



BACKYARD nature center News

April/May 2013 • Issue 17

The Sweetness of Life

By March, I am so done with winter. Done, I tell you. I live for those little green shoots of spring, the fragrance of hope and warmth and summer to come. We live in a time when it has become increasingly dangerous to ignore Nature and pretend that she doesn't have the last word.

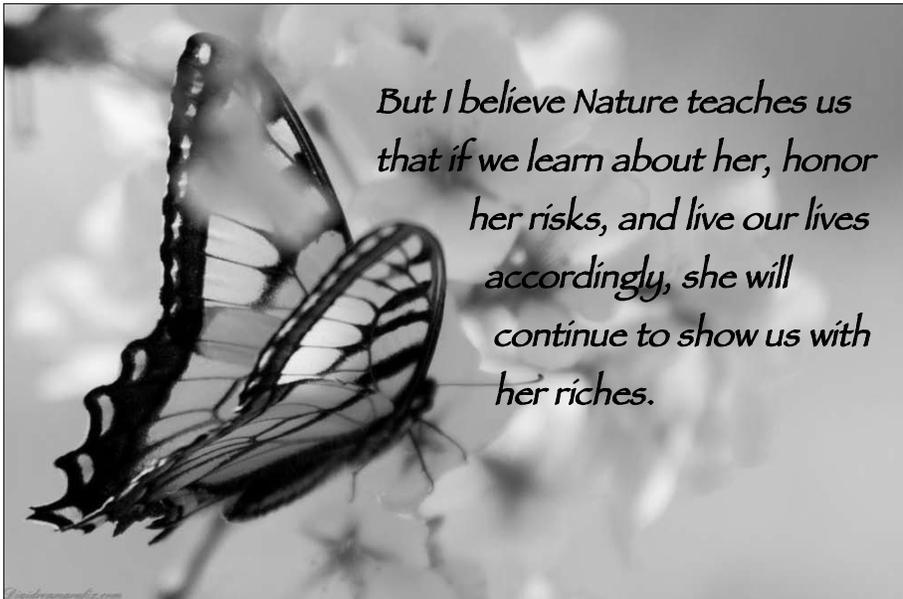
For me, it always starts with the smell of soil. Believe me when I say I'm not talking about a bad smell but am praising the sweet smell of life being reborn, coming

alive, the warming, wetness, promising so much to come . . . it's heaven! I fell about that first sweet smell of soil in the spring the way some people think of the scent of the first grass cutting of the season. That's pretty good, too. But then, of course, spring comes to a crescendo with all the scents of the season's flowers, from the fragile snowdrops to the bodacious peonies, from the flowering trees that sprinkle fragrant showers of petals to the intensely perfumed shrubs such as lilac and mock orange that scent a whole garden. Can you tell I love spring?

The truth is, I love Nature, and so obeying her is not a problem for me. I

think many people fear her. (Bugs! Bad weather! Dirt! Weeds!) But as with all things that we fear, understanding and knowledge bring a lessening of fear and a heightening of respect. For

and louder and then if we are not paying attention . . . SHOUTS! We often decide things knowing the risks, and still choose to ignore them or hope for the best. But I believe Nature



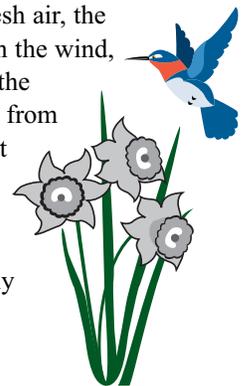
But I believe Nature teaches us that if we learn about her, honor her risks, and live our lives accordingly, she will continue to show us with her riches.

teaches us that if we learn about her, honor her risks, and live our lives accordingly, she will continue to show us with her riches. And we will be more likely to find protection when things are tough. Having said that—life is precious and we never know when it's our time and there are no guarantees of anything ever. That is also one of Nature's truths.

instance, knowing and respecting the risks of where you live are essential. Whether you live on a floodplain, over a continental fault, or in the path of repeated hurricanes, Nature tells us almost all the time exactly what's going on with her. If we don't listen, is it really her fault?

