



JANUARY

2008

“TREECYCLE”

After you've enjoyed your cut Christmas tree for the holidays, take it to one of the free disposal sites provided by Sedgwick County. (Remove all decorations first.) The trees will be chipped into mulch that will be free for the taking. Check the sites periodically to see when the chips are available. Bring your own shovel and container.

Christmas trees can be dropped off at these Wichita locations through January 23:

- Boston Park, 6655 E. Zimmerly
- Buffalo Park, 10209 Hardtner
- Cowtown, 1865 Museum Blvd.
- Edgemoor Park, 5815 E. 9th
- Extension Office, 7001 W. 21st St. N.
- Great Plains Nature Center, 6232 E. 29th St. N.
- Osage Park, 2121 W. 31st St. S.
- South Linwood Park, Hydraulic & Mt. Vernon

Other cities in Sedgwick County also offer drop-off sites.

There are other ways to use your old Christmas tree—instead of putting it out with the trash. You can cut off the branches and use them to mulch tender plants like perennials and bulbs. Or put the entire tree in the corner of your yard or near a bird feeder to provide winter shelter for birds.

WINTER BIRD FEEDING

Shelter, as provided by shrubs or your old Christmas tree, is a great start for attracting birds. Water and food are the other two requirements. It's a thrill to see a flock of cedar waxwings descend on your bird bath. Other birds also drink, bathe and generally delight in thawed water during the freezing months. It's easy to provide thawed water by using a bird bath heater. Good heaters are thermostatically controlled to shut off when the water temperature is above freezing or the bath is dry.

Now for the feeder and seed. The best initial feeder is some type of platform stocked with black oil sunflower seed or mixed seed containing black oil sunflower seed. A second option is a tube finch feeder with nyjer (thistle) seed. Mixing in some sunflower chips will attract woodpeckers, wrens and chickadees as well as finches. The sunflower chips can be an attraction to squirrels as well, so if they are a problem stick to straight nyjer. From these basic types you can expand into specialty feeders as your interest and feather population dictate.

If you want to attract some of the more interesting birds, try our “**Gardener's Choice**” made exclusively for Johnson's. This premium mix contains mostly peanut and

sunflower chips. All birds love this mix and will eat your feeders clean with no waste and no unwanted seedlings sprouting under your feeders.

Other good choices to feed birds include:

Black Oil Sunflower Seed — the one best seed to attract cardinals.

Gourmet Delight — premium seed blend including sunflower seeds, millet, peanut chips and dried papaya for broad appeal.

Sunflower Chips — the meat of the sunflower seed with all the nutrition, but none of the waste or sprouting. All birds, including insect-eaters like wrens, woodpeckers and nuthatches, like this food.

Safflower Seed — Cardinals will eat this seed, but squirrels, starlings and grackles will not.

In addition to using safflower seed to reduce squirrel raids on your bird feeders, give squirrels a feeder of their own with peanuts or Critter Crunch Squirrel Food. That way they won't bother your bird feeders as much and you might find yourself quite entertained by their antics.

LANDSCAPE PLANTS

Unless we have ample natural moisture, soak trees and shrubs once a month during the winter months.

Tree wrap should be used to protect the bark of trees susceptible to sunscald and subsequent splitting. Maples and newly planted trees are most vulnerable.

HOLIDAY HOUSEPLANTS

What should you do when the holidays are over and your poinsettia and amaryllis are still alive and well? Keep them for holiday blooms next year!

After your **amaryllis** has bloomed, keep it growing to build up the bulb for next year's flowers. Fertilize with a balanced fertilizer like **ferti•lome Geranium, Hanging Basket & Pansy Food** or **Daniels Plant Food**. Set the plant outside in the spring and let it grow until the leaves start to yellow in late summer. Let it go dormant and give it a six week rest. Then repot, start watering and watch for new blooms!

For **poinsettias**, continue the same care as before—bright light, moist soil and no drafts.

- Set it outside in the spring.
- In the summer, fertilize your poinsettia well and cut it back to help make it bushy.
- For Christmas blooms next year, give it 14-hour nights starting October 1st.