



BACKYARD nature center *News*

Aug 2021/Sept 2021 • Issue 65



The Good Stuff



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!



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and supplied with the best quality seed.*



HUMMERTIME? YOU BET! THIS IS IT!

A tip to keep them happy and beefing up for their long journey to South and Central America.



We often hear from folks who are discouraged trying so hard to get hummingbirds that they took their feeders down. We understand it's tough to keep changing the nectar when there are no takers, but this is not the time to quit. Late July is when the hummer population explodes. Babies are out and everyone is beefing up their body weight, getting those young ready for a long trip that begins as early as September. It's the time you may see some amazing display flight from males, challenging and just showing off. You may even spot more than just our Ruby-Throated hummingbirds. Calliope, Rufus and Broad-Tail hummers do often stop by for a meal. Don't give up now. I promise you'll be rewarded!

HUMMINGBIRD CARE

- Clean feeder every refill
- Use a Nectar Protector
- No preservatives
- No dyed nectar
- No oil or grease on feeder pole



This is a guide. Please check feeder daily.

Seed & Hull Digester

BEST PRODUCT OF THE YEAR!

Worried about the environment but at the same time want to keep the feeders healthy for our wildlife and pets?

We are proud to offer a product that is eco-friendly and eco-safe for children, pets and wildlife and is produced by a Wisconsin-based company.

Seed & Hull Digester is for use beneath feeders which can be a breeding ground for contamination. Bird droppings and bird scattered seed can be treated with this simple spray providing for a safe environment for birds to scavenge freely. Care Free Enzymes™ is non-toxic and will not harm any birds, animals nor the birdseed itself.

Birdhouses are a common depository for bird droppings, nesting material, shells and other organic material that can lead to contamination and an unsanitary environment. Seed & Hull Digester is effective in decomposing the contaminated material-naturally. Definitely a "feel good" product!



Mary Lake Thompson Linens



You're going to love these unique quality kitchen towels for your home or to give as just a sweet little friend or teacher gift! Beautiful bird or nature prints on a set of two high quality kitchen towels!

All packaged and ready to enjoy!

Gardening is for the Birds!

By Cathy Clausen, avid backyard birdwatcher and organic gardener.

Mulching, mulching, mulching! To dead head or not to dead head...that is the question. Once we get to the end of August, I say no more deadheading. Beside the fact that we're tired of doing it (I'm always a little bent over from deadheading). Your birds will appreciate the yummy seed heads available as we go towards cooler temperatures. Delighted by the coneflower and gaillardia (also called blanket flower) in the wildflower garden, goldfinch and chickadees spend time flitting from head-to-head plucking a meal from the leftovers to enjoy the freshest dinner possible. All perennials are reseeding in late summer so I say....let 'em go! As they dry the birds will eat them until they are depleted. Both garden and birds will benefit and you'll keep them coming to your yard!



A Kansas Bird?

Do we really have exotic birds like this one in Kansas?



The answer is YES! This great photo (left) taken by fellow bird lover, is of a Scissor-tailed flycatcher. Beautiful, graceful, you'll see them perched on high lines in more of a prairie grass setting. He is an insect eater, who winters in Mexico and Central America and breeds in open country of Texas, Oklahoma and now in south-central Kansas. An elegant bird who's light gray above with salmon underwings. About robin size but with a much longer tail, stunning! As with most all insect eating birds, he will be leaving soon for warmer climates.

Enjoy the view!

WILD CARD COUPON

15% OFF ANY ONE ITEM!

Not to be used with any other discount, birdseed or seed accounts, special orders or optics.

(Expires September 30, 2021)

*With sincere apologies, my lovely readers, ignore or discount the mistakes that I make in my writing of this newsletter. I promise you that I spell check multiple times and my editor does the same and there it is...always a tiny grammar, spelling or mistake in an expiration date. As one customer pointed out, I even called an Orchard oriole an Orchid oriole! That would be something to see! Maybe I can blame it on how fast and furious time goes by now but either way, thank you for letting it slide.



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

Monday–Saturday: 9 a.m.–5 p.m.
Sunday: Closed

PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT:
WWW.BACKYARDNATURECENTER.COM



from left to right
Tammy, Cathy, Nick & Mary



MEET CASPER!

Our Newest Employee!

In the last year, we were feeding this little grey and white cat from the back of the store. For many weeks, the cat wouldn't let us touch or get close to him. He lived in the bushes and would eat our offering after everyone left their stores at night. We continued to feed him and talk to him and eventually, he let Nick pet his head when he talked softly to him. We moved his bowl closer and closer to the door until he had to come to the mat just inside the door. Still weary, he would growl softly if we pulled the door shut with him inside so we let him back out. In January, with the freezing temps, we couldn't find him at all but had seen him duck into storm sewers and we figured he was a pop sickle by now. The following week, the faithful cat showed up at the bush behind the store, was talking and telling us all about his frosty survival. We eventually got him to come to his bowl which we placed in a giant cat carrier, promptly closed the carrier door and took him to our vet.

The vet gave him his shots and informed us that he was a 5-year-old fixed male with no tag or chip and we said, welcome home Casper! His name is appropriate as he carries a distinct white marking on his face that looks like a C from a distance. That and the fact that his beginnings with us, were somewhat illusive, Casper, the friendly ghost, seemed appropriate. Our vet claimed that he was a sweet boy but he would never surrender to being an "indoor" kitty. That's just funny!

A huge hit with customers, he is adoringly social and only wants to sleep on someone's lap. As the photos show.... he's adapted completely!

