



NATIONAL BIRD-FEEDING SOCIETY

Spring Cleaning and Other Tips

Healthy Feeding Station

- Give your seed feeders (especially tube feeders) a shake before you refill them, to dislodge any compacted seed. Dump out any wet clumps of old seed.
- Try every day to clean all hulls off platform feeders and out of seed trays.
- Move your feeding station when the ground beneath it becomes covered with seed hulls and droppings. Rake the old site to remove debris and to give the grass a chance to recover.
- Disinfect feeders by scrubbing with a weak bleach solution ($\frac{1}{4}$ cup of bleach to 2 gallons of warm water) every so often. Rinse and allow feeders to dry before refilling.
- Store your seed in a clean, dry, air-tight container, such as a metal or plastic garbage can. Secure a tight fitting lid with an elastic cord.
- Serve hulled sunflower seeds in a tube or hopper feeder that protects them from getting wet and soggy.
- Put out only as much seed as the birds can eat by nightfall, especially if you're visited by raccoons, opossum, bears, deer, or rodents.
- Suet is a high energy food that can be offered year 'round. During hot weather, use rendered suet or commercially prepared heat-resilient suet blocks that won't become rancid.
- Although petroleum jelly on your feeder poles may temporarily thwart squirrels or other feeder-raiding creatures, it can create problems for the birds. If a bird gets the jelly in its feathers, they are almost impossible to preen or wash out. Goopy feathers can become useless for flight or insulation, putting the birds at

risk to predators, extreme weather, and disease. Better to use a pole-mounted baffle for squirrels and other mammals. Ant guards filled with water prevent ants from reaching the feeder.

- If you see a sick or dead bird at your feeders, report the situation to your local wildlife officials who monitor wildlife health.

Especially for Spring

- Some of the most rewarding backyard bird watching happens during the mating and nesting season. Don't stop feeding when the grass greens and the weather warms in spring.
- When the sight of the first crocus lures you into the backyard, it's a good time to start spring cleaning around your feeding station.
- Start with a stiff brush to remove accumulated debris from wooden feeders. Scrub the feeders with hot soapy water, but don't add chemicals because wood is porous and can absorb them. Let the feeders dry thoroughly before refilling.
- Soak tubular feeders in a mild bleach solution and use a long-handled brush to scrub hard-to-reach areas.
- A handful of uncooked rice is a good cleansing agent for hard-to-reach places in hummingbird feeders. Fill the feeder with a one-part vinegar to four-parts water solution, add the rice and shake vigorously. Don't forget the feeding ports, and always rinse thoroughly.
- Hot soapy water applied with a lot of elbow grease is the best technique for birdbaths. Rinse several times, especially if you use a mild bleach solution to help control algae. Before you put away the bird bath

heater for the summer, scrub it with a solution of white vinegar and water to remove mineral deposits.

- If birds crash into a particular window, put a screen, crop netting or some branches in front of it to break up the reflection. Place feeders far enough away to give the birds maneuvering room.

Solutions

- Without breeding birds we won't have feeding birds. To encourage nest building in your yard, put out nesting materials such as dog hair and 4-inch lengths of natural fiber yarn.
- To keep large birds from crowding out others, use a tubular style feeder with shortened perches and fitted with a saucer to collect spillage. For ground feeders, top a tray with a wire "cage" with spaces just wide enough to allow small birds through.
- A squirrel makes getting to your bird feeder its life work. If you omit even one step in taking necessary precautions, the bushytails will find it out in minutes. Try weighted, all-steel feeders, cage-within-cage feeders, stovepipe baffles surrounding the feeder post or serious peace negotiations: put out corn or peanuts in the shell on feeders designed just for squirrels.



National Bird-Feeding Society

PO BOX 23 • NORTHBROOK • ILLINOIS • 60065 • WWW.BIRDFEEDING.ORG

Helping people create bird-friendly backyards

The Bird's-Eye reView

Published since 1990



Click to subscribe:

[HTTP://WWW.BIRDFEEDING.ORG/JOIN.HTML](http://WWW.BIRDFEEDING.ORG/JOIN.HTML)