



BACKYARD nature center News

December 2016/January 2017 • Issue 38

The Most Wonderful Time of the Year

Were you wondering where your beautiful songbirds had gone this fall? Hummingbirds and orioles have gone sure, but where did my chickadees, goldfinch, cardinals and woodpeckers go, you ask? You put fresh seed out.

You made sure that everything was tip-top condition, only the best clean BACKYARD Nature Center seed, and.....nothing.... just silence. Feeding came to a screeching halt! Let me explain. All plants and trees re-seed themselves in the fall. With a very wet spring and a lovely warm summer, it was a banner year for natural seed out there. No longer nesting and feeding young, the birds energy requirements are at their



lowest in late summer and early fall. It's not until natural seed becomes undesirable with rain, snow, and even slightly inclement weather, do the birds come back to the feeders. As temperatures drop at night, it's more difficult to keep themselves warm thus requiring more calories to do just that. Feeding once again picks up and the "fast food restaurant" you are offering up becomes the place to be!

In our wooded backyard, even the neighborhood turkeys were scarce, and they rarely turn down free food! Juncos (snowbirds) are the first to show up,

followed by the white-throated sparrows. Harris sparrows will be here soon along with the Rufus sided towhee! All the ground feeding birds feel at home when feeding from a

screen-bottom platform feeder placed low and near bushes and shrubs so they can dodge in and out of cover. It's a healthier way to feed than throwing seed directly on the ground.

Robins and Cedar Waxwings will be gorging on the berries late fall provides on honeysuckle, service berry and viburnums. They can occasionally be messy but who cares when the snow flies and cleans it all up! Don't worry about

raking every last leaf trying to tame nature. It's a real temptation, I know, but as a gardener think of fall as a time of rest. Decomposing leaves protect delicate plants with a warm blanket while providing nutrition too, and it's a great place to search for insects! Yum!

Provide a clean nest box with an entrance hole larger than 1 inch and fill the bottom with fresh cedar shavings. All cavity nesting birds will be grateful for a cozy place to spend the cold winter nights.

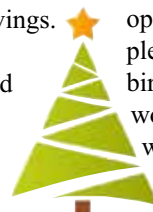
Now is the time to put out your suet and nut feeders. Both



are packed with good calories that are easily converted to energy. Clingers, the birds with strong feet and don't require a perch, are the beneficiaries. Downy, hairy, flickers, nuthatch, tufted titmice, chickadees and, my favorite, the Carolina Wren will be all over the feeder with such a fare! Try the "suet sandwich" feeder, starlings have a tough time clinging on the composite feeder resembling two pieces of wood smashed together with suet spread between them!

Black oil sunflower is the best seed for snowy weather. Placed in a hopper feeder with a screened bottom for drainage and moisture control, cardinals will be the most regular visitors. Have someone in a nursing home, or just not able to see way out in the yard? Put up a suction cup window feeder and fill it with wonderful, yummy nuts and sunflower and invite cheerful little chickadees and downy woodpeckers up close and personal! That would brighten anyone's day for sure.

Sharing your bird feeding joy with friends and loved ones is a gift for the giver as well as the recipient. When it's cold outside, we fill our feeders and open our hearts to the simplest pleasure, a visit from a grateful hungry bird. Somehow we've just made the world a better place. It truly is the most wonderful time of the year and it doesn't get much better than this.



GREAT NEW PRODUCTS

What's a FEIFISH?

Our new beautiful nature jewelry!

It's from FEIFISH, it's handmade in the USA by an inspiring artist. Made from pewter that



will not darken, and clasps of stainless



steel. Some adorned with semi-precious stones. Earrings, bracelets and necklaces, a great natural gift.

Reusable DIY Suet Cake Mold Kit

A fun gift for the DIY person on your list, our reusable DIY Suet Cake Mold & Starter Kit. No more grease down the drain! Make your own suet cakes. Eco-friendly. Food Safe and dishwasher safe. Perfect for anyone who cooks



meat! Nicely packaged and complete with recipes for great success. Your birds go wild!



Binoculars as a gift...

Do you know someone who would like to get a better view of the birds outside their window? We can help you and we can make it easy for you. We carry ALPEN optics. Some are waterproof, no questions lifetime warranty, fully armored, multi coated optics in an affordable binocular. Rated a best buy from Outdoor Life Magazine, these binoculars are a great value for any level of bird and nature viewing. We can guide you to the best fit for the user with a 7, 8 or 10 power magnification, roof or porro configuration, 24 to 50 mm objective lens, compact or standard. It doesn't have to be mind boggling. Let Nick assist you. He knows his optics and we really love our ALPENS!



