



Buzz, Body & Bites

A newsletter for actively aging adults
Virginia Cooperative Extension Family & Consumer Sciences
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The Stewardship of Bird Feeding

According to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, stewardship is “the conducting, supervising, or managing of something, especially the careful and responsible management of something entrusted to one’s care.” If you choose to feed the backyard birds, you owe it to them to do it with good stewardship!

Bird seed can be found nearly everywhere – from gas stations to supermarkets, and everywhere in between. When offering seed to your birds, ensure the freshness of the products. Seed should be clean and edible by the species that are present in your yard. Avoid seed blends that contain milo, sorghum, cracked corn and wheat. These are considered fillers and the birds simply do not prefer them. Mother Nature does not use preservatives, and therefore, should not be in the food you feed to the wild birds. Some fine examples of quality bird seed include Black Oil Sunflower Seed, Peanuts, Sunflower Chips, Tree Nuts, Nyjer and White Millet. Dried fruit such as raisins and cranberries are welcomed as well. It is also beneficial to include plants in your garden that attract birds such as Sunflowers, Coneflowers, Honeysuckle, American Wisteria and Fruit Trees. A mixture of annuals and perennials adds color and interest to your yard and is a magnet for all types of pollinators including birds, bees and butterflies. Maintain your feeders by keeping them clean. When it is time to refill, wash with hot soapy water then soak in 1-part bleach to 10 parts water for 15 minutes, rinse well and air dry. It is a good idea to keep a spare feeder handy to fill and put up as you take one down. This will give you time to clean the empty feeder.

Water plays a huge role in supporting backyard birds. Birds need water to drink and to keep their feathers clean and in top shape for flying. Bird bath water should be changed daily. Keep a sturdy scrub brush handy for cleaning the bath. Simply wet the brush and drag it in some nearby dirt. Use the dirt as an abrasive to clean any algae or bird droppings. Then rinse with lots of fresh water and refill. Mosquitoes lay their eggs in standing water so keeping the water clean is important! They cannot lay eggs in moving water. You can prevent egg laying by adding a Water Wiggler or fountain to your water source.

It is such a joy to see the different species that come to backyard bird feeders. Lots of bird activity means a healthy yard and that you are feeding the best seed available. Feeding year-round allows you to see migratory species that make their way thru your yard on their way to their breeding or winter grounds. Also, your resident birds will bring their babies to the feeding stations and teach them how to eat from the feeders. There is always something magical going on if you take the time to look.

Contributed by Lisa Benoit, Owner, Wren & Sparrow, Fredericksburg, VA

Tips for Feeding Birds in the Winter

Birds need high-fat, high-protein foods to keep warm.

- Black Oil Sunflower seeds are a good choice
- Peanuts and Suet are also appreciated in cold weather
- Consider a heated bird bath - birds need access to unfrozen water
- Be reliable - keep those feeders full

Hummingbird Cake

This version of hummingbird cake has been reduced in fat by substituting applesauce for some of the oil and butter, and using low-fat cream cheese.

Source: southernliving.com

Ingredients (Makes 20 servings):

- Vegetable cooking spray
- 3 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 3/4 cups sugar
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 2 large eggs
- 1/2 cup unsweetened applesauce
- 3 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 1 3/4 cups mashed banana (5 to 6 bananas)
- 1 1/2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 1 (8-ounce) can crushed pineapple, undrained
- Cream Cheese Frosting - mix 8 oz low fat cream cheese with 1 cup powdered sugar and 1 teaspoon vanilla

Instructions:

1. Coat three 9-inch cakepans with cooking spray. Sprinkle with flour and shake to coat.
2. Combine 3 cups flour and next 4 ingredients in a large bowl. Stir together eggs, applesauce, and oil; add to flour mixture, stirring just until dry ingredients are moistened. (Do not beat.) Stir in mashed banana, vanilla extract, and pineapple. Pour batter evenly into prepared pans.
3. Bake at 350° for 25 minutes or until a wooden pick inserted in the center comes out clean. Cool layers in pans on wire racks 10 minutes. Remove layers from pans; cool completely on wire racks.
4. Spread cream cheese frosting between layers, on top, and sides of the cake.

Achieving the Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans

Over our lifespan, it is important to stay active. This is particularly true as we age to reduce injury, prevent many health problems, and enable us to continue activities of daily living. This section of the newsletter will offer a new series of recommendations to help you stay active and achieve the Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans.

According to the Guidelines, adults 65 years and older need:

- At least 150 minutes a week (for example, 30 minutes a day, 5 days a week) of moderate intensity activity such as brisk walking. Or they need 75 minutes a week of vigorous-intensity activity such as hiking, jogging, or running.
- At least 2 days a week of activities that strengthen muscles.
- About 3 days a week of activities to improve balance such as standing on one foot.

Use the weekly activity tracker included with this newsletter to track your exercise and see how close you are to meeting the Guidelines.

Subsequent newsletters will provide ideas on small steps you can take to meet them. for a crunch. Then, extend the arm and leg to parallel the floor, repeat.

Resources

National Audubon Society. www.audubon.org

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Physical Activity. www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/basics/older_adults/index.htm

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