

Feeding Wildlife in the Winter

People feed **wildlife** in the winter for several reasons. Some people feed animals because they enjoy watching the animals and others feed them because they are afraid the animals will starve from a lack of food since the snow covers the ground and hides their food.



Feeding birds in the **winter** can be a very enjoyable thing for kids as well as adults. You can see these animals up close and watch their behaviors. You can attract birds to the backyard as well as the school yard where you can study **bird** food preferences and feeding habits. A wide variety of items can be used to feed birds in the winter. Here are just a few things that can be used to feed the birds:

Corn - Most birds will eat corn in some form; whole kernel, cracked, corn meal, on the cob, or corn bread. Be sure to use yellow corn instead of white, since yellow has more vitamins than white.

Thistle Seed - It's actually niger, thistle seed imported from Africa. It is taken selectively by purple finches, goldfinches, pine siskins, red polls and a few other small birds. While it seems expensive, it may not cost as much as some of the foods taken more generally, because you do not have to replace it as often.

Peanut Butter Pine Cone Feeder - To make a feeder, put some waxed paper or newspaper on a flat surface where it won't hurt to get messy. Pour some bird seed on the waxed paper or newspaper. Use a plastic knife to spread peanut butter all over a **pine** cone. Be sure to get the peanut butter inside the pine **cone**, too. Now roll the pine cone in bird seed. Tie a string around the top of the pine cone. Take your peanut butter cone feeder outside and hang it in a tree or from another object where the birds can find it.



Sunflower Seeds - Any birds that can crack open the shell eat sunflower seeds. Black Oil sunflower seeds (solid black shell) have high fat and protein content and a thin shell for easy cracking. Striped sunflower **seeds** have a large, hard shell and not as much seed per shell as the black oil seeds.

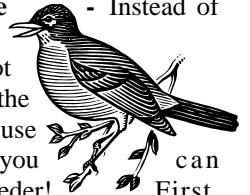
Suet - Suet can be offered pure or blended with corn meal, peanut butter and other items. In winter, this tremendous energy source replaces the insect diet some birds have in the

spring, summer and fall.

Peanuts - Peanuts are high in protein and fat content. Use natural peanuts in the shell. They can be distributed on the ground or strung together and hung between two branches. Chopped peanuts will work, too, as will peanut butter.

Fruits - Dried fruits, raisins for example, will be eaten by certain birds like American robins, thrushes, bluebirds, waxwings, catbirds and mockingbirds. Fresh fruits can also be used but care should be taken to keep them from spoiling. Sliced apples, bananas and oranges are often taken by mockingbirds, catbirds, American robins and European starlings.

Recycled Christmas Tree - Instead of throwing out that cut Christmas **tree**, why not put it to good use after the holidays. If you don't use tinsel (harmful to birds), you can set it out for a bird feeder!



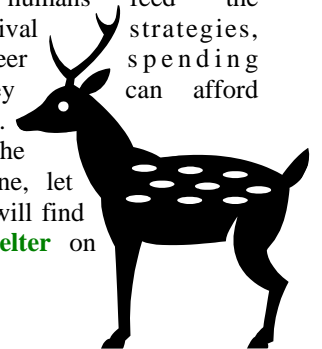
First, take off all decorations. Then make some popcorn garlands, pine cone treats, cut oranges, etc. Put it out in the back yard and you will have a lovely tree **feeder**.

These are only a few of the things that we can do everyday to provide food for some of the flying animals throughout the winter. Also, a very important thing to remember is that animals also need fresh water. We tend to forget that their water sources are frozen in the winter so it is very important to make sure that we give them some fresh water daily to help them survive. If it gets to cold during the day you may have to change the water a couple of times to keep it from being frozen, too.

We all want to help animals survive the winter weather but there is one animal that we need to leave alone. That is the deer!

Deer seek softwood cover to avoid deep snow, high winds and extreme cold. **Deer** move little in these areas, using a network of trails that disperse them and reduce competition for **natural** food. When humans feed the deer, it disrupts survival strategies, and may lead to the deer spending more energy than they can afford outside of **safe** shelter.

If you care about the deer leave them alone, let them be wild. They will find natural food and **shelter** on their own.

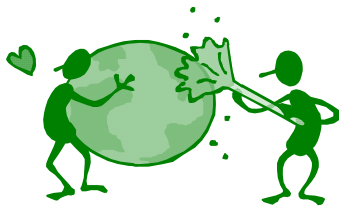


Nuts About Nature

Compliments of the
Fayette County SWCD

WORD FIND

On the front page of this newsletter there are twenty, green bold words. Search for those words in our Conservation Word Find at the right.



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Help me find my lunch

Hello, my name is scooter. I have been outside playing and I am getting very hungry. Could you please help me find my food. With all the turns I get lost easily, so help me get to the other side.

