



BACKYARD BIRDING AT WILDBIRD & BACKYARD

SPRING 2010

10



Tenth Anniversary Celebration

Help celebrate our **Tenth Anniversary**
Come in and find something new for your
backyard, marked **10% OFF**

And...

We're bringing out the dice again.
With every purchase...roll the dice.
Shake a "10"

and we'll give you a **\$10 Gift Card**
for use on your next purchase.

**THANKS FOR 10 GREAT
YEARS!**

Good Luck Charm...

Popular folklore has it that if a Wren selects your yard to raise its young, you will have good fortune all year. The male builds the nest, but the female takes care of the "decorating," adding feathers, plant fibers, yarn, etc. The tiny house wren is among the most common backyard nesters in North America. They are easily recognized from their bubbling, repetitive song that will brighten any backyard. The Wren is a small, stocky, brownish bird with a lighter breast and belly. The bill is thin and slightly downcurved. The tail is short and often cocked when the bird is alarmed. Put out a bird house and may Good Luck come your way this year.

Feeder Trade-In

February is **National Bird Feeding Month**. In celebration, during the months of **February and March**, we are offering specials on bird feeders.

Bring in your broken, disgusting, decayed and dilapidated bird feeders. We'll give you 10% off a new feeder AND we'll fill it for you (up to 10 pounds of seed, based on size of new feeder). If there is still life in your trade-in feeder, we'll offer it to one of the nature centers in the area. Winter can be tough on bird feeders. Treat yourself (and your birds) to a new one!



How Birds Build Their Dream Houses



Even before spring gets into full swing, birds are on the hunt for the perfect nesting spot. Competition can be fierce, especially in areas where natural habitat has decreased. Each birds species tends toward a favorite location for nests. For example, mockingbirds and thrashers nest mostly in shrubs, while tanagers nest mostly on tree branches. Robins, cardinals and blue jays create open nests as high as 20 feet off the ground; you won't find them using a birdhouse.

But when you add birdhouses on your property, you provide additional nesting sites for more than 80 species of North American birds that are known as cavity nesters. These can be placed on the side of a tree, or ideally on a pole with a baffle where it's harder for predators to make a surprise attack. Bluebirds, chickadees, wrens, nuthatches and woodpeckers are just a few that will gladly utilize housing you provide for them.

Many of the nest-building birds, including robins, barn swallows and phoebes, will use a man-made nest platform. This is a simple, sturdy shelf constructed from weather-hardy wood that can be fastened in a protected spot on the side of a building or tree, preferably in view of your favorite bird-watching window.

When it comes to nest construction materials, almost anything goes, from dried grass to bits of fur. You can augment the supply of nesting materials with very short pieces of yarn or a ball of fuzz from your dog grooming brush. Make the materials accessible in containers such as a clean wire suet holder, a mess bags from citrus fruit or a bicycle basket. We have a number of different styled ready-made nesting balls in the store for your convenience.

Remember, if there are no breeding birds, there will be no feeding birds. Encourage your backyard feathered friends in their nest-building efforts to help ensure offspring.

Spring is a critical period for making food available. Natural foods are scarce in many breeding areas; in the North, nothing much is growing and insects still may be in hibernation, but female birds need to be well fed so they are in good condition when they lay their eggs.

Even as natural resources become available, you can capitalize on the birds' need for protein by putting out a handful of mealworms each day. Orange halves, sliced apples and raisins will add variety to the spring and summer menu and may help attract orioles, warblers and woodpeckers to your yard. Fruits and mealworms can be offered in hanging/mounted cups and small bowls. Cardinals, chickadees, titmice and finches will continue to visit your sunflower and mixed seed feeders, just not as often as nesting season advances.

Being able to watch the birds through their nesting cycle is a wonderful experience. Do what you can to accomodate the birds in your yard.

An added enjoyment during nesting time is to be able to watch the action in a nest box in your yard. We have *Bird Cams* that can be easily installed into a bird house that will go unnoticed by its inhabitants. With it's "low light" feature you'll be able to watch all the nesting action on your television. The cam comes with a 100' of cord which plugs right into the input jacks on your TV. How amazing it will be to see the progression from egg to fledgling from the comfort of your favorite chair.

Featured Product: Easy Clean Tube Feeders



Cleaning a tube feeder has never been easier!! Gone are the days of removing the perches and/or trying to get your brush in and around the inside of the tube. Two of our favorite manufacturers have introduced "Quick-Clean" or "Clever Clean" feeders that are amazing. Each, with their own technology, has either a twist-off bottom or release buttons at the bottom to completely remove the base of the feeder. The perches on these feeders are solely on the outside, leaving a completely open tube for ease of cleaning. Another manufacturer has done away with perches altogether on their new design for nyjer/thistle seed. Because the birds enjoy clinging, these tube style feeders are simply a stainless steel or patented screen mesh that allows ample room for clinging and has a completely open inside seed area for easy cleaning. Any of these feeders would be a great choice when adding to your feeding station or replacing an existing feeder. Why not take advantage of our **Feeder Trade-In** promotion and take one of these great feeders home with you....filled with new seed!

American Redstart

The American Redstart is a Neotropical migrant resident in Central America, north-western South American and the West Indies. It feeds flycatcher-like, sallying forth to catch insects, or gleaning them from vegetation. In Spring they cross the Gulf of Mexico on their migration to northern and eastern North America, usually arriving on their breeding grounds in early to mid April. After raising a single brood, they begin their southward journey in August and September. They move to the Gulf Coast before crossing the Gulf of Mexico or following the Carribean Cost of Mexico or the West Indies island chain to their wintering grounds. They migrate at night.

