



BACKYARD nature center News

February/March 2015 • Issue 27

Just Feed Birds

Our friends at Droll Yankee ask: “Why attract and feed birds at home?” Why put up a bird house? Why develop a water area? Why landscape for the birds? Why offer songbirds both food and shelter? Why put up a variety of different feeders and fill them with different kinds of food? Why feed birds beyond the winter months? Because attracting birds is so much fun, so full of wonder and such a delightful experience. At Droll Yankee, they believe it’s possible to make a world of difference in the lives of wild birds by creating a wildlife habitat close to home. By taking control over your immediate environment, you will make a difference in the lives of birds creating a place for them to nest and raise young and find food and water. Creating a suitable habitat for birds has a positive effect on the birds’ populations and encourages and sustains bio-diversity.

It doesn’t happen overnight. For us, it began when we saw a lot close to the little river. Amazed by the incredible cover of trees and heavy under-brush between the lot and the river, we were sold! Our little one acre of land had only three small cottonwood trees. Our canvas was set. We could build a home, for our little family, smack in the middle and over the years add trees and shrubs that the wildlife would like.

How time flies when you’re having fun! Almost a quarter of a century has gone by in a blink. Girls are grown, have grandkids now, we’ve operated the greatest little bird feeding shop for almost that long, and what once was a

bare lot with three trees has developed into a natural haven for wildlife and a private oasis for humans!

Selecting trees and shrubs is made easy by the great nurseries here in Wichita, and by Sedgwick County Extension Service. They will advise you as to what is native in our area and therefore will have the most success



surviving in our now very dry environment. We favor hardy viburnums, honeysuckles, cedars, and berry producing woody service and choke-berry bushes. Songbirds love them!

We have seen over 150 different species of birds in our yard, and even documented the rare visit of a Calliopes hummingbird! Our kids and grandkids have grown up enjoying it as much as Nick and I.

Our bird haven has taught us patience. Perhaps, the older we get, the better we understand this. From time to time, a customer will call just a few days after setting up a new birdfeeder, and ask, “Where are my birds?” This is a tough one so I begin with the twenty questions: How long has it been up? Are there any trees or shrubs close by

to offer cover and safety for the birds? Do you have any other feeders that the birds are used to feeding from? Have you offered water for bathing and drinking? The best explanation I can give is that songbirds are very visual, do not have a very good sense of smell, and they will find that new feeder eventually by sight and discovery. It may take a week or two.

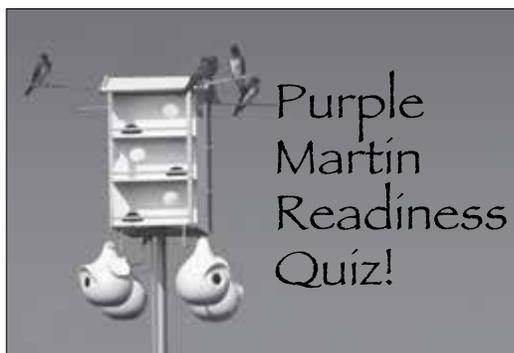
Meanwhile, keep your feed fresh, don’t let it get stale. Also, don’t keep moving it around from tree to tree. It could take even longer for them to find it. Patience pays off.

Enjoy your bird feeding for a lifetime. Once you get started, it’s fun to add specialty feeders like peanut feeders, jelly and hummingbird feeders! Expand on what you have. Watch the

way nuthatches, titmice, and chickadees hang upside down to pluck a peanut from a feeder! Be amazed by the sweet tooth of Baltimore and Orchard orioles as they lap up grape jelly from a dish hanging on a simple wire hanger. And.....hummers....., the feisty little jewels that can run off any challenger from their private nectar feeder! If you have troublesome birds, put a caged feeder out that only the little birds can go inside. There is a multitude of good feeders and accessories that will enhance your bird watching enjoyment. Offer the very best quality you can afford, put your feeders where you can see them and most of all remember to be patient. If you build it....they will come, right? Who said that anyway?

Spring is on the way!

Songbirds will be singing, building nests, mate feeding and eating like crazy. Natural seed produced in the fall is no longer desirable and the need for fresh seed now is increased by all this nesting activity. You'll see an increase in your bird feeding in spring. Keep it fresh and plentiful and your birdies will be grateful!



True or false? Purple Martins are completely dependent on human supplied housing.

True, because of their long relationship with man, Purple Martins have gone through a behavioral shift and now only use man made housing in the eastern half of North America.

True or false? If I don't get my house out early, I'll miss the "scouts"!

False, the first martins to arrive are simply adults who go back to where they nested the year before. They will not be looking for a new house. Last year the older male and female adult martins started arriving here at the house in our parking lot on March 14th. That's soon, I know. No need to open up all the compartments as yet. If you do, you will start fighting sparrows and starlings immediately. Checking regularly to make sure no other nest competitors have begun nesting.

True or false? It's too late to put up a new house in April.

