



BACKYARD nature center News

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How we got started, 34 years ago... ...a reflection/re-visit

What possessed us to become bird store owners?

In an 82 Ford van packed to the hilt with tent, Coleman cookstove, folding chairs, five sleeping bags (good to 30 below), we'd head for the Grand Tetons and Yellowstone every September, taking 3 little girls out of school. John Denver's greatest hits were playing "Rocky Mountain High...". It became the theme of our trips. Nick, the official camp director, was determined to convince four females to love "roughing it" as much as he did. He did it all, set up camp, made dinner, chopped firewood and made sure we were all comfy. All we had to do was sit and take in scenery and wildlife. It didn't take long before we were on board.

Doing their homework at camp site picnic tables, the girls fed nuts and sunflower to Clarke's Nutcrackers, Gray Jays, Pinion Jays and an occasional crow or magpie. On the Snake River were Bald Eagles and small groups of Trumpeter Swans. Our binoculars came in handy, even though they were borrowed, big and clunky. Nights in a tent were full of eerie sounds from bugling elk and moose. We took these great trips over a dozen autumns while three little girls grew up right before our eyes. They were some of the best years of our lives and we had become totally connected to nature.

We've been working to re-create that connection to wildlife in our own little acre ever since. The national parks were our inspiration and growing a landscape that native birds and squirrels would want to nest and raise their young was our goal. Planting trees and shrubs that do more than just sit there and look pretty, they perform a service like providing food and shelter ultimately creating an oasis where water guzzling chemically, dependent non-native lawn is the norm.

Birdwatching is the second largest hobby in the United States and gardening is number 1.

Our local newspaper ran a story about a group of backyard bird-watching stores that had opened in the D.C. area. Birdwatching, hum... we thought, right up our alley! Curious, we loaded the old van and kids and drove east to see what the buzz was all about. Could these pioneers,

these little retail store owners be on to something? We must have visited 5 or 6 such quaint little shops, all with bird feeding and viewing stations on their property where customers could see the products in action.

Feeders filled with the finest, cleanest quality seed blends available, tested and scientifically approved by Dr. Alred Geis, biologist for the U.S. Department of Fish and Wildlife, proven to attract the most beautiful songbirds to the feeders. We were hooked! Could we make a living at this? Was it stable enough year-round? Could our bodies physically handle moving that many seed bags?

The answer seems evident now as we celebrate our 34th year of business and well beyond retirement age. People who love their yards and want to invite beautiful birds to share it with them are everywhere. Birdwatching is the second largest hobby in the United States and gardening is number 1! Know anybody like that? We count our blessings every day that we get to work at such a happy business. Nobody is ever grumpy. Helping people find that same feeling we first discovered in the great national parks of our country. Life doesn't get much better than that!



Birds, Bees &... Gorillas?

Got your attention right? Two or three times a year, we unload gigantic pallets of stone birdbaths and fountains. They are packed tightly with a natural product called excelsior, a shredded wood product. Lots and lots of excelsior! So much that we filled two giant trash dumpsters with it. Being the crazy recyclers we are, this was very disturbing to us. After investing further, it was suggested by Campania, the stone birdbath manufacturer, that the local zoo may use it for cozy bedding in the primate buildings. I'm happy to say that we were able to take two heaping truck loads to the curator of



mammals. I'm sure the gorillas and others are enjoying playing and napping in our excelsior! Good call, don't you think?

The end of orange bag Patio Mix

Having two Patio mixes with the same ingredients has been confusing for everyone. Basically one has smaller pieces. Low millet Patio mix in the yellow bag remains. We think you'll find it less confusing!



HELP NEEDED

Flexible schedule, part time. Must be able to lift 20 lb. seed bags (we use carts most of the time). Duties are fun if you like people who enjoy their backyard birds, and helping folks be successful at attracting backyard birds.

It's a happy place to work!

Change is coming! Be ready!



Chickadee on a wild sunflower

Preparation for migration means a busy time at your feeders for hummingbirds who will return to the Amazon Basin soon. Orioles are also busy plumping up for migration and chowing down at the jelly feeders. Don't worry about wasps and bees, it won't stop the hungry orioles.

Resident seed eaters like cardinals' chickadees, titmice, goldfinch, house finch and woodpeckers will be here year-round. They have made your yard their home. They do not migrate. With plenty of cover when cold winds blow and plentiful seed in nature or at your feeders, you can expect Eastern Bluebirds and Carolina Wrens to spend the entire year here. It's a busy time of year, it's almost fall!



Carolina Wren munching on seeds



Eastern Bluebirds enjoying a drink at a bath

*Great minds discuss ideas. Average minds discuss events.
Small minds discuss people.*

– Eleanor Roosevelt

**BACKYARD
nature center**

For people who feed and care for backyard birds
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STORE HOURS

Mon-Sat: 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. | Sun: Closed
Closed Labor Day, Monday, September 1

PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT:

www.BackyardNatureCenter.com



Enjoy late summer's change to fall!

Steve, Nick, Cathy, Trudy & Tammy

34 years is a **BIG DEAL**

so we are going to
share it with a

34% DISCOUNT

August 15 & 16 only,
one single item, excludes
seed, binoculars, and
applies to in-stock only.

**Offer expires
August 16, 2025**

*We are grateful for
your support!*

