



BACKYARD nature center News

April 2021/May 2021 • Issue 63

It's Hummer Time!



Around here, we think Tax Day, April 14th, is just Tax Day. It's also a reminder that it's time to prepare for hummingbirds and orioles to arrive! We're lucky to be in the path for hummingbirds who are migrating north and west but occasionally they will stop by to rest and refill on their long trip. Broad Tail, Calliope, and Rufous humming birds don't nest in Kansas. Ruby throated hummingbirds are the only hummer that nests here. They build their tiny lichen filled nests in heavy foliage, trees or shrubs and they often use sticky spider web to hold everything in place. Very smart, don't you agree? Nature is truly amazing.



Don't forget the Orioles! Mid to late April is time to get those jelly feeders cleaned and loaded up with fructose free jelly. Any jelly will do but do check the label for fructose as it is very harmful for the birds and affects egg production. It's not good for us so it can't be good for the birds either. Male Baltimore Orioles are stunning with orange and black heads having white vertical striping on their wings. Females vary from yellowish to bright orange below and a grayish head. Blue-gray bill on both is sharply pointed. You may hear their high-pitched whistling song coming from the treetops before you spot them. Orioles may visit your hummingbird nectar but prefer fruit and berries and love jelly presented in a hanging bowl. Hang a simple "ant moat" filled with water, above your feeder. Ants will not go through the water and your jelly is saved!





“Grateful”

Just a personal note of gratitude. Since March of 2020, things have been just a little irregular. That’s putting it mildly. Most businesses slowed way down, closed or laid off many employees and that’s not just retail but wholesale and manufacturing. Shipping got held up and what used to be overnight, became two days or more. Products that we ordered became back-ordered. It was frustrating to say the least. Our super birdseed vendor, located in Kentucky, ran short of seed to produce our private mixes and what they did have, took too long to bag and ship with minimal staff. You saw the floor in front of the seed bins and it was pretty sparse! As if Covid didn’t slow things up, we got a week of snow, ice and dangerously low temps that pretty much stopped everything in its tracks.

Enough complaining, the fact is that we are grateful for your patience and your business and hope that watching the birds in your backyard helps to entertain and delight. We are very thankful and know that the birds are too!



Customer “snippets” (We love them!)

Walking to the mealworm feeder, Barbara, to her surprise, noticed an impatient titmouse hanging on the mealworm tub, right at her fingertips! She froze in her steps while he grabbed a mouthful of worms. Early bird gets the worms!

“The Blended Family”, spring is in the air!

An update on Tammy’s blended goose family from our October 2020 issue. With hundreds of Canada geese on the lake, Tammy reports that she has lost sight of Vinnie and Gertie’s gosling, Mayble, the Canada that the pair hatched and nurtured to adulthood. Mayble, as Tammy reported, has been spending more time mingling and flying with the Canada’s and not returning to her yard for her regular feedings. At this writing, she can no longer be singled out. Her honk is not distinguishable from the others. Maybe she has left the area? Perhaps she has paired up with another Canada and is nesting just the other side of the lake. No one has reported seeing evidence of her demise. It’s a good thing to think that she has found a mate and is starting to create her own family. Meanwhile, Tammy reports that, the burley and very robust Vinnie, is being very protective of his lifelong mate, Gertie, and with their permanent bond in place, is preparing a new nest. The cycle of life begins all over and spring is in the air!



Life is Good!

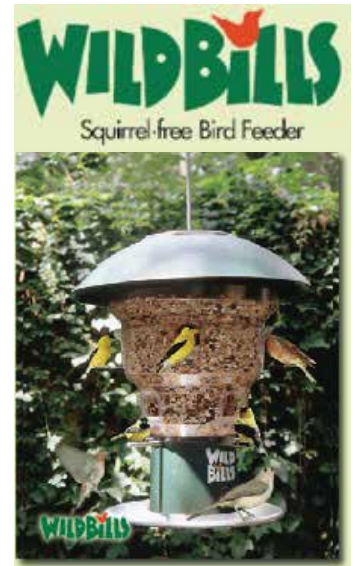
Squirrels a problem?

Ready to pull your hair out?

We've got the answer!

WILD BILLS Squirrel-Free Bird Feeder!

Keep the squirrels and animals off your bird feeder! You love that your bird feeder attracts beautiful birds, but the food also invites unwanted visitors, such as squirrels. If there was only a safe, harmless way to keep the furry critters on the ground. Wild Bills "stinger" feeder trains thieving squirrels and racoons to eat elsewhere. The stinger, made in the USA, is gentle on critters and will not harm your beautiful birds!



Good nest season advice.



By April and May, primary (excavators) and secondary cavity nesting birds (birds that use holes already excavated or a nest box) are busily feeding their young and getting them prepared for the real world. Once you see that the young have fledged and no longer using the box, it's time to remove all the old nest material, sweep or blow it out and you'll invite them to start a second brood in a clean, healthy, mite free, home. No need to clean with toxic bleach or chemicals, discard the old nest with all the fecal matter, shell and shed skin, and you remove the food for mites and they will disappear. Some of our songbirds, like bluebirds, will have 2-3 broods per season!

Easy clean out is essential!

Got dirty birds?

How's the condition of your birdbath this year. Winter was hard on many baths, heated or non. It may be time to freshen up your yard and invite songbirds to drink, bath and meet other birds socially? No social distancing needed.



We've just received a nice shipment of beautiful granite boulder baths. Granite is naturally beautiful and will last decades longer than concrete. Guaranteed to not chip or crack in the winter. Some have turtles, fish, frogs, and our latest, two hippos which are hand carved on the bottom, then polished to enhance their detail. Beautiful! Come see!

Let your birds be social!

20% off all
Birdbaths

Coupon expires May 31, 2021

Coupon Code C-050121



For people who feed and care for backyard birds
The Shops at Tallgrass
8336 E. 21st Street, #500 • Wichita, KS 67206
www.backyardnaturecenter.com
316-683-2121

STORE HOURS
Monday–Saturday: 9 a.m.–5 p.m.
Sunday: Closed

PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT:
WWW.BACKYARDNATURECENTER.COM



from left to right
Tammy, Cathy, Nick & Mary



EARTH DAY, APRIL 22

Happy Mother's Day!



Algonquin legend

“Beneath the clouds lives the Earth Mother from whom is derived the Water of Life, who at her bosom feeds’ plants, animals, and man.”

In many cultures, dating back since the first civilizations, Mother Nature or the Earth Mother has been associated with plentiful harvests fruitfulness, and fertility. Her image is depicted in many mediums and paintings across the world.