


Selecting Bird Seed continued

Milo, wheat, oats


 These agricultural products are frequently mixed into low-priced birdseed blends. Most birds discard them in favor of other food, which leaves them to accumulate under feeders, where they may attract rodents. In the Southwest, however, milo attracts pheasants, quail, and doves.

Follow these tips and recipes for home-made additions to your bird feeds:

Peanut butter pudding:

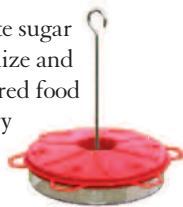
Peanut butter is a good substitute for suet in the summer. Mix one part peanut butter with five parts corn meal and stuff the mixture into holes drilled in a hanging log or into the crevices of a large pine cone. This all-season mixture attracts woodpeckers, chickadees, titmice, and occasionally warblers.

Fruit for berry-eating birds:

 Fruit specialists such as robins, waxwings, bluebirds, and mockingbirds rarely eat birdseed. To attract these birds, soak raisins and currants in water overnight, then place them on a table feeder, or purchase blends with a dried fruit mixture. To attract orioles and tanagers, skewer halved oranges onto a spike near other feeders, or provide nectar feeders.

Nectar for hummingbirds:

Make a sugar solution of one part white sugar to four parts water. Boil briefly to sterilize and dissolve sugar crystals; no need to add red food coloring. Feeders must be washed every few days with very hot water and kept scrupulously clean to prevent the growth of mold.



QUICK REFERENCE SEED CHART

SPECIES	PREFERRED SEED/FOOD											
	Oil Sunflower	Striped Sunflower	Sunflower Hearts	Nyjer (Thistle)	Peanuts	Tree Nuts	Fruit	Millet	Safflower	Milo	Cracked Corn	Suet Cakes
Bluebirds												
Buntings												
Cardinals												
Chickadees												
Doves												
Goldfinches												
Grosbeaks												
House Finches												
Jays												
Juncos												
Mockingbirds												
Nuthatches												
Purple Finches												
Quail												
Siskins												
Sparrows												
Tanagers												
Titmice												
Towhees												
Woodpeckers												
Squirrels												

For More Information

- Visit the AUDUBON AT HOME web site: www.audubonathome.org
- Contribute to conservation efforts by participating in citizen science projects like the annual Great Backyard Bird Count each February (www.birdsource.org/gbbc), or Project FeederWatch (<http://birds.cornell.edu/pfw>).
- Visit the Audubon Marketplace to view Audubon licensed products and publications: www.audubon.org/market/licensed

RECOMMENDED BOOKS

NORTH AMERICAN BIRDFEEDER GUIDE

Robert Burton and Stephen Kress. Dorling Kindersley, New York, 2005

BIRDS AT YOUR FEEDER

Erica H. Dunn and Diane L. Tessaglia-Hymes. New York: W.W. Norton and Company, Inc.

THE AUDUBON SOCIETY GUIDE TO ATTRACTING BIRDS

Stephen W. Kress. Cornell University Press, Ithaca, NY

THE AUDUBON POCKET BACKYARD BIRDWATCH

Stephen W. Kress. Dorling Kindersley, New York

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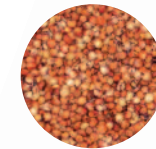
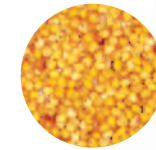
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NASELECTSEED 1210



SEED AND FEEDER SELECTION GUIDE

BY STEPHEN W. KRESS, PH.D.



Selecting Bird Seed

Over 100 North American bird species supplement their natural diets with birdseed, suet, fruit and nectar obtained from feeders. Bird feeding can benefit birds and also provides great bird watching from your own backyard. Different birds are attracted by different kinds of seed, so try offering a variety in separate feeders. Just make sure that the seed is compatible with both the feeder and the birds you hope to attract; homemade recipes offer even more options.



Sunflower seed



Black-oil seed is the preferred seed of many small feeder birds, especially in northern latitudes. Striped sunflower seed is also readily eaten, especially by large-beaked birds. Hulled sunflower seed is consumed by the greatest variety of birds; it attracts jays, red-bellied woodpeckers, finches, goldfinches, northern cardinals, evening grosbeaks, pine grosbeaks, chickadees, titmice, nuthatches, and grackles.

Millet



White millet is the favorite food of most small-beaked ground-feeding birds; red millet is also readily eaten. Millet attracts quail, doves, juncos, sparrows, towhees, cowbirds, and red-winged blackbirds.

