



BACKYARD nature center News

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There is birdseed..... And then there is birdseed!

Customers often ask “What is the difference between your seed and seed found in supermarkets, garden centers, and big box stores? The answer is quality and value.

Most bargain-brand birdseed mixes contain large quantities of ingredients that songbirds do not eat. These inexpensive “filler” seeds add weight to the bag, giving the impression that you are getting a lot for your money. But birds know better. They will sweep their beaks through the mix and dump undesirable seeds to the ground. You’ll find a pile under your feeder that will sit for months until it sprouts. Even ground-feeding birds—doves, juncos, and sparrows—may ignore the spilled seed. If good seed falls to the ground, they will devour it.

Check the list of ingredients on the bag of seed. Ingredients should be listed in the order that they contribute to the total weight of the bag. Bargain mixes often contain milo as a major ingredient. Some birds of the Southwest do eat milo, most Midwest birds do not. Sometimes you will see “mixed grains” listed. What are they? Simply put.... fillers.

The major ingredient in our BACKYARD Nature Center mixes is sunflower seed, the birds’ favorite.

Seed quality is also important. Our seed is 99% clean by weight. We demand that our vendors sift the seed three times to remove all, or almost all,

this “reclaiming.” We call it “unfit for avian consumption.”

You can count on us to keep you well informed and supplied with the

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empty shells, sticks, leaves, and other debris that is found in bargain seed bags. Typically, most commercial seed can have over 2 pounds of inedible material and you are paying for it.

Most bargain-brand seed is sprayed with oil to keep dust down and to make it shiny and attractive to people (not to birds). Seed can also vary in quality—from fresh to stale to sweepings off the mill floor. Mill owners call

best quality seed. We get fresh shipments weekly. BACKYARD Nature Center seed is fresh, 99%-clean, and delicious. At least that’s what the birds seem to think!

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Nick and Cathy Clausen, Owners

Bird Feeding 101

Which feeders shall I choose? What type of feeder will attract which birds? These are common questions we hear here at the BACKYARD Nature Center. We hope to make the answers clearer.

Platform feeders

A feeder placed close to the ground and perhaps has a screened bottom will be a wonderful gathering place for winter visitors like juncos (snow-birds), mourning doves, beautiful native sparrows like the Harris Sparrow, White-crowned and White-throated Sparrows, Rufus-sided Towhees and everyone's favorite Northern Cardinals! Ground feeding birds enjoy black oiled sunflower and very often white proso millet. If you place the feeder close to bushes, these birds will feel safer if they need to escape to cover quickly.

Tube feeders

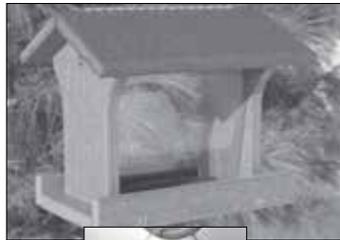
Any elevated tube feeder with or without perches filled with sunflower, in or out of the shell, will be attractive to chickadees, Tufted Titmice, goldfinch, House Finch, and most all the woodpeckers. These birds have no problem clinging to the tube feeder. Make sure you buy a good feeder with a lexan tube so it will hold up in icy conditions. A nice dome over the feeder will help to keep the weather out and also squirrels!

Hopper feeders

A good beginning bird enthusiast's feeder, made from wood or better yet, a recycled wood and plastic combination, a hopper feeder will normally have at least two sides with a clear plastic window which allows you to see the seed level and a large landing area for most any species to access. This is a great feeder to fill with a mixed seed, heavy on sunflower seeds, no milo, and perhaps some nutmeats. Remember, however, all birds can access this feeder including some very large birds you may not be trying to attract.

Thistle feeders

Using a feeder with tiny slit openings or an all mesh construction, filled with sunflower bits and perhaps some nyger thistle, will bring the smallest of finches, the goldfinch, pine siskins, and beautiful small house finch. These small birds can cling to a



feeder with or even without a perch with no difficulty. Sunflower hearts or bits are my preference for greatest activity with lots of color in spring on one little feeder!

Caged feeders

A caged feeder is a good answer for keeping large intrusive and bullish birds out. Chickadees, titmouse, finch, Carolina Wrens and even small woodpeckers can access a tube feeder surrounded by a large mesh cage. Caged feeders are also called "select" feeders.



Peanut feeders

Clinging birds have very strong feet, love peanuts and find them irresistible! Peanuts out of the shell, or peanut splits, make a wonderful addition to your backyard bird feeding station.

Most peanut feeders have a mesh area with 1/4 to 1/2" openings, just enough for the long probing beak of a woodpecker and large enough for a chickadee to chip off a large chunk of nut. Nuts are heavy in good calories for year round feeding. Clinger feeders encourage larger birds like starlings, grackles, pigeons, etc. to feed somewhere else.

Suet feeders

Suet feeders will be especially welcome during cold weather. Suet is rendered beef

fat, highest in caloric value and very quickly turned to energy.

Presented in a cage to hold the suet cakes, sometimes hung close to a tree trunk, clinging species will be delighted!



