



# BACKYARD nature center News

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## Late summer gardening is for the birds!

Mulch, mulch, mulch, water, water, water, it's hard to just keep things alive this time of year! To dead head or not to dead head...that is the question. Once we get to August, I say no more deadheading! Besides the fact that I'm tired of doing it (getting a little bent over), your backyard birds will appreciate the yummy seed heads available as we go towards cooler temperatures. This summer has been a great time to watch goldfinch sitting on the heads of coneflower, coreopsis, and black-eyed susan's, plucking out seeds in the wildflower garden. Usually we watch them thin out or move out completely to nest in late summer. The goldfinch' nesting coincides with wild thistle going to seed and most folks report that the goldfinch have gone from their yard.

The American Goldfinch is not a migratory bird. Delighted by jumbo sunflowers looming at the edges of the garden with their giant heads so heavy with seeds, there is always a chickadee or downy woodpecker hanging upside down feasting

on the freshest dinner possible. If your feeder activity gets slow and you wonder what you've done, remember there's lots of natural seed available and until they deplete it or



the weather makes it undesirable, perennials are reseeding in late summer so I say...let 'em go! Don't be so tidy. Take it from this old Master Gardener, both your garden and your beautiful birds will be happy!



### Summer Jewels

Hummingbirds are definitely more active. Nesting is over and it's time to put on some body mass in time for migration to South and Central America. Rufous and Broad tailed hummers migrate through Kansas, following rivers and streams for cover. If

you saw hummingbirds in the early spring and wondered what happened to them in June. They were busy nesting, building and feeding demanding young mouths. It gets pretty quiet in mid-summer until young birds follow their parents back to the feeders to show them where the good stuff is! Keep nectar feeder's fresh through August into mid-September. You will be helping the migrating birds plump up. They will often stay for a few days before moving on. If you see two, put up a second feeder to accommodate them! I love this time of year. You can be surprised with something uncommon in your yard, or young birds that you may not recognize.



# Safe solutions for an “anti-buggy” backyard

As we have been blessed with spring and the rain and sunshine that comes along with it, I hear many people already talking about the mosquitoes and ticks that “Old Man Winter” didn’t take care of and the concern that we will be fighting them sooner, rather than later. For those of us looking for a “SAFE” option to insect control, Backyard Nature Center offers several natural choices that we can feel good about.



## 1) Cedar Oil

For control of fleas, ticks and mosquitoes in your yard, I suggest Cedar Oil. What is Cedar Oil? Cedar Oil is an essential oil derived from trees that bear cones and needle-like leaves that are in the pine and cypress families. Cedar Oil controls different insects in different ways and is known to be toxic to fleas, ticks and mosquitoes specifically, which are the pests we’d love to get rid of.

Another attribute to Cedar Oil is that it is completely non-toxic to humans and pets and as an added benefit, it even has a pleasant aroma. Please keep in mind that this product is an oil and you should avoid contact with vegetation as it could possibly burn them.

The best method for treating yards is by spraying. It is suggested to spray the

entire yard where the kids play, and surrounding areas and structures, from the ground up to about 5 feet high on any structures approximately every 2 weeks. Another great feature of Cedar Oil is that you can apply it directly to your clothing before going outside and apply it to pets.

A personal size of Cedar Oil is available at Green Acres and quart size (covers approximately 400 sq.ft.) available online at [killbugsnaturally.com](http://killbugsnaturally.com).

## 2) Establish a Bat Colony

Did you know that bats eat almost their full body weight nightly and are the major predator of night flying insects? They have been known to travel up to 30 miles in search of food. There are nearly 50 species of bats, most of which consume insects. The bats most commonly found in the midwest consist of Big Brown Bats, Little Brown Bats, Red Bats, Hoary Bats and Silver-Haired Bats. Of all the species in the United States, only the colony-roosting bats will use bat houses, such as the Big Brown Bats and the Little Brown Bats.

Starting to establish a Bat Colony is very easy, but keep in mind it could take up to a year to establish. Key points to remember are that bat houses should be placed on a pole, house, barn, garage or other structure that is at least 15’ tall. The higher the bat house is placed, the better the odds of attracting bats. You



also want to make sure that the house is positioned so they face south or southeast so they get the morning sunlight. Once a colony of bats has

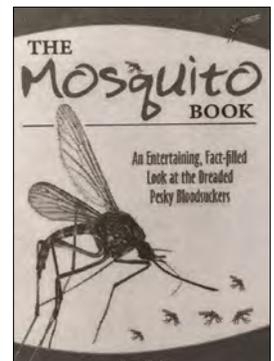


found your bat house, they will use that same house every year. As far as maintenance, just make sure all boards are securely in place, the ventilation slot is open and free of debris, and that the mesh on the landing platform is securely in place (not on all models).



Stop by Backyard Nature Center and check out our supply of Bat Houses. From preferred Organization for Bat Conservation (OBC) certified models to houses for a colony of 60 to 600 bats, there are several to choose from. My personal favorite is the Triple Chamber Bat House by Songbird Essentials that will hold a colony of 300 bats and is made of weather-resistant cedar and even designed and endorsed by the Organization for Bat Conservation.

