

TIPS ON SUMMER BIRD FEEDING

adapted from FeederWatch News 4:1

The Project FeederWatch survey revealed that 59% of respondents feed birds year around. Here are some tips to help your success.

Fewer birds will visit, so you won't need as many feeders. Take them down one at a time over a few weeks until you have the right number of feeders: enough so that you don't have to refill every day, so few that food gets eaten before it spoils.

Buy seed in smaller quantities so it doesn't get moldy while in storage. Don't offer cracked corn and baked goods which spoil easily; moldy bread can be downright dangerous for birds. If you do feed suet, check it daily for freshness. If very warm, refrigerate (in a sealed container to avoid contamination of other refrigerated food) at night.

Spilled seed sprouts. Mulch under the feeding area with bark chips to keep your yard looking neat.

Hang a hummingbird feeder if you haven't already.

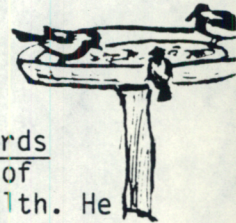
Fruit attracts a variety of birds. Offer oranges, apples, or bananas; cut them in half and impale the fruit on tree branches.

In the summer, clean your feeders every few weeks. Use warm water, a mild detergent, and a stiff scrub brush.

Install a bird bath if you don't have water nearby your feeders.

HUMMINGBIRD FEEDING

by Dan McAskill



Thomas P. McElroy Jr. in his book The New Handbook of Attracting Birds (Nick Lyon Books, W.W. Norton and Co. 1960) notes that a straight diet of sugar water (50%) in hummingbird feeders can be detrimental to their health. He suggests that honey be used rather than sugar as it has small quantities of proteins and other substances required by their young. Bruce Di Labio and Laurie Le Vasseur in "Stocking Up For Summer" (Nature Canada, Spring 1991) on the other hand indicate that honey solutions ferment easily and can cause a fatal fungus to grow on the bird's tongue. They suggest that you utilize a 1 part sugar to 4 parts water solution brought to a boil for 1 to 2 minutes and then allowed to cool. If you do decide to use honey, be sure that the honey has not fermented and then pasteurize it with boiling water to ensure it does not ferment soon after it is placed in the feeder. Food colouring is not required in the mixture.

Whichever food you use, ensure that you inspect the feeder frequently, especially in warm weather, for signs of mould. Moulds will normally appear as tiny black specks in the solution or around the inside of the reservoir or as cloudiness in the solution. If you do find mould, ensure that you clean the feeder thoroughly with warm water and vinegar. Then rinse thoroughly and place a fresh food solution in the feeder.

Concern has been expressed by some individuals that keeping hummingbird feeders up too late may cause the hummingbirds to remain too late in the year. The amount of daylight is the cause of migration so it is unlikely that this fear is warranted. You should however make sure that your feeders are brought inside when frost warnings are issued as freezing sometimes breaks the feeders.

SOCIETY INCORPORATES

The Natural History Society of Prince Edward Island became an incorporated non-profit company on June 3, 1991. This action will limit the liability of the Executive Council and members in the event of a lawsuit. Our thanks to Mr. Tom Matheson who assisted the NHS with this change in legal status.