Clinger feeders

Clinger only feeders have a very small area to hang on when accessing sunflower chips. Clinging birds include those with strong feet that make it easy for them to run up and down a tree trunk or to grasp onto a small surface to retrieve an insect or gnat. These include titmouse, chickadees, goldfinch and woodpeckers. Many people refer to these birds as the "polite" birds as they often take one seed at a time, fly off and eat or store it, and then come back for another. Encourages larger birds like starlings, grackles, pigeons, etc. to feed somewhere else.

Romancing the West

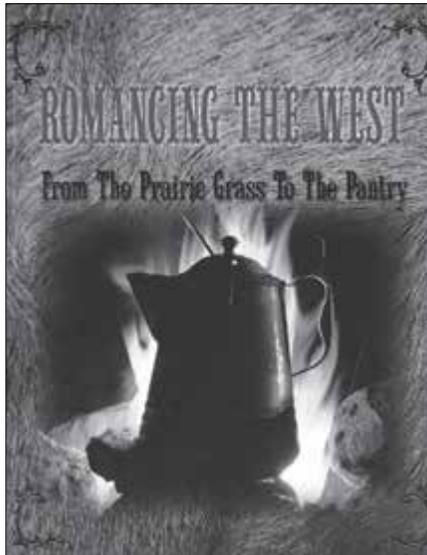
Great Book review, by Cathy Clausen
A cookbook you won't be able to put down!
"ROMANCING THE WEST"

Quoting American icons and characters from Teddy Roosevelt, Jessie James, and Wyatt Earp to Abraham Lincoln, an insightful American woman and author Frances Gillette, who recalls recipes from the kitchen of woodstoves and folks recalling stories of food "From the Prairie Grass to the Pantry"!

Mouthwatering full color, it takes us back to our roots in the history of fabulous earthy, delicious, home cooking and teaches us just where we come from, our connection to food and history and a fabled era when wagons with iron pots and pans clanked across the prairie in search of a new world. We have a great connection to these pioneers whose many recipes started with CORN, America's most important native food which plays a recurring role in history. First cultivated by the Indians, it sustained waves of pioneers and nation builders. Now it feeds the world.

Learn about what happened at Wounded Knee, Annie Oakley and Buffalo Chili, Home Brewed Root Beer, Ranch House Steak, Betsy Ross and All-American Apple Pie, root cellars of the past, children's glass marbles and Grandma's Peanut Butter cookies. Buckaroo Nachos, Saddle Bag Pull-Apart Bread, Wyatt Earp and Prime Rib Roast. "Wish I had time for just one more bowl of chili"... Alleged dying words of Kit Carson!

*Available at the BACKYARD Nature Center
Makes a great holiday gift!



Cardinal Candy

Try our new "CARDINAL CANDY" seed blend! With a higher concentration of sunflower and striped seeds, you will no doubt find you have more interest from the backyard beauty!



Nick and Cathy Clausen, master gardeners, avid bird watchers and owners of the BACKYARD Nature Center.

Q. What can I do about hawks eating my birds in my yard?

A. Hawks are federally protected birds just like the songbirds in your yard. Not all hawks are bird eaters. The ones that you will see around your feeders are either Sharp-shinned Hawks or Cooper's Hawks. These are bird eating hawks that are highly maneuverable and like to surprise birds that are not paying attention by bursting into your yard and snatching the unattended. More times than not, they miss. However, the best thing you can do is place your feeders close to dense shrubs that provide cover and protection. Your birds then have time to flee into the shrub and get away.

Q. Do I need to have water out for the birds in the winter?

A. Water is actually a more important factor than food for your birds. Going into winter, birds have the most natural food than at any other time of the year. However, with cold temperatures, fresh water starts freezing, and access becomes limited. Birds must be able to drink to hydrate themselves during cold dry winter days and nights and they must be able to bath to control oil on their feathers so they insulate properly. Adding a birdbath heater to existing baths or a heated bath will greatly improve your bird activity during those bleak winter months.

*Try Recycled Composite Feeders!
They last and last!*

15% OFF
any feeder made of recycled materials.
Includes hoppers, suet feeders, ground platforms.

C111401; Expires November 15, 2014.
Cannot be combined with other offers.

*Give your birds a spa when all other natural
sources are frozen!*

15% OFF
any heated birdbath or heater



C111402; Expires November 15, 2014.
Cannot be combined with other offers.



For people who feed and care for backyard birds
 The Shops at Tallgrass
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 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



FALL BIRDSEED SALE

October 1 1th through October 3 1st



Get the best prices of the year! All bulk seed will be available, at 20% off. Two times a year, we make this great offer, only to our newsletter customers. You can take your seed with you or you can open or add to an Early Bird Seed account! A \$150 minimum deposit on your seed account allows you to extend the 20% discount on all seed, suet, and mealworms for as long as your money extends. Thereafter, just stop in and take home only what you need that week and enjoy the benefits of the freshest seed in town at the lowest price! We think it's a win/win deal!

