



Johnson's Garden Talk

Lawn and garden information for the friends and customers of Johnson's Garden Centers

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June 2006



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The Birds Of Summer

Mike Hargrove,

Ridge Rd. Store Manager

Feeding birds in the summer is just as rewarding for me as winter bird feeding. Not only are the birds in their finest plumage, I don't have to get out in the cold to fill the feeders or clean the birdbath. The birds seem to be in a better mood, also. At least they are singing a lot more.

If you take your feeders down in the spring, you miss many of the courtship rituals of the birds. My wife thinks that the male cardinal taking the best sunflower meats to his lady is the most romantic thing and that I should learn a few tricks from the birds.

Summer Visitors

Right now, we have pairs of cardinals, robins, doves, brown thrashers, house finches, and of course I cannot forget the grackles and house sparrows nesting in the yard. The wrens have taken up residence across the street and the orioles, chickadees, downy and red-bellied woodpeckers, as well as the flickers and goldfinches, nest within a half-mile of our yard but they all visit every day.

Attracting Birds

There are several things our yard offers that makes it attractive to birds. Number one in the heat of summer is the water we offer—two waterfalls and at least two birdbaths, plus the sprinkler system.

Number two is a reliable source of food. The summer menu consists of safflower, Johnson's Gardener's Choice, peanuts and sugar water. The natural food sources include elderberries, hawthorns, crabapples, coneflowers and shasta daisies.

Birdseed Storage

I strongly recommend keeping your birdseed in a metal container outside. If you store it in the house or garage, you WILL get meal moths! These bug eggs are in the birdseed and will hatch when the temperatures are warm. If you are unfortunate enough to have an infestation, you can treat several times with Hi-Yield Total Release Fogger or use Revenge Moth Traps to control them.

Fresh Seed and Water

Do not put out more seed than the birds will go through in a couple of days. If you are feeding one of the shell-less mixes, the heat will cause the oils in the seed to seep out and make a mess of the birdfeeder.

Keep the water fresh in your birdbaths. No one wants to drink warm green water. If algae buildup is a problem, try some of the Birdbath Protector.

After reading this article you may think this is a lot of trouble to keep the birds happy. The reward is sitting on the deck, listening to the birds sing and watching the adult birds teach their babies how to eat the food you provide. ■