



# BACKYARD nature center News

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## Hummertime

Get ready. Have your feeders fresh! It starts now! If you didn't have very much hummingbird activity this summer it simply is that the hummers weren't nesting in your immediate area. All birds become

very quiet during the nesting period. There is not nearly the vocalization and singing going on that there was during spring. If there is nesting going on in your yard, an adult may come quietly to the feeder, get their fill up of much needed instant energy and return to their nestlings.

Here in Kansas, the only hummingbird that nests is the Ruby Throat. We are very fortunate to be in the central flyway, where many other



species like Broad Tailed, Rufus and even tiny Calliope Hummingbirds will come through, are grateful to have a place to stop, rest and find a clean feeder to give them the nutrition and

energy to move on, at least to the gulf area. Normally, most hummingbirds return to south Central America for the winter, a hazardous 500-mile journey across the gulf, but biologists and bird banders have documented as many as ten species that are overwintering in the gulf-states. The



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theory is that there is a great deal of deforestation in Mexico and Central America making their arrival somewhat precarious.

Public and private gardens throughout the Southeast regularly attract significant numbers of ruby-

throats during migration, and some locations have become hummingbird "hot spots." At these places, hundreds upon hundreds of the birds converge.

At first this may seem mysterious, since ruby-throats usually travel alone and along highly individual routes, a strategy that keeps them from draining the nectar supply. But these concentrations take place along natural landmarks, such as mountain ranges and rivers. Ruby-throats, like other birds, tend to follow such formations during migration, which explains why their flight paths may briefly flow together. Such gatherings often occur in mountainous regions, where an abundance of wild flowers provide migrants with food. I say they follow I-70 from Denver, turn south at Salina and take

135 south. That's the route most of us take from the mountains right? In the 1820s, artist John James Audubon described the Ruby-throated Hummingbird as a "glittering fragment of the

rainbow." I agree.



## Bird Feeder Clean Up Time



Would you eat dinner from your bird feeder? Your feeders can get pretty yucky after a summer of frantic feeding activity. This is great time to assess the condition of your feeder set up. Trays being held up with bubble gum and zip ties? Old food stuck to the underside of the feed ports and growing mold? An upside-down trash can lid serving as a baffle after you realize it's not squirrels working over your feeder, but rather a big fat racoon who's nightly acrobatics would amaze you. It may even be time to re-locate a feeder or pole to a more advantageous position in time for cold weather! You'll find that August and September are very quiet at the feeders. Natural seed is abundant and readily available since all plants re-seed themselves in late summer. A goldfinch will pick from the seed head of a coneflower first before coming to the birdfeeder now. Young are no longer begging for mom to feed them. Singing to attract a partner has ceased and it becomes very quiet. A number of feeders can be refurbished. If your feeder is old fashioned, you may want to upgrade to the quick clean Droll Yankee or Aspects feeders. A good long feeder brush

makes easy work of it. Hot water and vinegar or soap and water can make a big difference, or we do have a terrific organic feeder cleaner. If your feeder is just shot and you're tired of looking at it, it may be time to replace it with a new style!

Creating a good healthy place for our fine feathered friends just makes us feel good! We know how they feel by how crazy the feeding is going to be again very soon!



Aspects Quick Clean feeder



Big Foot tray

## Night Visitor at Your Feeders? Think Not?

Off and on, we will have folks bring in a feeder that has been pulled down off a branch, hanger twisted and broken, feed ports chewed out, trays broken off, and generally in bad shape! This is not the work of squirrels.



Raccoons are the night visitors that you may never have expected would be in your neighborhood, let alone, your backyard, ravaging the feeders. Raccoons are very urban creatures, living in culverts, old woodpecker holes and dens, hiding out during the day only to make hay all night long in your yard. Their habitat is generally wooded and near water. With all the beautiful neighborhood ponds and large trees, even surrounding new housing additions, is it any wonder they find it a good place to settle in? Squirrels are very ambitious for sure but do not work at night. If you were able to film your feeders from dusk to dawn, you might be surprised at who's out there. This late-night thief can be almost 33 inches long and weigh up to 35 pounds, equipped with tool like paws and able to maneuver almost any feeder off its pole or branch. At times, they may even work as a team. Once the feeder is on the ground, however, they are very aggressive and protective of their prize!

We have finally won the battle of these masked bandits who were tearing down our feeders almost nightly. A simple squirrel baffle on a pole will not do, this night marauder is too big. If placing your feeder in a tree, generally their playground, you'll need to use a very long hanger, possibly 54" long but be sure to zip tie it to the branch and at the feeder. A pole works great as long as your baffle is at least 24" long and made of steel, plastic won't due.



