

HOME DECOR & MORE



Suet is a high-fat meal for birds who need food in winter.

Birds Need Extra Assistance in Winter

Cold weather can be particularly taxing on many of the birds individuals discover in their backyards throughout the year. Although some species migrate to warmer climates each winter, many stay put and attempt to ride out winter in their normal habitats. Birds that tend to stay put include finches, sparrows, titmice, jays, woodpeckers, chickadees, and cardinals.

The Cornell Lab of Ornithology says that, in much of North America, winter days can be windy and cold for birds, and nights are even more challenging. In winter, birds no longer have berries and lush vegetation to consume and insects have died or gone underground. Since finding food can be especially difficult, and shelter may be scarce, many birds can benefit from a little help from their human friends.

Shelter

Wild Birds Unlimited says shelter for birds is hard to come by in winter. Trees have shed their leaves, and evergreens may not be as abundant or protective. As a result, birds frequently seek man-made structures that can provide refuge from the elements.

People can provide shelters for birds, which may include traditional birdhouses, windbreaks and snow shields. Even a brush pile can simulate the natural shelters of trees and shrubs that birds prefer. Roost

boxes are another option and one that can accommodate small flocks that will group together and share their body heat.

Use leaves and branches to provide natural camouflage and help attract birds to the shelter. Offer yarn, fabric scraps, cotton, and other insulating materials that birds can use to help make their shelters more comfortable.

Food

Birds require high-calorie and high-fat foods in the winter so they can keep up their metabolism to generate warmth. Also, since birds' feeding habits vary depending on the type of bird, it may be necessary to place feeders at varying heights to maximize access.

Feeders should be located out of the wind and in an area that offers safe refuge from predators. The National Wildlife Federation also says individuals should put out sizable feeders and/or use multiple feeders to provide ample food during snow and ice storms. Feeders should be checked regularly and kept full.

Consistency is also important because birds will grow accustomed to being supplemented with food and may depend on such supplements to survive.

Bird Watcher's Digest suggests a variety of foods for birds. Black-oil sunflower

seeds, peanuts, suet, cracked corn, millet, thistle seed, safflower, and various fruits can help many birds thrive. It's also suggested to include mealworms, which can be purchased at bait stores or pet stores. These larvae of beetles

can be presented in a shallow dish with slippery sides so the worms cannot crawl out.

Birds typically need extra support to survive harsh winters. Offering food and shelter during these bleak months can help.

Weight restrictions in place

Spring weight restrictions on all provincial roads began on Monday, February 26. Heavy commercial vehicles will not be allowed to travel on specified roads throughout the province.

The department monitors conditions throughout spring so roads can be opened or closed as needed. For a complete list of restricted and exempt roads visit, www.novascotia.ca/tran/trucking/springweight.asp.

Improve Privacy And Security At Home

Living in close proximity to one's neighbours has its benefits. But many homeowners would no doubt admit that privacy at home is a good thing.

Whether homeowners are enjoying their yard in spring or summer or simply want their in-home activities to be less obvious to neighbors, their privacy is a year-round concern. If privacy is a concern, homeowners can take certain steps to ensure their homes stay or become the sanctuaries they were designed to be.

Window treatments and frosting

Windows allow natural light to enter a home, but windows also enable neighbors and others to see into a home. If thieves are the ones looking inside, wide open windows present a security issue. Window treatments are an effective way to add privacy to a home. Closing curtains or blinds limits others' ability to see inside the house. Switch to more opaque window treatments when using interior lighting more often, as gossamer draperies may still make it possible for outsiders to understand what's going on inside the home if people and items are backlit.

For those who do not want to compromise natural light, frosted windows can satisfy a desire for privacy. Windows can be purchased with frosting in place, and home improvement retailers sell various products that can create a frosted look.

Fencing and perimeter plantings

Privet hedge, arborvitae or Italian cypress are fast-growing evergreens that provide privacy around a home for homeowners who do not want to

install traditional fencing. These trees also provide a natural habitat for various yard animals. Layering various plants of different heights and textures also can create a more natural and less imposing look.

Fencing remains a viable option to create privacy and stop noise pollution. Privacy fences come in various materials, colors and sizes, enabling homeowners to choose styles that fit their landscapes.

Pergolas and enclosed patios

Homeowners who like to entertain outdoors may want to make their outdoor living spaces more private. Pergolas allow light to filter through but obstruct direct view of patio activity, especially when combined with some gauzy draperies hanging on the sides. An enclosed patio or three-season room can be a

worthwhile addition for homeowners who like to enjoy the great outdoors without being in the elements or on display for neighbors. Structures vary from screened-in porches to greenhouses to removable gazebos. Potted plants or trailing vines can soften the structural edges and help the privacy devices blend in with the natural surroundings.

Personal tactics

Homeowners who do not want their neighbours or others knowing what they're up to in their free time can limit what they share through photos and descriptions on social media. Doing so also cuts down on neighbours' curiosity.

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