh feeders that will not allow sizeable pieces to be removed, since these could be a choking hazard to chicks. Home-made fat balls can melt in warm summer weather, and should be avoided. During Autumn and Winter months, put out bird food and water on a regular basis. In severe weather, you may find you need to feed twice daily. Birds need high-energy, high-fat foods during cold weather. Always adjust the quantity given to the demand, and never allow uneaten foods to build up. Once you have a feeding routine, try not to change it as birds will become used to it.



How

You can use feeders to offer the different types of seeds to Birds. Many Birds will happily sit on a feeder and eat the seeds – Some will take a Nut or Seed and fly to a perch and eat it there. Some birds prefer to eat seeds from a table or flat surface instead. If you can, have a Bird table that is well off the floor and is “Cat Proof” with a central single pole. If you have a few feeders, try to place them close to a tree or bush, so that they have somewhere to fly to if “Spooked”. Remember, never allow uneaten food to build up, remove any uneaten food on tables and in feeders. The most important thing to remember is that you **MUST** clean your feeders every 1-2 weeks to prevent transmission of bacteria, parasites and other infections. If you have a table for birds to eat from, make sure that you clean it regularly, so that there isn't a build of droppings. Wear gloves and thoroughly wash your hands after cleaning feeders and bird tables. Clean feeders outside with separate utensils.

