

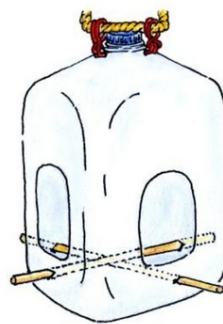
Winter Bird Feeding

As winter approaches and you have extra time for family activities, consider attracting wild birds to your best windows for observation by hanging bird feeders outside them. The food you provide helps birds that do not migrate south in the winter because their traditional sources of food may be less available (e.g., insects) or buried in frozen soil or under snow.



Wisconsin's *Environmental Education for Kids* site has wonderful resources to help families get started with both making bird feeders and observing birds, as well as caring for bird feeders and discouraging squirrels and raccoons from stealing the food you intend for the birds (<http://dnr.wi.gov/org/caer/ce/ee/nature/winterbird.htm>). They also provide directions for making bird feeders from recycled materials and for choosing different types of food based on the species of birds you hope to attract. According to the site, "Grains are very popular with many bird species. Sunflower seeds, corn, milo, and millet are common birdfeed grains. Black, oil-type sunflower seeds and white proso millet are probably the best and most popular seeds to attract goldfinches, blue jays, cardinals, black-capped chickadees, evening grosbeaks, pine siskins, purple finches, pine grosbeaks, and white-breasted nuthatches. Corn is also a very popular grain food on the ear, shelled, or cracked. Blue jays, house sparrows, starlings, and pheasants all prefer corn. Milo, another grain, is preferred by dark-eyed juncos, American goldfinches, pine siskins and tree sparrows. Cardinals like squash seeds if you've got any extras from your fall harvest." The site's authors do caution that it sometimes takes time for the wild birds to "discover" your feeder, so you might want to start on this project before the weather gets too cold and try a few different types of feeders and locations around your home to have the best chance of success!

Here are a few sample feeders to inspire your creativity in the coming weeks. Be sure to invite your children's ideas as well!



One last tip:

The Cornell Lab's Project FeederWatch web site offers lots of tips for observing the detail of backyard birds. With this newsletter, we've included their free field guide for backyard birds in the eastern United States, but you might want to check their web site for more information (<http://feederwatch.org/learn/identifying-birds/>).

Enjoy!