Looking for an informative read on mosquitoes? Check out *The Mosquito Book* by Brett Ortlor from publisher Adventure Keen. This book is an entertaining, factfilled look at the dreaded pesky blood-suckers.



## Cedar Oil: Kills Insects 6 Ways!

- Death by dehydration
- Encapsulation and / oremulsification of bodily fats
- Pheromonal interference that interrupts processes necessary to metabolism,
- movement, reproduction and feeding
- Neutralization of bodily fluids
- Prevention of breathing
- Dissolving insect larvae

# FUN NEW PRODUCTS!

## Jackite Osprey Kite

Better than a scarecrow!  
**JACKITE** Birds! Fly them in any weather because they're made of Tyvek. Flaps its wings and soars on the air like a real bird. Wings flap because of ultra-flexing fiberglass rod. Can be flown as a kite or as a windsock off a long flexible pole. Fly the Osprey, with his realistic 44" wingspan or the Bald Eagle with his tremendous 5' wingspan, both are birds of prey, and will detour Canada geese from taking over your backyard!



# Good News for Purple Martins Everywhere!

Nick's update:

The year 2017 has been a great year for the purple martin colony in the parking lot, in front of the store! This is the 16th year for the 20-compartment martin house with ample 6"x12" units. The house attracted 19 pair of martins and no sparrows, thanks to diligent work to discourage done by Nick, the most dedicated landlord the martins could ever want. The year started out to be a bit worrisome. Springs weather was very wet and cool. A good planting spring but not so good for arriving martins. Most years the adults have shown up earlier than the 20th of March! Days after their arrival, Nick was placing live mealworms in the nests compartments. Temperatures limited flying insect activity for a martin meal. Wiggly mealworms are too much for a starving adult purple martin to resist. Thank goodness!



As of June 6th, there were 44 babies and 41 eggs. From that day on, adults were been busy sitting on eggs, feeding and caring for their young and Nick no longer lowered the house to count. It is always a concern that at that point, a young fledgling may make a jump to the ground only to find himself stranded with no recovery. At late July, Nick estimates, with all the young and adults flying in and out, hunting, socializing, some possible fledglings balking at trying their wings, the martin colony successfully added some 75 to 80 young purple martins. That's a GOOD YEAR!

## The best tip of the summer

Every summer, it's the same fight to keep the darn squirrels from planting and digging in the big flower pots on the deck. I'd just get them planted with fresh, delicate little summer annuals, and the next day, complete destruction with fresh potting soil everywhere and poor little flowers mangled!

I tried and failed with cayenne pepper last summer. I think they developed a taste for south of the border fare!



This year I sized up the pots and attempted to create a grid of sorts with chicken wire but only cut my hands trying to plant through it. Then I cut black garden cloth but it showed and I didn't like the way it looked. On the shelves in the garage with feeders and seed storage cans, I spied some rusty old solar dragonflies on stakes, six of them. I put those around in between the fresh new coleus, springer fern, creeping jenny and potato vine. I added some of Nicks 12" black garden stakes (he'll never miss them) and pressed them down into the soil far enough that you can't see them. Eureka..... success! Now there is no room for the naughty squirrels to get in and dig, dig, dig!



*WILD CARD*

**20% OFF**  
any  
one single item

C170801; Expires 9/30/17.  
Cannot be combined w/ any other offer. One-time use.  
Excludes seed and optics. In stock items only.

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READY FOR HUMMERS?

**FREE**  
ant moat (valued up to  
\$6) w/ purchase of any  
hummingbird feeder

C170802; Expires 9/30/17.  
Not to be combined other offers. One time use only.



**BACKYARD  
nature center**

*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**

**OPEN 7 DAYS WEEK**

Monday–Friday: 10 a.m.–6 p.m.

Saturday: 10 a.m.–5 p.m.

Sunday: 12 noon–4 p.m.

PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT:  
[WWW.BACKYARDNATURECENTER.COM](http://WWW.BACKYARDNATURECENTER.COM)

Remember to Recycle



# Welcome to Cheers!



Where everybody knows your name (well, almost)! Don't you love visiting a comfortable, familiar place, where you get great service (any service these days is uncommon), they have plenty of what you're looking for in stock (well most of the time), you don't have to take a number and sit down (like the tag office), you can park close, a sweet black kitty loves you (sometimes too much, sorry), they have a bar stool you can perch on, take a load off and visit about the birds and squirrels in your backyard! The help knows the product they sell because they have tried it in their yard. There's this guy (Nick), who can fix just about any feeder you bring in or can get you a part and make it practically like new! He likes saving you money and hopes you'll reciprocate by buying seed to fill it. It's amazing these days to find just such a place of comfort still in business. At this writing, we celebrate being in business for 26 years! We're not fancy, not an internet mega-buster sales success, have a website, but it doesn't sing, dance or answer all life's questions. There's nothing wrong with those places mind you, but it's tough to be everything to everybody. With two owners, two employees and one cat, we'll settle for just being the little "bird store" around the corner! When a new customer comes in and says "I didn't know you were here", I tell them "Welcome, we're an overnight success, after 26 years!" Thanks to the lovely loyal customers like you.