Take climate change, for instance. The scientific community increasingly supports what we at Rodale have long believed: that not changing our behavior or ignoring how Nature speaks in our landscape won't help us in the long run; we really should pay attention. She is just like a person who speaks softly at first, and then louder

Nature is the sweetness of life—the clean scent of fresh air, the rustle of leaves in the wind, the bounty from the garden and fruits from the trees. Without her, we are nothing; we do not exist. We are Nature. Especially in spring!



Written by Maria Rodale. From Organic Gardening, February/March 2013 © 2013 Rodale. All rights reserved. Used by permission.

The Return of Hummingbirds and Orioles

When you receive this newsletter, it will probably be time for the return of two of my favorite summer visitors. Around the



middle of April, one of our smallest and most interesting nesting species returns to our area. The Ruby-throated Hummingbird is the only hummingbird that nests east of the Rocky Mountains. This little bird nests in all of the states in the Eastern US and in Kansas east to about the middle of the state. It prefers wooded areas that are close to water, so habitat will be a big factor in if you see Hummingbirds the first half of the summer. But you could see one any day during this time by using a little patience and putting out a Hummingbird feeder with fresh nectar (change at least every other day) in a place that is easy for you to see, on the patio, close to a window or on the deck where you spend a lot of time relaxing. Hummingbirds are attracted to the color red so even hanging up red ribbons or wearing a red hat may be enough to bring them up to investigate. But if you really want to have the best luck, improve your green thumb and plant as many flowers that bloom throughout the summer. Some suggestions, Trumpet Honeysuckle, Bee Balm, Columbine, Cardinal Flower, Red Salvia, Impatiens and Butterfly Bush.

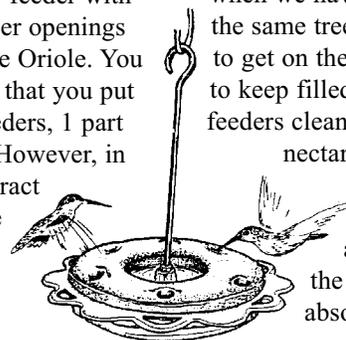
Your Hummingbird feeders may also attract another nectar loving bird, the Orioles. Both Baltimore and Orchard Orioles return to nest in our area and may try to use your Hummingbird feeders for the nectar in them. Male Baltimore Orioles are brilliant orange with black on their head and back. The females are a muted yellow orange without the black head. Orchard Orioles are a wine color with

black wings and a black hood. The females resemble the Baltimore females.

If that happens, you can put up an Oriole feeder for nectar

that is basically a nectar feeder with bigger perches and bigger openings for the larger beak of the Oriole. You can use the same nectar that you put in the Hummingbird feeders, 1 part sugar, to 4 parts water. However, in my yard, what really attract the Orioles attention are the jelly feeders!

Orioles love grape jelly (sugar and grape juice).



Jelly feeders are just hanging bowls in most cases and some have prongs for fruit also.

Oranges seem to be the best for attracting Orioles but you can try apples or other fruits too. There have been times in our yard when we have had a dozen Orioles in the same tree at the same time waiting to get on the two jelly feeders we try to keep filled. If you keep these feeders clean and filled with fresh

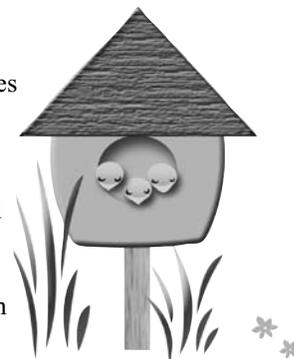
nectar and jelly, you can have continued activity all summer long! Come in and let us help you choose the right feeder to get the absolute best activity!



Spring is Here, Finally!

We thought it would never get here! Twenty-seven inches of snow in March! Temperatures in the 30's and 40's. Spring was supposed to be here by the 20th. After last year's complete lack of winter, this was a shock.

But just to show us all is well, Purple Martins started showing up on March 13th, here in Wichita, right on schedule! Even though the weather was absolutely miserable if you are a flying insect eating bird, (more on that later!) that did not stop these incredible migratory avian wonders from completing their five thousand mile journey from the Amazon basin to begin returning to their nesting territories. The arrival of Purple Martin is the first official indicator that it is, in fact, Spring. They are the first returning tropical migrant each year and they time their arrival with the availability of food, flying insects. Arriving in the next few weeks will be Hummingbirds, Orioles, Barn Swallows, Kingbirds, and a host of other insect and fruit eating birds that leave in the fall and migrate to warmer climates.