The Redstart is one of the most common warblers to breed in the United States. About 5" in length, the male has a habit of "posing", spreading his wings and tail as if showing off its beautiful coloring, and is typically very active. The male is black with orange patches on each wing, on the side of its breast, and at the base of its tail on either side. His throat is black, the breast and belly are white. The female is gray where the male is black, and yellow where the male is orange. She has a white eye-ring. Juveniles and first-year males look like females. The Redstart has a relatively short, wide bill.

They primarily eat small insects and other invertebrates. In late summer they may supplement this diet with berries and seeds.

Monogamous pairs are the norm but some males may have 2 or 3 mates at one time. The male shows the female potential nest sites during courtship, the female make the final nest selection. The nest is nestled against a trunk or attached to vertical stems anywhere from 4 to 70 feet off the ground. The female builds the nest although sometimes they will use old nests of other birds. If they build a nest, it is cup shaped, made of bark, grass, rootlets and other plant fibers. The whole nest is held together by spider webbing. Three to 5 creamy white eggs with brown splotches are incubated by the female. Both members of the pair feed the young. About 9 days after hatching the young leave the nest and the parents divide the brood, each taking half, continuing to feed them for at least a few more days.

This species is commonly seen especially during its migration periods. Breeding Bird Census data shows that populations have been declining in the recent years.



Getting Wild Birds to Eat Out of Your Hand

Some of the more inquisitive, less timid, birds species are easiest to train, including the following: bluebirds, chickadees, goldfinches, jays, nutchatches and redpolls.

First you must establish a routine. Begin by filling your feeders at the same time every day, preferably in the early morning when birds actively seek food. Include a few chopped walnuts or pecans (unsalted), which the birds relish, where the birds can get at them immediately. Certain birds will catch on and show up soon after you visit the feeder. Spend some time near the feeder, watching them calmly, maybe at times talking gently (to get the birds used to you).

Now the training begins. One day, don't fill the feeder but stand or sit at the expected time near the feeder. Place feed in a cup formed by your upturned palm and finger pointing up for a perch. Birds see well from a distance and will easily notice that you are holding feed. Don't get discouraged if they don't come that day. It's fine to talk gently, but avoid sudden movements. Be patient. One of the braver birds will eventually take a piece from your hand. It may even hop onto your fingers and will, hopefully, be rewarded with a nice treat. Soon others also will come. When you are done, refill the feeder.



Mike's Message



A decade. WOW! When you say it that way, it really seems like a long time. And yet, the past ten years of owning this store have been the highlight of my business life. I have enjoyed every minute - with very few exceptions.

I recently looked at a video we recorded when we bought this store in March 2000. Oh, what a difference! We were half the showroom space and so crowded you could hardly turn around. I remember Judy and I doing inventory outside in the rain and snow because we had no storeroom. The first addition to the original design was for Judy and me. A warehouse went up, not heated, but dry. And do you remember my seed truck? It was used for seed storage and everytime we needed to restock the store with seed, out to the truck we went, with a ladder in hand, to climb up and retrieve more seed. I remember one day when the lock was frozen and I couldn't get the customer's seed out. That was tragic and embarrassing.

The second addition to the store was for you, my customer. Doubling the size of the showroom has allowed me to present you a much more comprehensive product line, displayed better with room to spare. No more claustrophobia.

I think my third addition will also truly be for you--our website. With our new website you will be able to pick up the newsletter on line and in color! All of the information and features of the old newsletter will be the same on line, only better. We will be able to present idea's, new products and updates faster than if you had to come in the store to hear about them.

Pat and I encourage all of you to register your email address on the Home Page or Newsletter Page so that in the future we will be able to email you simple reminders (like when the orioles are expected), the newsletters or announcements of special happenings or events in the store. *Feather Your Nest* members will need to sign up for the newsletter, nobody is automatically subscribed. We promise not to misuse your email address and of course, the information you give us will never be sold or given away to anyone.

If you don't have access to a computer, copies of the current newsletter will be available at the counter for you. You just have to ask for one.

Again, thank you for a simply wonderful decade. My staff and I are looking forward to being here and serving you well into this next decade. Without you, this would never have happened.

Happy Birding, Mike



The Orioles are Coming....

The first orioles usually can be spotted by late April, early May

Be sure to have your oranges out, along with nectar and jelly. Their trip has been long. Give them

reason to stop in your yard to eat. Maybe they'll nest and stay!

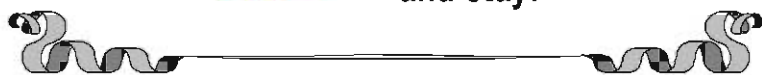
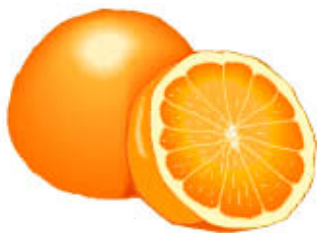


PHOTO CONTEST



Bring in your favorite bird or nature photo during the month of March.

First Place \$30 Gift Card
Second Place \$15 Gift Card.



Visit us on our NEW WEBSITE. Search for new Products, Newsletters, Links to Birding Resources, On-line shopping
WWW. WILDBIRDBACKYARD.COM