



Bird Feeding Basics



There are many ways to support feathered friends throughout the year by providing them food, water, shelter, and places to raise their young. Setting up a bird feeding station is one of the easiest ways to provide nutrition, especially when grain, seeds, insects, and berries become scarce in winter, but also to provide natural enjoyment for the entire family.

Begin by picking a location that has a clear view from indoors to out. A site that has year-round, easy access so you can routinely fill and clean the feeder is important, too. Cleaning feeders every two weeks, using hot, soapy water or a 10% bleach solution, then rinsing and air-drying, ensures a healthy feeding environment. Also, consider a location where the discarded seeds, their shells, and bird droppings will not make a mess or suppress the growth of other plants. We suggest placing a flat steppingstone underneath the feeder that can be swept or rinsed easily to keep the area underneath feeders free of debris. Remove feeders if outdoor cats are prowling. If windows are nearby, minimize bird collisions by applying window decals, netting, or screening.

Despite best efforts, squirrels will find and try to visit your bird feeder. The best defense is to invest in a squirrel-proof feeder. Another effective solution is using a pole-mounted, metal feeder with a metal baffle. Wooden and plastic feeders with baffles will work, too, but are also easily damaged by squirrels. Avoid placing hanging feeders or birdhouses from tree limbs unless they have baffles. And keep in mind that hanging or mounting any feeder at least 10 feet away from a tree limb, trunk, or structure should help lessen squirrels jumping onto it.

Types of feeders and foods are listed below, along with the feathered friends of Northeast Ohio they best support. More detailed information can be found at www.allaboutbirds.org.

- **Tray/Platform Feeders** – Attract the widest variety of birds, large & small. Easy to clean. Require a bottom screen and/or drainage holes. Provide little weather or wildlife protection. Refill every 1-2 days with any type of bird food.
- **Hopper/House Feeders** – Hold a lot of seed, grain, or nuts. Fairly weatherproof. Require a baffle unless they have a counter-weighted gate or perch release. Difficult to clean. Refill as needed.
- **Tube Feeders** – Keep seed clean & dry. Smaller tubes are easier to clean. Empty old seed from the bottom before refilling. Size of perch and feeding port determine type of feed and birds that visit.
- **Thistle/Nyjer Feeders** – Tubes or mesh “socks” for attracting small birds, especially goldfinches. Socks get wet, so refill frequently. Nyjer seed is not a squirrel favorite, so possibly less damage.
- **Suet Feeders** – Feature wire mesh for holding cakes or hollowed-out holes for plugs. Use during colder weather. Replace feed as needed. Provides no protection from weather or wildlife.
- **Nectar Feeders** – Use during the active birding season. Change & refill nectar often, every 1-5 days. Clean at least once a week with hot water & bottle brush. Rinse with 10% bleach solution, and air-dry.

*Small Tube Feeder with **Petitti Cardinal Mix** or **Black Oil Sunflower***

- Chickadees
- Finches (Gold, Purple, House)
- Nuthatches
- Pine Siskins
- Redpolls
- Titmice

Large Tube Feeder or adding a Tray will also attract...

- Cardinals
- Grosbeaks
- Jays
- Red-Winged Blackbird
- Starling

*Tray or Platform Feeder with **Petitti Wild Bird Mix** or Corn, Millet and/or Milo (Millet* and/or Corn** preferred)*

- Blue Jay
- Cardinal
- Cowbird
- Crow
- Doves (Mourning, Eurasian Collared)
- European Starling
- Grackle
- Juncos
- Northern Flicker*
- Raven**
- Red-Winged Blackbird
- Ring-Necked Pheasants**
- Rock Pigeon**
- Sparrows (Tree*, Chipping, Field*, Fox, House, Song, White-Crowned & White-Throated)
- Towhees
- Wild Turkey

*Hopper/House Feeder with **Petitti Songbird Mix** or Shelled Peanuts/Hearts*

- Brown-Headed Cowbird
- Cardinal
- Carolina Wren
- Chickadees (Black-Capped, Boreal, Carolina)
- Dark-Eyed Junco
- Doves (Mourning, Eurasian Collared)
- European Starling
- Grackle
- Jays (Blue, Gray)
- Northern Flicker
- Nuthatches (White-Breasted, Red-Breasted)
- Red-Winged Blackbird
- Rock Pigeon
- Sparrows (Tree, House)
- Tufted Titmouse
- Warblers (Pine, Yellow-Rumped)
- Woodpeckers (Downy, Hairy, Red-Bellied)

*Nyger/Thistle Feeder with **Petitti Finch Mix** or Nyger seed (with a Tray*)*

- Chickadees
- Finches (Gold, Purple, House)
- Juncos*
- Pine Siskins
- Redpolls
- Sparrows* (Tree, Chipping, Fox, Song)
- Titmice

Fruit (any feeder)

- Bluebird
- Crow
- Grackle
- Jays
- Mockingbirds
- Orioles
- Pine Grosbeak
- Red-Bellied Woodpecker
- Robin
- Starlings
- Thrushes
- Waxwings (Cedar, Bohemian)
- Yellow-Rumped Warbler

Suet Feeder (avoids eating from a Hanging Suet Cage)*

- Bluebird*
- Brown Creeper
- Brown Thrasher*
- Carolina Wren
- Chickadees (Black-Capped, Boreal, Carolina)
- Crow*
- European Starling
- Grackle*
- Jays (Blue, Gray)
- Northern Flicker
- Northern Mockingbird*
- Nuthatches (White-Breasted, Red-Breasted)
- Oriole*
- Pine Grosbeak*
- Raven*
- Robin*
- Ruby-Crowned Kinglet
- Tufted Titmouse
- Warblers (Pine, Yellow-Rumped)
- Woodpeckers (Downy, Hairy, Pileated, Red-Bellied)
- Yellow-Bellied Sapsucker

Hanging Peanut Feeder

- Crows
- Grackles
- Jays
- Woodpeckers

Nectar Feeder (use spring to fall)

- Cardinal
- Finches
- Hummingbird
- Oriole
- Tanagers
- Thrushes
- Woodpeckers