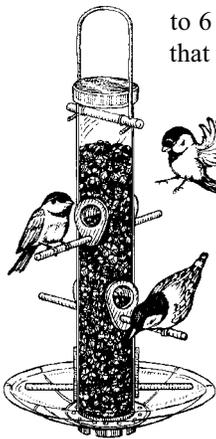
Oriole Jelly Feeders attract the sugar junkies!

15% OFF
any of our beautiful jelly feeders!

C130402; Expires 5/31/2013. Not to be combined w/ other offers.

Time to stop feeding?

Each year I am asked by someone if they should stop feeding in the summer. Their reasoning is that the birds can eat the insects that come with warmer weather. My answer is that if they in fact are trying to help the birds get thru tough times, that spring and early summer is actually the time that birds need the most help! This is the time of the year when there is the least amount of natural food available for the birds. They have been living on the seeds and berries that were produced during the last growing season and by now, that supply is at its lowest point of the year and plants have not started producing yet for the coming year. Birds' energy needs are also higher now than at any other time of the year because they are starting to nest. They must now also find food for 4



to 6 offspring in the nest that are demanding to be fed! It is a very stressful time for birds and a feeder full of seed or mealworms or nectar is a welcome addition and a very busy place!

Also, not all birds eat insects. American Goldfinch, for example, are only seed eaters. They in fact love anything that has gone to seed in the garden so don't dead head everything. One of their favorites, dandelions!

The best reason to continue feeding in my opinion though, is that you enjoy watching the birds. Bird activity during the nesting season is more fun to watch, they sing more they fight for territory, and they are constantly trying to keep the youngsters fed. It is fun to watch for baby birds ready to leave the nest and then follow the parents around begging to be fed, and because the days are longer, and the weather warmer and you can sit and enjoy the activity. What better way to relieve the stress from a long day at the office or fighting with those bargain hunters at the mall!



Mother's Day Sunday, May 12



We have brought in some new products for Mother's big day. Function meets beauty in our new sculpted anodized aluminum hanging feeders with matching wall brackets. Dogwood and Cardinals and pine boughs and chickadees. Lovely!

Our selection of birdbaths, drippers, and water wigglers will keep the birds coming to your fresh water for a sip or a bath, whether you are looking for stone, glass, copper, or ceramic in hanging and free standing. We have a wonderful selection!

Celebrate Mom's special day with a gift of nature from the Backyard Nature Center

**20% OFF
one item**

C130401; Expires 5/31/2013.

Not to be combined w/ other offers. Excludes optics ad limited to in stock items.



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.

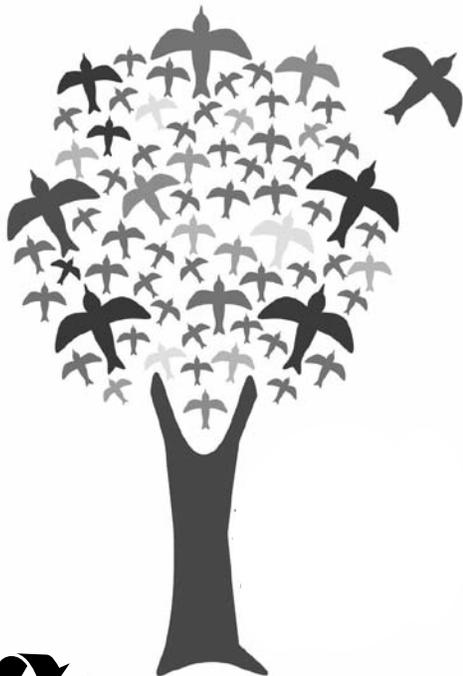
Saturday: 10 a.m.–5 p.m.

Sunday: 12 noon–4 p.m.

Return Service Requested

PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT:

WWW.BACKYARDNATURECENTER.COM



Remember to say
thanks to mother
nature by celebrating
Earth
Day.