All I needed to know ... I learned from a Chickadee!

As we start into the holiday season, do we sometimes find it difficult to step back from the bustle and really appreciate all we have? I say, take a look at a chickadee and learn from his positive attitude. On the coldest of days, he flits around happy at being equipped with built in down underwear!



After weeks with out fresh water and a throat that is so dry, he celebrates the trickle of melted snow and drinks it as though it were champagne! A chickadee seems to find good fortune in the very act of looking, perhaps knowing that a cheerful eye sees more clearly than one clouded with despair. A few frozen insects wedged in



the crevices of tree bark constitute a Thanksgiving feast. Sunflower seed feeders and suet cakes provide dining for a king. Every minute it sucks in more than sixty-five breaths of fresh air. A chickadee weighs a mere ten grams—you could mail three of them with a single postage stamp—but the energy and enthusiasm with in its tiny frame would dwarf Santa Clause.

As the rush of the holiday season approaches, let us all be cherry and thankful like a chickadee.



Henry David Thoreau

This morning it has begun to snow, apparently in earnest. The air is quiet still, yet some flakes come down from one side and some from another, crossing each other like warp and woof apparently, as they are falling in different eddies and currents of air. In the midst of it, I hear and see a few chickadees prying about the twigs of the locusts in the graveyard. They have come into town with the snow. They now and then break into short, sweet strain, and then seem suddenly to check themselves, as if they had done it before they thought.



—December 15, 1858



America's Proud Symbol

Is it any wonder why the Bald Eagle is the symbol of our great country? Chest out, head straight, strong, proud, fiercely majestic in every way. The Bald Eagle has been through a lot in our lifetime. Populations almost decimated by the use of DDT and indiscriminately shot by humans not realizing how great the loss. Well, he's come back strong, a true survivor! Adopted as our national symbol in 1782, the founding fathers really know how to brand a society, though they may not have realized it. A symbol of freedom, justice and faith in one another. There is a balance in the natural world. One that has been tested by man indeed and will continue to be tested. The effects of our actions have great consequences.

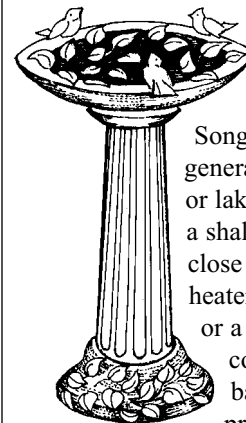
Some things are resilient, some cease to exist.

Many things that are not up to us and feel beyond our control, leaving us feeling helpless.

But.....there are easy things we can do to make a difference in the lives of all creatures in the natural world. Fight the urge to feel helpless. It's the little things we do every day that can change the world. Being conservative in how we live, responsible for our own footprint on the planet, recycling and consuming less, being conscious about the harmful chemicals we have sprayed on our lawn and being aware that we are sharing this planet with many other creatures and their existence depends on it and so does ours!

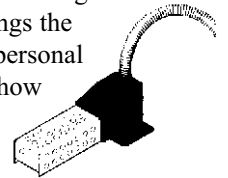


Give Them Water

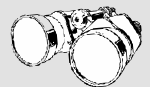


The most precious thing for life to exist is water.

Songbirds are not generally fond of ponds or lakes unless there is a shallow water fall close by. Offering a heater in your birdbath or a thermostatically controlled heated bath is a way to provide for drinking and bathing during freezing temperatures. It brings the birds up close and personal where you can see how grateful and happy you've made them!



The BACKYARD nature center is your local resource for binoculars. We offer expert advice while providing you with quality optics.



Sign up for our e-newsletter and receive \$5 off any item

Water attracts birds

10% OFF
any birdbath heater
or heated birdbath

C161201; Expires 12/31/16. Cannot be combined w/ any other offer, special orders, seed accounts.
*Excludes optics. One time use only.

Get the best view!

\$10 OFF
beautiful Corinthian
Bells windchimes
from \$50-\$350

C161202; Expires 12/31/16. Cannot be combined w/ any other offer, special orders, seed accounts. *Excludes optics. One time use only.

*Get a jump start
on holiday shopping*

20% OFF
one item*

C161203; Expires 1/31/17.
*Excludes optics and seed accounts, in stock items only. Cannot be combined with other offers.

**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.

Christmas Eve: 10 a.m.–4 p.m.

Closed Christmas Day

PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT:
WWW.BACKYARDNATURECENTER.COM

Remember to Recycle



Holiday Greetings

*From our nest to yours, wishing you PEACE, JOY
and the bounty of the natural
world this holiday season from all
of us here at the BACKYARD
Nature Center.*

*Nick, Cathy, Tammy, Mary
and Ruby*

