



## Summer Bird Feeding Tips by Don & Lillian Stokes

Bird feeding in summer is great fun. It helps the birds and fills your summer outdoor living with sound and color. You will see a whole new variety of birds because many species, such as Rose-Breasted Grosbeaks, Gray Catbirds and Indigo Buntings, are just summer residents in many parts of the country.

Breeding birds will appreciate the extra source of food. When females are incubating and the weather is bad, they may not be able to find food very fast when they take a break from incubating. They are off the nest longer, leaving the eggs vulnerable to predation and cooling. If they can come to a bird feeder, they can take a shorter break and get the nourishment they need.

Parental birds also are helped by bird feeders. They will come to bird feeders and use the food as a supplement to feed hungry nestlings and fledglings. Parent birds themselves must work hard to raise young, so they appreciate a bird feeder for some of their own food.

There is nothing more fun than seeing parent birds bring their fledged babies to your feeder. The babies may sit nearby while the adults carry food to them from the feeder. Soon the young learn to use the feeder on their own. Because the adults stop feeding fledglings after several weeks, a newly independent young will benefit from using a feeder while it learns to find food and survive on its own.

American Goldfinches have turned into their brilliant yellow breeding plumage and, being one of the latest breeding birds, have just begun nesting. Use finch feeders to attract finches. Fill with thistle (Nyjer) seed or Nyjer Plus, which is a mixture of Nyjer and fine, hulled sunflower chips. When baby goldfinches fledge in August, they will flock to your feeders in numbers.

Enhance your bird habitat in summer with a variety of flowers and fruiting trees and shrubs to complete your summer bird feeding success.

In summer, add a variety of bird feeders and use high-quality bird foods, because breeding birds have greater nutritional needs. Hopper and screen feeders accommodate a wide variety of birds, both large and small. Fill them with hulled sunflower or black oil sunflower, which are high-quality nutritional seeds filled with protein and oils.





Dried mealworms are a natural for summer bird feeding. This is a high-protein food source that is perfect for breeding birds and their babies. Parental birds feed nestlings insects and caterpillars because these growing babies need a lot of protein.

Water is essential for summer birds in hot weather. They need it for drinking, bathing and cooling off. Watching birds bathe is very entertaining, so place bird baths where you can view them. Your bird bath can be simple or more elaborate with a fountain which will lure many birds with the sound of moving water. What the birds care about is clean water. The easiest way to do this with a bird bath is to empty and refill on

a daily basis. If necessary, scrub with a brush and rinse.

Attract colorful summer orioles and hummingbirds with hummingbird and oriole feeders filled with nectar.



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