



BACKYARD nature center News

October/November 2019 • Issue 55

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



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



NEW PRODUCT

Desert Steel Art



The definition of ART is the expression of human creative skill and imagination, producing works to be appreciated for their beauty or

emotional power. Inspired by nature itself to create art that is tough and rugged, yet embodies the majesty and beauty of nature.

We are now carrying some very special steel birdfeeders, gourds and pumpkin luminaries. Desert Steel: Art, sparked by nature, forged with steel.

Reminder:

We moved up our hours to:
Monday–Saturday:
9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Sundays: 12 noon to 4 p.m.
Hope this is helpful to you
early birds!



What to Expect This Fall

Keep your seed feeders fresh and full! Insect and jelly eaters are pretty much gone. Orioles, hummingbirds, Purple Martins, all swallows and swifts and Mississippi Kites have moved on. With the first cool, crisp breeze "snow birds" (juncos), Harris Sparrows, beautiful White-throated and White-crowned Sparrows, Rufus Towhees along and Red-breasted Nuthatch are all new arrivals to watch for. Change, like the seasons in Kansas, is a time we all look forward to!

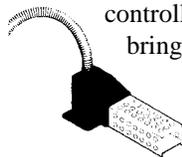


Importance of water in cold weather

Offering water is one of the most enticing and vital components of bird feeding. Ponds and streams may become frozen quickly over night when temperatures drop and it becomes difficult for songbirds to find much needed open water to bath as well as drink. Feather care is critical at this time of year and that includes lots of bathing to remove excess oil to allow feathers to be fluffed up like a nice down jacket. You may think your birdies are just fat when in fact, they are puffing out those wonderful layers of down feathers closest to their tiny bodies.



Adding a heater to your existing birdbath is one good way to keep the birds coming. Thermostatically controlled, a heater will only bring the water temperature up to just above freezing and then it shuts off. Heated birdbaths are quite handy too. Both will need to be plugged in with an outdoor extension chord. Your birds will be grateful for fresh shallow water free of ice!



*Jump start holiday shopping!
Hand-tuned anodized aluminum wind-
chimes w/5-year warranty.*

15% OFF
Beautiful Corinthian Bells
ready to wrap

C191001; Expires November 30, 2019. Cannot be combined with other offers.

*Warm up that birdbath with a thermostatically
controlled electric heater! Ice-free water is a "Bird Magnet"!*

\$15% OFF
any Birdbath Heater
or Heated Birdbath

C191002; Expires November 30, 2019. Cannot be combined with other offers.

Woodpeckers Welcome!

Made of Poly resin for longevity and designed to accommodate a woodpecker's long tongue and bill while deterring other pests, my favorite suet feeder is the Suet Sandwich. With spreadable suet you can invite all "clinging" birds with strong

feet like Carolina Wrens, nuthatch, chickadees and of course all our beloved hardy woodpeckers.



Purple Finch or House Finch?



Female Purple Finch



Female House Finch



Male House Finch

I can understand that it sounds much prettier to say that one has Purple Finch at the feeders than to say one has House Finch but, let me clear things up a bit.

- House Finch males can vary from pale orange, kind of like Kool Aid, be fiery red, or be very plum colored. Very pretty and they are great singers!
- Females are both vertically streaked, but the female Purple Finch has a white eyebrow. The House Finch female does not.
- House Finch are year-round in our area.
- Purple Finch are scarce, but occasionally visit east of the Flint Hills.
- The House Finch is the cutie that makes their nest in the wreath at your front porch!
- The Purple Finch arrive in November and leave in April, but rarely in Wichita.

Ahhhh, the "molt"!

Ever miss seeing your beautiful birdies after they have finished nesting, late summer? It gets pretty quiet. We have lots of folks ask what happened to my birds? I don't have any. It does get very quiet in late summer. That is, until the babies are flight ready and following mom and dad back to the feeders, standing there dumb-founded and begging still to be fed. This is a very quiet time that is easy to explain. After nesting, adult birds, both migratory and year-round residents will lose a great deal of their feathers, not all at once thank goodness, but just enough to slow them down. Feathers that are worn down from building nests and making constant trips back and forth feeding young will not insulate well when they confront cold temperatures or migrate. During this time, birds kind of "lay low" and are more secretive and flight can be more difficult making them somewhat vulnerable. Quickly new feathers with cozy down grow in, and they are back showing the ropes to juveniles, and getting ready to face the cold winter weather of Kansas or migrating to tropical havens far away.



**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–Saturday: 9 a.m.–5 p.m.

Sunday: 12 noon–4 p.m.

PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT:
WWW.BACKYARDNATURECENTER.COM

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!

