



BIRD'S-EYE VIEW

Volume 20 Issue 5 | September/October 2013

**ALL SEASONS
WILD BIRD
STORE**

THE MYSTERY OF

Molting

+ **Our Customer Community**
Early Autumn Checklist



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(Clover Center)
Bloomington, MN 55420
952.884.4103

EAGAN
2143 Cliff Rd.
(Cedar Cliff Shopping Center)
Eagan, MN 55122
651.459.0084

MINNETONKA
4759 County Rd. 101
(Westwind Plaza)
Minnetonka, MN 55345
952.935.5892

WHITE BEAR LAKE
2703 East Cty. Hwy. E.
(Cty. Rd. E. and Hwy. 120)
White Bear Lake, MN 55110
651.653.8705

WAYZATA & WILD BIRD DELIVERS
15710 Wayzata Blvd.
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Wayzata, MN 55391
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WILDBIRDSTORE.COM

Bird's-Eye View is published to share the joy of backyard birds with All Seasons Wild Bird Store's customers and friends.

NOTES FROM OUR STAFF

Our Customer Community

By Bloomington Asst. Manager TRISH WAGLE

At All Seasons Wild Bird Stores, we share your love of birds. You can feel this common connection with our staff from the moment you walk into any of our five stores. Like you, we enjoy feeding, watching, and learning about birds. We share that special thrill when you see the first oriole of the season, and the awe that strikes you when you see a Pileated Woodpecker at your suet. We wait each winter for spring migrants to breathe life back into our frozen landscape.

We strive to be *more* than just a store to our customers. We are a *community*.

One of the most important benefits of our community is mutual support. All of you share your bird sightings, pictures and local insights with us. And we strive to provide the appropriate tools and resources to each and every one of you, whether you're a beginning backyard birder or have been feeding birds for years. Here's a look at some of the resources available to you as a member of our thriving customer community.

Free Literature

You'll find fliers on a wide variety of subjects—from Jim Gilbert's *Phenology*, to squirrel-proofing strategies, to tips for attracting hummingbirds

and more—in our stores and on our website.

We also produce the *Bird's-Eye View* newsletter 6 times yearly, with a goal of providing articles and featuring products that will make your backyard birding experience successful and more fulfilling with each passing season.

Facebook

If you haven't stopped by our Facebook page yet, check us out! We have a large community of followers who post pictures, questions and comments. Our staff regularly responds to your posts and has even helped identify birds from other areas of the country!



▲ [Our Facebook page](#)

(Our Customer Community, continued on page 4...)

Our Bloomington Remodel!

They say pictures are worth a thousand words, so we'll keep this brief. We recently completed a quick remodel at our Bloomington location, resulting in a more inviting and airy space. We hope you like it!



Al and Dave Netten



Worry-Free Guarantee!

We want our customers to have a worry-free experience with every purchase. If you're not completely satisfied with *any item* purchased from our store, simply return it to us for an exchange or refund.

No worries . . . ever.



Join the conversation online!

Visit our Facebook page to post photos, ask questions and be the first to know about upcoming sales and events.

SEP.
&
OCT.

