



BACKYARD nature center News

December 2011/January 2012 • Issue 10

A Gift for All Seasons

Let's face it: You're hooked. If you are reading this newsletter, chances are good that you're already feeding birds or seriously thinking about it. But what's the best way to pass along your interest to those you love (or even those you just like well enough)?

Share your story

Think about the things that first delighted you about feeding and watching birds and share those thoughts. Remember the feeling of satisfaction you got the first time you identified a bird by yourself? Or the delight you experienced when you realized that that big, loud song was coming from a tiny wren?

Share your window

Whether you're having an informal cup of tea or a formal brunch, the presence of birds outside the window will enhance your atmosphere of relaxed festivity. Encourage family and friends to look out your window. Many a dedicated birder got started



simply by watching a chickadee fly to the feeder over and over, taking one seed at a time. It isn't long before observation turns into

curiosity. Why don't birds just sit and eat until they're done? Why do they pick up several seeds and put them down again before they choose one? Birds become endlessly fascinating once you begin to wonder. And the presence of wildlife so close to us makes us feel uniquely gifted.

Share an experience

You don't have to be able to identify all 900+ species of North American birds to enjoy a walk through a park or the woods. The sight and sound of birds in their natural environment is a perfect way to decompress after a long day, and sharing that time with a friend or significant other makes it something special.

Share your tools

Backyard birding offers us the opportunity to see birds relatively close at hand, but it can still be remarkably difficult to identify and enjoy them without the proper tools. Quality binoculars help people see field marks more clearly, and a field guide adds



SHARE
•
your window
•
an experience
•
your tools
•
SHARE
your story

interest by helping us name individual species. A bird that looks nice through ordinary binoculars often becomes stunning when viewed through birding glass.

Bird watching has an advantage over most other hobbies—you can enjoy it completely no matter what your level of expertise. A person's involvement can be as simple as pointing out the window or as complex as setting up a complete feeding station. The people you may remember at this time of year are experiencing different seasons of life, but, as you well know, the delights of birding are a gift for all seasons.

Visit the Backyard Nature Center for all your gift-giving needs. 

ASK NICK:

Q: Which birds will come to my suet feeder?

A: The birds most likely to be attracted to your suet are bark gleaners like woodpeckers, nuthatches, and chickadees. Besides these common visitors, you may also be able to attract kinglets, some warbler species, jays, and creepers, or even stranger suet eaters like juncos, thrushes and grosbeaks. Some species that are attracted occasionally to suet



and deemed undesirable by some include grackles, crows, and starlings. All the members of the crow family can be "controlled" to some degree by using a small mesh suet feeder. These feeders do not allow these larger and resourceful birds from taking big chunks of suet at one time. They will still come, but will not go through the suet at such an alarming rate. Other strategies for dealing with the crow family members involve making the birds hang sideways or upside down to feed. The crows don't like this, but some of the other "desirable" birds will feed this way. This strategy will work to reduce starling feeding frenzies as well. Another way to reduce the amount of suet consumed by starlings and crow family

Presenting suet in your yard will attract a greater variety of birds for your enjoyment.

members is a caged suet feeder. These feeders have an outer cage surrounding the inner suet holder. They restrict larger birds from reaching the suet. However, larger woodpeckers like flickers can still reach the suet due to their long beaks and extremely long tongues.

The caged feeders will also thwart squirrels. Our customers have varying experience with the squirrels on their suet feeders. Some don't have any problems while others are in full attack mode. Squirrels, like the birds, do not like all flavors of suet. Of course, the peanut cakes which are preferred by the birds are also the ones preferred by the squirrels. Another strategy is to experiment with different flavors of suet until you find one that is still attractive to the birds and only moderately attractive to the squirrels. This way you still have plenty of birds and only the occasional squirrel. Try insect suet as a cake that will attract birds and not many squirrels.