Cracked corn



Medium cracked corn attracts many species of ground-feeding birds, but it is vulnerable to rot, since the interior of the kernel readily soaks up moisture. Feed small amounts, mixed with

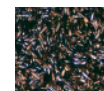
millet, on feeding tables or from watertight hopper feeders. Avoid fine cracked corn, since it quickly turns to mush; coarse cracked corn is too large for small-beaked birds. Cracked corn attracts pheasants, quail, doves, crows, jays, sparrows, juncos, and towhees.

Safflower



Safflower seed is readily eaten by cardinals, grosbeaks, sparrows, and doves; starlings, house sparrows, and squirrels usually find it less appealing than sunflower seed.

Nyjer® (Thistle)



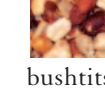
A preferred food of American goldfinches, lesser goldfinches, house finches, and common redpolls, nyjer is sometimes called “black gold,” because it costs about \$1.50 per pound. Do not confuse it with prickly thistle, a pink-flowered weed used by goldfinches to line their nests.

Suet and bird puddings (beef fat and seed)



This mixture attracts insect-eating birds such as woodpeckers, wrens, chickadees, nuthatches, and titmice. Place the suet in special feeders or net onion bags at least five feet from the ground to keep it out of the reach of animals. Although suet is particularly helpful during cold weather and migration when birds need extra fat reserves, “no melt” suet cakes are now available for use in warmer weather. Peanut butter pudding (recipe on reverse panel) is a good substitute for suet in the summer.

Peanuts



Whole and crushed peanuts attract woodpeckers, jays, chickadees, titmice, bushtits, nuthatches, brown creepers, wrens, kinglets, northern mockingbirds, brown thrashers, starlings, and yellow-rumped and pine warblers. Provide these in tube-shaped, metal mesh feeders.

continued >>>>

Choosing A Feeder

Following are a variety of feeders to accommodate specific types of birds and their diets. Choosing more than one will help attract more species and avoid feeder congestion.

GROUND FEEDERS

These simple screen-bottomed trays typically sit several inches off the ground or your deck and help to keep grain or seeds and bird droppings from coming in contact with each other. Some feeders have covers to keep out snow; others may have wire mesh to keep out squirrels and large birds like crows. Ground feeding tables should be placed in open areas at least 10 feet from the nearest tree or shrub to give birds a chance to flee predators. Doves, juncos,



sparrows, towhees, goldfinches and cardinals are all likely to visit ground feeders. Avoid using ground feeders if cats are likely to pounce from nearby shrubs.

SUNFLOWER & SEED TUBE FEEDERS

If you are going to put out just one feeder, this is your best choice. Be sure to select a model with metal ports around the seed dispensers to protect the feeder from nibbling squirrels and house sparrows. Hang the feeder at least five feet off the ground and try to position it near a window where you can enjoy the visitors, which are likely to include chickadees, titmice, nuthatches, goldfinches, siskins and purple and house finches. Reduce the risk of bird collisions by



placing feeder less than three feet from a window or more than 30 feet away.

SUET FEEDERS

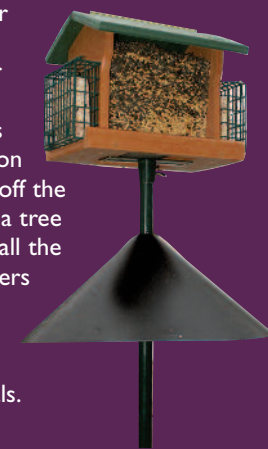
Suet is popular with titmice, chickadees, nuthatches and woodpeckers. Wrens, creepers and warblers will also occasionally peck at suet. While you can hang suet chunks in a mesh onion bag, you can also purchase cage feeders. Some people like to make their own suet “puddings” by grinding the suet and adding seeds, and create homemade suet feeders by packing the mixture into the crevices of large pine cones. Suet feeders can be hung from trees, from poles near



other feeders, or from a wire stretched between trees. also available for warm weather Suet feeding, “no melt” suet cakes.

HOPPER FEEDERS

Hopper feeders keep several pounds of mixed seed dry and ready for hungry birds. Birds hopping on the feeder trigger the release of seeds. Hopper feeders should be positioned on a pole about five feet off the ground, or hung from a tree branch, and will draw all the species that tube feeders attract, along with larger birds like jays, grackles, redwinged blackbirds and cardinals.



NYJER® FEEDER

Especially designed to dispense Nyjer (thistle) seed, these feeders have tiny holes that make the seed available only to small-beaked finches such as goldfinches, redpolls and pine siskins. Hang your thistle feeder from a tree or place it on a five-foot pole near other feeders. Squirrel baffles will help to protect the feeder.