Early Autumn

by Minnetonka Manager CAROL CHENAULT

- Keep your hummingbird feeders up until you don't see any hummers for a week, or until the nectar freezes.** Migrating hummingbirds will continue to visit your feeders into October.
- Keep Nyjer™ feeders full for goldfinches.** They're still here—just disguised in a dull olive green plumage after their fall molt.
- Make updates to your pole system now,** before the ground freezes. We'll help you choose what's best for your yard!
- Keep watch for the robins and Cedar Waxwings** feeding on berry shrubs, like mountain ash, viburnums and dogwoods. Put out a birdbath to draw them closer for better viewing.
- Provide a heated birdbath this winter.** Birds that don't ordinarily go to bird feeders, like over-wintering robins, will always enjoy a fresh water source.
- Clean last year's birdbath heater** with white vinegar to remove any lime scale.
- Attract Red-breasted Nuthatches** with peanut pick-outs and suet.
- Scatter Finches' Choice or Spectrum Mix on the ground or in a ground feeder** for winter-visiting Dark-eyed Juncos. White-throated Sparrows, White-crowned Sparrows and Mourning Doves will also appreciate this treat.
- Welcome migrating birds with a seed mix containing dried fruit, like Berry Nutty.** Add some dried mealworms to any seed mix for an extra energy boost.
- Clean out or take down your birdhouses.** If you leave the houses up over the winter, open the side/bottom of the bird house to prevent mice from winter nesting. Close up your Purple Martin houses.
- Leave seed heads on your perennials.** Birds will eat from seed heads all winter. Particularly valuable are purple coneflowers, black-eyed Susans, sunflowers and hollyhocks.
- Give your feeders a good cleaning before winter.** Use a 1:10 solution of bleach to hot water or a mild solution of unscented dish detergent. Feeders should be cleaned inside and out, including all feeding ports, perches, lids and platforms. Rinse the feeders with clear water for at least 10 seconds and make sure they're completely dry before refilling. Don't forget that we offer a bird feeder cleaning service if you'd rather have us do it!
- Prevent an Indian Meal Moth infestation.** These pests are active in September! Store your seed in sealed tins on the deck, in the garage or in the shed. For easy access, store smaller quantities in the freezer. Too late? Install a moth trap.
- Watch for migrating warblers, vireos, grosbeaks and sparrows on their way south.** Track monarch and hummingbird migration at JourneyNorth.org. Plan a trip to Hawk Ridge in Duluth to view raptor migrations.



Remember last winter? Many folks found it difficult to get to their feeders due to the deep snow. Plus, the unusual height of the packed snow allowed squirrels to jump over baffles. A deck-mounted rail bracket makes feeders easy to reach and fill. Add a pole extension piece to your Erva pole system to raise the height of your feeders and your baffle. Adding an extension will also keep the feeders out of the reach of deer.



Stop in the store and we'll help you winterize your feeding stations!

The Mystery of Molting

by Wayzata Manager MELISSA BLOCK



A Ruby-throated Hummingbird, mid-molt ▲

Birds spend a great deal of time caring for their feathers because their lives really do depend on them. A bird's feathers keep them warm and dry, camouflage them from predators, attract mates during breeding season and, most importantly, give them flight.

Replacing Feathers

Molting is the process of replacing worn and damaged feathers. Molting is necessary because no matter how well birds care for their feathers, they can't prevent them from wearing out. Like our fingernails or hair, birds' formed feathers are largely dead—so they can only be replaced, not repaired. A feather that has been completely lost is replaced immediately.

Timing Matters

A mix of hormonal and seasonal changes triggers molting. It takes a lot of energy to build new feathers, so the timing of molting coincides with periods of less strenuous demands, such as after nesting and before migration.

Molting occurs once or twice a year, usually in the spring or fall. Some birds have one complete molt and one partial molt, such as American Goldfinches. Their complete molt occurs in the fall when the male's bright yellow feathers are replaced with darker, less conspicuous feathers. In the spring, with a partial molt, the males transform back into their bright yellow plumage, while retaining the wing

and tail feathers from the previous fall.

Birds that spend the winter in colder climates, like American Goldfinches, Black-capped Chickadees and Northern Cardinals, grow additional feathers during their fall molt to help insulate them from the cold air.

Feathers Wear Unevenly

Feathers of the wing tips are subjected to the most wear. You can observe this in the plumage of European Starlings. Following their fall molt, new feathers with white tips grow in, giving starlings a spotted



▲ At left, a European Starling's fresh, post-molt feathers have white wing tips that create a spotted appearance. At right, a pre-molt European Starling shows that once wing tips have worn away, the bird appears to be black.

appearance. The ends of these feathers gradually wear off over the year, so by summer starlings appear completely black.

While birds typically grow and replace their feathers gradually—and usually symmetrically—sometimes a bird loses a big cluster of feathers on its head at once. This produces a very strange-looking



▲ A balding cardinal, taken by Jim Weisman, staff member at the Wayzata All Seasons Wild Bird Store.

bald bird! Remember this when you see a cardinal or Blue Jay with bald black patches on their heads at your feeder or birdbath. You'll know that they are just growing new feathers, not suffering from premature baldness! ■

FEATHER FACTS

- * Heavily Pigmented feathers are more resistant to wear and tear than light-colored feathers. That's why many woodpeckers, who use their tail feathers extensively for bracing, have black tail feathers.
- * Most songbirds have between 1,500 and 3,000 feathers.
- * Feathers on a Blue Jay or Indigo Bunting appear blue to our eyes because they have tiny particles that bounce blue light at the on-looker while screening out other wavelengths of light. When backlit, the feathers appear to be brown.