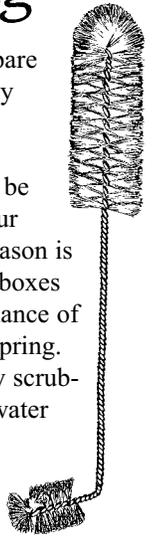


Winter cleaning

Many backyard birders prepare for each change of season by cleaning their feeders and baths. And if you haven't already done so, this would be a good time to clean out your nest boxes. The breeding season is over, and if you clean your boxes now, you'll have a better chance of attracting birds again next spring.

Clean wooden feeders by scrubbing them with hot, soapy water and a stiff brush.

To keep the visitors flocking to your tube feeders, you must keep the seed flowing freely. Use your finger to clear out the seed ports. When your feeder is ready for a real cleaning, soak the cylinder and removable parts in a five-percent bleach-and-water solution. You can use the same solution to clean your birdbath. Always rinse your baths and feeders well after cleaning them and make sure the feeders are dry before you refill them.



A use for used Christmas trees

Christmas has come and gone. The decorations are all put away, and the only thing left is the Christmas tree. This year, instead of leaving it out for trash collectors, why not leave it out for the birds?



Find a suitable spot near your house or feeders and decorate it with strings of peanuts in the shell, raisins, cranberries, or almonds. Mix some peanut butter (or suet) with corn meal and roll pinecones in the mixture and then in seed. Tie net bags filled with dried berries, shelled peanuts, almonds, or suet to the tree branches. And don't forget to put some millet around the tree's base for the ground-feeding birds. As a final, cheery touch, hang some old Christmas ornaments, too.

FREE
5-lb. bag
of Supreme Blend
birdseed w/purchase
of a feeder and a pole
or tray combo

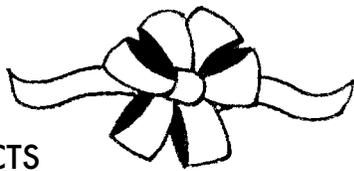
C111201; Expires 1/31/2012.

Not to be combined w/ other offers. Limit one coupon per customer. Must present coupon at time of purchase.

Birdie's Wild Card
20% OFF
one single item
(Wild card can be used only
once during December)

C111201; Expires 12/31/2011.

Not to be combined w/ other offers. Limit one coupon per customer. Must present coupon at time of purchase.



NEW PRODUCTS

Bovano Cheshire

Nick and I are proud to announce a beautiful new product that we have brought in especially for the holidays. We are excited for you to come in to see it.

Holding tightly to bringing in products that are made in the USA, Bovano is an artisan studio located in Cheshire, Connecticut.

Highly skilled artisans handcraft the beautiful Bovano collection of nature inspired artistic wall decor using the medium of glass enamels. It is important to note that the word enamel means glass and not paint. Since 1953 the former copper refinery, built in the mid 1800s, Bovano designers work the the enamel process by firing layers of finely ground glass powder to solid copper shapes. After cooling, the enameled components are welded into the final sculpture.

Bovano's goal is to produce the finest heirloom quality enamel sculptures for customers to enjoy. It is our wish that this interpretation of nature's beauty will bring elegance and pleasure to your life.



Sharing the Love of Birds

This has been an extraordinary year in so many ways. One thing I cannot dispute is that it has been crazy busy for most people. We meet ourselves coming and going. We are so obsessed with making things perfect for the holidays and the loved ones that will be converging on us any day. Perfection is overrated! It's exhausting at best. Over time the pace can cause stress and health problems.

