



# BACKYARD nature center News

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## Change is in the air... and in your yard!



Sadly, hummingbirds and orioles have gone by the end of September, along with house wrens, flycatchers, warblers and gnatcatchers. In this area, there is one good exception and that's the eastern bluebird. Cedar hedgerows planted by smart farmers



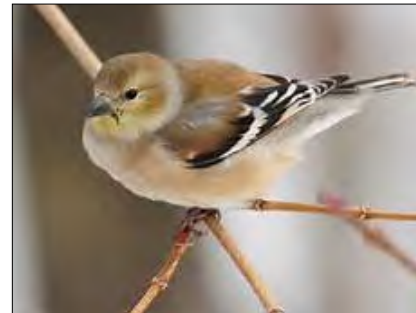
so many years ago provide both berries and shelter for bluebirds. Adding a heated birdbath will help keep them around. All native seed-eating birds stay year-round. Cardinals, Blue Jays, woodpeckers, chickadees, titmice, and house finch are dependable at your seed feeders



especially if you keep them full of their favorite seeds. Ask for a copy of the feeding prefer-

ence guide to better understand the seed eater's favorite combination of feeder and seed.

With the onset of cold weather, you can expect "snow birds", or juncos, both northern and slate-colored. Kansas is one of the only states where beautiful Harris sparrow over winters. The American Goldfinch, much to the



surprise of many, does not migrate but may be difficult to recognize as they molt from summer's bright plumage to winter's olive drab. Look closely

among the goldfinch, you may be seeing pine siskin at your feeders. Slightly smaller and very striped, he is the winter cousin. Most year-round woodland residents will molt old worn feathers and add new warm feathers for winter.

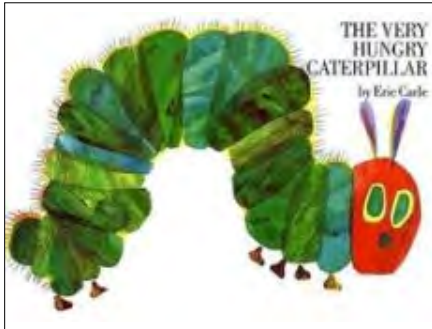
Watch for the Towhee, dodging in and out from under bushes, grabbing a seed here and there. White-crowned Sparrows and White-throated Sparrows will be competing for seed close to the

ground. A real treat is a flock of cedar-waxwings with their black mask and waxy red tips on some of their wing feathers, joining robins to feast from a bush full of autumn's leftover berries. Cool breezes, leaves changing colors, birds flocking together in family groups, juncos showing up at the first flurry, sweatshirt weather and cider on the back porch. Life is good!



## A BOOK REVIEW

### The Very Hungry Caterpillar by Eric Carle



A “Classic” and copywritten originally in 1969, this little book is a charmer and one that introduces any preschooler to books, counting and teaches the child about the cycle of life of a very interesting little critter that often could go un-noticed. The life-cycle of the caterpillar’s journey is so beautifully illustrated by Carle in vibrant color illustrations. The intro to this book puts it beautifully, to quote: “The final, double-paged picture of the butterfly is a joyous explosion of color, a vibrant affirmation of the wonder and beauty of Nature”.

Share this book as a gift or enjoy it with a little friend. We know you’ll both love it!



- Add our Butterfly Growing Kit from Insectlore. The kit includes:
- Pop-Up butterfly habitat
  - Voucher to redeem 5 baby caterpillars
  - Butterfly Garden instructions
  - Feeding dropper

A complete gift of nature and education to share with your young people!

## 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



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



“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 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

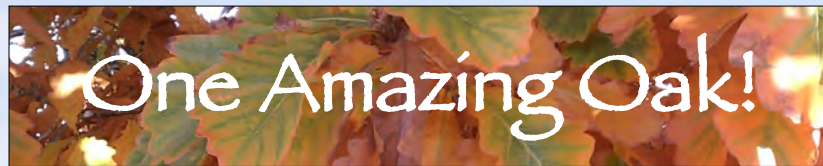
have any problems while others are in full attack mode. Squirrels, like the birds, do not like all flavors of suet. Of course, the peanut cakes which are preferred by the birds are also the ones preferred by the squirrels. Another strategy is to experiment with different flavors of suet until you find 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.



15% OFF  
any heater or  
heated birdbath

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One-time use only.





## One Amazing Oak!

A 6-foot Bur Oak tree, planted some thirty years ago, is now taller than a two-story house, stands straight, sturdy and gorgeous. Messy indeed, dropping acorns for several months, but I'd never hold it against him. Let me introduce you.

From the straight branches of this oak, hang six feeders, a hummingbird feeder, a covered platform feeder that the grackles can't access, an oriole nectar feeder, a jelly feeder, a large caged feeder for the house finch, oops and also a suet sandwich for the woodpeckers! Because we know we have late night visitors, Nick has retro-fit two large sheet metal baffles around it's middle and it works! Considering how much green there is in the yard, it really doesn't look ugly. Racoons are not good jumpers, so they aren't bypassing the baffle only to spring from the house. At last, a tree that's safe! It's normally very difficult to baffle a tree. It's everyone's playground! Feeders above that baffle are untouched by pesky varmints!

May I tell you more? During hot summer months, it's giant soft-shaped leaves protect the entire back of the house, keeping it cool and shady when it's 100 outside. Those leaves are so beautiful, they are a work of art in themselves. Grandkids have taken them to school to do leaf art! I will gladly rake them up in the fall!

We sit inside our comfy cage, the screened porch off the kitchen, best seats in the house, and watch orioles, and hummingbirds, titmice and chickadees, Downy and Red-bellied woodpeckers, cardinals on the platform, and Carolina Wrens feasting on just about every feeder, especially if it has nuts in it. In August the Bur Oak presented us with a new gift, a butterfly feeder. Sap has begun oozing from deep crevices of the trunk. At first, we worried that he may be sick so we checked with an arborist and learned that "sometimes, they just do that" (very scientific huh?). Okay, well if that's true then fabulous! Some parts of the day, the 2' diameter trunk is covered with painted lady butterflies lapping up fermented syrup and most likely getting a little tipsy! My word..... could one tree offer more? It's officially autumn, my favorite time of year, and this oak becomes even more beautiful than possible. This tree holds the history of our family. It has witnessed our three daughters grow up. It cools us when were doing yard work. It has withstood many Kansas storms and yet still stands, a testament of strength. Now dressed in glorious orange, yellow and red leaves I feel the need to say thank you, big Bur Oak, for being part of our lives!

**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.

PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT:  
WWW.BACKYARDNATURECENTER.COM

Remember to Recycle



# FALL BIRDSEED SALE

**Now through October 31st**



Nick and Cathy Clausen are the owners of the Backyard Nature Center master gardeners, avid backyard bird-watchers

Enjoy the change!



Happy  
Autumn!

It's that time again! Twice a year we offer this savings!  
All large 20- to 50-lb. bags of premium bird seed is **20% off**, take it with you that day, or . . .

Join the penny-wise and open or add to an EARLY BIRD SEED ACCOUNT with a minimum of \$150. You can deposit as much as you like to your personal seed account and take any size bag of seed, suet, peanuts, mealworms from your seed as you need and at the 20% discount until your funds are used up. Ask us to check to see how much you used last year. We're glad to check for you.

**20% OFF!**