Our Customer Community

(... Continued from page 1)

Website

We provide information, the ability to browse our products and other resources on our website. Plus, you can sign up for our emails, which offer seasonal tips, observations, and exclusive coupons and specials.

Phone Support

Call any of our stores with your questions—we love to help! Daily, we field calls concerning a wide variety of topics—from bird identification, to woodpecker problems,

to how to assist a lost baby bird.

I hand out my card and a *Bird's-Eye View* newsletter with every feeder I sell, along with instructions to call me with any questions or problems. I'll never forget a customer who called the Bloomington store once to ask about a ring of red feathers she found in the snow. I explained to her that it was likely a cardinal who had fallen prey to a hungry hawk. The hawk has to eat too, I acknowledged, but seeing nature at its fiercest is never easy; we all love the birds. The experience of talking with and consoling that customer stays with me even today.

Customers Helping Customers

Our community goes beyond the interaction between staff and customers. Often, customers share their experiences with one another through spontaneous endorsements in our stores, such as "I have that feeder and it works great!" or "Try the Golden Safflower; my finches love it." In my eyes, that speaks volumes about the camaraderie found here.

Thank you for what you bring to our community. Those who believe that feeding the birds is a solo endeavor have never been to one of our stores! ■

FEATURED PRODUCT

WindowAlert™ Cling Decals

Protect Your Birds From Deadly Window Strikes

Millions of wild birds are killed each year by flying into windows. You can protect your backyard birds from window strikes with WindowAlert. WindowAlert is a static-cling decal containing a component that brilliantly reflects ultraviolet light, a wavelength

of sunlight that's visible to birds, but not to humans. Select from a variety of shapes such as leaves, butterflies, hummingbirds and snowflakes. Place WindowAlert decals on the outside of the window and replace the decals every 6–9 months for best results.



▲ WindowAlert™ decals

GREAT IDEAS

Suet Pest Prevention

Discourage Unwanted Pests

How can you keep squirrels out of your suet? Let me count the ways! First of all, try a suet cake with hot pepper like **Pacific Bird™ and Supply Co. insect and hot pepper cake**.



▲ Pacific Bird Insect and Hot Pepper suet.

This cake will offer any marauding mammals a spicy hot surprise, while birds, who don't have taste buds like mammals, enjoy eating suet studded with dried mealworms.

Another option is to **place a baffle** above your suet feeder or on the pole from which it hangs. If squirrels can't get to the suet, they can't eat it.

In the same spirit, try a **caged suet feeder**, which will keep chubby squirrels out,

while allowing smaller birds access.

Finally, try offering **plain suet**, with no peanut flavor. Plain rendered beef fat is less attractive to

squirrels than cakes and plugs containing peanut or sunflower seed.

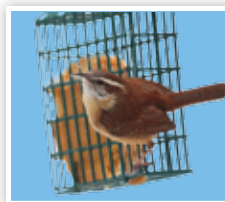
Suet is a popular year-round option for feeding birds. Don't let squirrels ruin the fun!

Custom Touches

Ideas to Enhance 1" Pole Stations

The **Quick Connect™ wire holder with a glass dish** is great for water, mealworms, grape jelly or seed. The dish comes in blue, orange or clear glass and easily attaches to a 1"-diameter pole.

Add a quick-mounting, **24" branch-shaped arm** to a 1"-diameter pole to provide



▲ A caged suet feeder.

additional perching places or a hanging spot for another feeder. A **bird swing** on the end leaf of this arm invites your feathered friends to stop and swing a spell.

Finally, enhance your feeding station with a **red cardinal silhouette** finial that inserts into the top of the pole. ■



▲ Above: a squirrel baffle and 24" branch-shaped arm with a bird swing on our 1"-diameter pole. Upper right: a red cardinal finial for the top of pole stations.

Have an idea for a future issue of *Birds-Eye View*? Photos and articles may be submitted by email to info@wildbirdstore.net.
Sign up for our weekly e-newsletter at WildBirdStore.com to receive information about backyard birding, store events and exclusive discounts.