False. If you did not have martins nesting last year, or if you are putting up a new house, don't get in a hurry. You are going to attract the young, first year birds, called sub-adults. You'll enjoy watching the arrival of the adults and sub-adults on maps documented by landlords who are reporting to the PMCA website. The website for the Purple Martin Conservation Association is: purplemartin.org. You'll be informed and ready!



WOLF POINT FORGE

Classic ironwork products whose appeal has withstood the test of time.

Hardware may not sound glamorous or exciting, but our store is proud to have carried this line of poles, baffles and



hardware since we opened in 1991 and we thought you may enjoy knowing a little of their historic past. Made in the USA is important, as a matter of history, this is a Chicago story. Wolf Point Forge drew its inspiration from the pioneering spirit of the region's early settlers. Wolf Point is the historic town's center of what would later become the great industrial capital, Chicago. For the past half century they have been a part of Chicago's manufacturing tradition. Their logo, shown here, was taken from the center medallion of a large stained glass window that once adorned a mid-19th century blacksmith's shop, not far from Wolf Point. We, here at the BACKYARD Nature Center, are proud to be supplying you with forged iron products for your yard from Wolf Point Forge in Chicago, IL. With the determination of the pioneers before them, they will move ahead embracing new methods and technologies to bring us classic "yardware" whose strength and appeal has withstood the test of time. It is our privilege to be a part of their success and to have our input valued for a quarter century.

10% OFF
any Purple Martin house or pole

C021501; Expires 3/15/2015. Cannot be combined w/ other offers.
Limit one coupon per customer.

15% OFF
Wolf Point Forge
ironworks yardware

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Limit one coupon per customer.

SPECIES PROFILE:

American Goldfinch

The American Goldfinch (*Spinus tristis*), is a year-round resident of our area. Although technically a migratory bird, our area is in the center of its range and thus doesn't really experience their departure and return.

The American Goldfinch is a granivore and adapted for the consumption of seedheads, with a conical beak to remove the seeds and agile feet to grip the stems of seedheads while feeding. It is a social bird, and will gather in large flocks while feeding and migrating. Its breeding season is tied to the peak of food supply, beginning in late July, which is relatively late in the year. This species is generally monogamous, and produces one brood each year..

The American Goldfinch is a small finch, 4 to 5 inches long, with a wingspan of 7 to 9 inches. The beak is small, conical, and pink for most of the year, but turns bright orange with the spring molt in both sexes. The shape and size of the beak aid in the extraction of seeds from the seed heads of thistles, sunflowers, and other plants.

The American Goldfinch is unusual in that it undergoes a molt in both the spring and autumn. The plumage coloration is especially pronounced after the spring molt, when the bright color of the male's summer plumage is needed to attract a mate. Once the spring molt is complete, the body of the male is a brilliant lemon yellow, a color produced by pigments from plant materials in its diet, with a striking jet black cap and white rump that is visible during flight. The female is mostly brown, lighter on the underside with a yellow bib. After the autumn molt, the bright summer feathers are replaced by duller plumage. The autumn plumage is

almost identical in both sexes, but the male has yellow shoulder patches.

The American Goldfinch is gregarious during the non-breeding season, when it is often found in large flocks, usually with other finches. Flocks generally fly in an undulating pattern, creating a wave-shaped path. During the breeding season, it lives in loose colonies.

The American Goldfinch begins its breeding season later in the year than any other finch. This may be related to the abundance of seeds in the late summer months, as seeds represent the majority of their diet. The nest is built in late summer by the female in the branches of a shrub or tree at a height of up to

30 ft. The nest is so tightly woven that it can hold water, and it is possible for nestlings to drown following a rain-storm if the parents do not cover the nest. The eggs are incubated by the female alone, though the male brings her food as she nests.

The American Goldfinch is not threatened by human activity, and is widespread throughout its range. The clearing of forests by humans, though harmful to many species, has benefited the American Goldfinch. This benefits the American Goldfinch both as a



Exclusive "Magnet" Feeder

short-distance migrant, and because the created open areas are the preferred environment of the bird, where weeds thrive which produce their primary food source.

Best Product of Early Spring

Want to see color this spring? Our steel mesh tube feeders filled with fine sunflower hearts or our super finch mix will get you goldfinch clinging to it in all directions! The goldfinch does not require a perch.



Constructed of fine steel mesh, it's difficult for big birds or squirrels to cling to and almost impossible for a larger birds beak to get anything out of. You'll love seeing the goldfinch change to their bright yellow for mating season. Now...this is why we feed birds in warmer months right?



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



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





SEMI-ANNUAL BIRDSEED SALE



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Here we are into February and now is the time to consider opening or adding to an Early Bird Seed account. Make your money stretch right into spring feeding. All your seed, suet, mealworms and nuts come off your account at the sweet 20% discount, minimum of \$150 please. It's like having free seed storage. Or purchase any bulk bags of seed during the sale, 20% off and just take them with you. Sale ends February 22nd, 2015.

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