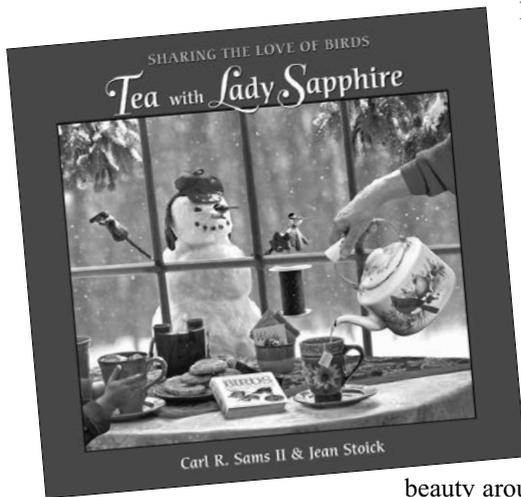
This year my holiday gift to you is the gift of nature. It is my hope that you will share it with friends and loved ones. *Tea with Lady Sapphire* is the most beautifully illustrated little book about a grandmother sharing her love of birds, along with hot cocoa and a cup of tea, with her grandchildren.

Acknowledging that it's okay to slow down, stop fussing, and take in all the

beauty around us. The joy in watching a

perky little chickadee cracking a nut and gratefully devouring it, bright red cardinals enjoying the feast of sunflower, millet and nuts that you placed on a platform feeder, a woodpecker working diligently upside down on a suet feeder to get that perfect bite. Breathe slowly and feel your pulse come down. Life can be complicated or simple, you chose. SHARE the beauty that nature has to offer and count your blessings.

Have a blessed holiday from your grateful friends at the BACKYARD Nature Center.



Winter Checklist for Backyard Birdwatching

1. Always have your birdbath filled with fresh water
2. Keep ice-free water available all winter with a birdbath heater or deicer
3. Clean your feeders for a fresh start of the season
4. Offer fresh birdseed to attract a wide variety of birds
5. Hang your nyjer feeder in a place that is visible from above, yet away from other feeders
6. Attract Dark-eyed Juncos with millet on a platform feeder or on the ground
7. Put up roosting boxes or roosting pockets to help keep birds warm on cold winter nights
8. Keep your suet feeders up for woodpeckers and other birds
9. Keep you peanut feeders filled for jays and chickadees
10. Enjoy your birds with a fresh, steaming cup of bird-friendly coffee

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



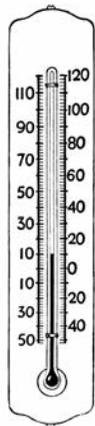
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316-683-2121

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.

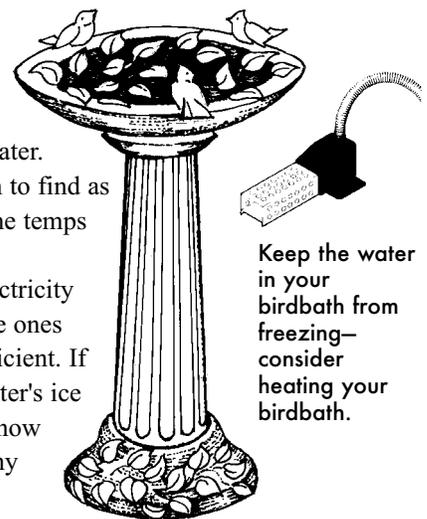
Return Service Requested



Cold Days Ahead!

We want to remind you all that during the cold months of winter, your outdoor friends really appreciate your help. Putting food out regularly lets them know to look in your yard first, especially when the really nasty weather sets in. But we also want to make sure you remember water. This one thing, so essential to their well being, can be extremely tough to find as temperatures drop below freezing. This is especially true when day time temps don't rise much. Open water can be life saving.

If you have a birdbath out consider heating it. Our heaters work on electricity (gotta plug them in) and keep the water from freezing. We only sell the ones with thermostats in them because we think they are safer and more efficient. If you don't have a handy plug, consider getting a birdbath that won't break with winter's ice and then just try to fill it each morning with warm water. The birds will begin to know when to look for it and come to expect it! Come by and talk with us if you want any other ideas for how to best help your birds cope with winter.



Keep the water in your birdbath from freezing—consider heating your birdbath.

We have Gift Certificates available in any denomination.