Raccoons are very good climbers, but not such great jumpers. We carry a great product that is made of actual coyote urine. Sprinkled under the feeder, it alerts the invader that there is a predator present and that he is a meat eater so watch out. It takes some doing, but I think we can help you win the battle of the masked bandit!

**15% OFF**  
a new  
tube feeder  
or hopper feeder

C180801; Expires 9/30/18.  
Cannot be combined with other offers.

**\$2 OFF**  
hummingbird feeder  
cleaner

An organic enzyme eats mold for dinner! One capful and 15 minutes!

C180802; Expires 9/30/18.  
Cannot be combined with other offers.

# Purple Martin Update

The purple martin colony had a very successful season in the 20-compartment martin house located in the middle of our parking lot! At the last nest check, on June 17th, there were 92 young! Nick will not lower the house after that for fear a few young hot martins jumping out too soon. At this writing, the middle of July, all 92 have fledged, no dead were found in the nest and the parking lot is strangely quiet. While the martins and their young no longer roost in the houses at night, it's much cooler in trees, they do visit occasionally checking up on the house. Some of their young and young from other houses could be looking for next year's housing prospects, building a site fidelity for the perfect location. Remember to close up your house permanently after all martins have left the area in mid-August. It would be very detrimental to have starlings or sparrows nest and take over the house during the martins' absence. Martins nest one time and one time only. Sparrows and starlings nest 5 to 6 times per year and you would not be able to clear them out when the martins arrive



in spring, they do not co-exist nicely and your martin colony will suffer terribly. Look for your older adult martins to arrive as early as mid-March next spring. If you are installing a new

house, you'll attract the first-year martins to your house and they begin to arrive 4 to 6 weeks after the older birds. In other words, don't get anxious. You can watch the sightings of the martins in the United States at purplemartin.org as folks from the lower states begin posting their arrivals. If you have

questions about purple martins, be sure to ask Nick. He really has become an expert in this field. We look forward to helping you become a successful landlord, and we look forward to the happy return of our martins in the coming spring!



## NEW PRODUCTS

Best product ever! Forever Granite Boulder Baths have arrived with new designs!



An igneous rock typically formed as a result of volcanic activity is known for its strength, durability and will virtually last forever. Collected from mountains, streams or fields, it takes hundreds or thousands of years of weathering to achieve its beautiful aged patina and natural beauty. Add this new curved charcoal granite bath with polished leaf design into your landscape for a great organic statement.

Gorgeous new designs by Andrew Brinkley



Meet the Birdwatcher Frog, designed to last in copper with a Verde finish, stands 35" tall on a lily pad, binoculars ready for spotting that elusive bird! A golfer frog, a fly fisherman and a lady bird-watcher, holding her field guide and sporting her binoculars, are also available.

Brinkley's peaceful Morning Glory fountain and base offer a gentle relaxing sound as water flows from one flower down to

the next and pools under a base of copper lily pads where the recirculating pump hides. Artist hand crafted completely of copper with a Verde finish. A beautiful statement in any garden!



## Last Chance!

Last Chance to buy a fine Alpen binocular or spotting scope at incredibly low prices! Alpens are now 30% OFF (and cannot be combined with another discount) until they are gone! We will be introducing two new lines of optics around Christmas!



**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

Remember to Recycle



**What can I expect to see in August and September?**

Resident seed eaters like cardinals, chickadees, titmice, Downy Woodpeckers, Red-bellied and Harry Woodpeckers are all going to be here year around. They have made your yard their home. They will not migrate. There is plenty of cover when the cold winds blow and seed is plentiful either in nature or at your supplemental feeders. You can expect eastern bluebirds and Carolina Wrens to spend the entire year here. They eat berries, insects and any seed without a shell, so Patio Mix is perfect. Suet is super high in calories and protein and makes a good insect substitute.



Late September and October juncos, Harris Sparrows and White-throated Sparrows and an occasional towhee show up in our area and will feed on seeds close to the ground. Harris sparrows and juncos will be full time fall and winter residents. It looks to be a good fall out our windows!

*Thank you!*

*A big thanks to Mary and Tammy as we celebrate a third year with*



*them here at the store! They give us so much more than rest and a day off now and then, they energize us and give our customers such great service with a cheerful attitude! Thanks ladies! You're the best!*

**Give the birds every reason to visit and keep coming back.**

