



BIRD'S-EYE VIEW

Volume 21 Issue 4 | July/August 2014

**ALL SEASONS
WILD BIRD
STORE**

American Goldfinches:

Golden Delights

+ Summer Suet

Late Summer Seasonal Checklist



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Bloomington, MN 55420
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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.
(394 Frontage Rd.)
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.

SEASONAL FEEDING TIPS

Easy Breezy Summer Suet

By Bloomington Assistant Manager TRISH WAGLE

Suet isn't just for winter anymore. In the spring and summer, it's a great way to provide brooding birds and their nestlings with a generous amount of calories in an easy-to-eat form. Suet with insects or fruit appeals to a wide range of birds and may provide a source of insects when they are scarce.

The 5-Minute Meal for Busy Parents

Suet in your summer feeder will attract bluebirds, woodpeckers, chickadees, wrens, cardinals and warblers. At this time adults need more calories to forage for food for their young and defend the nest from intruders. It's also beneficial for young birds because it provides easy energy, leading to quick growth. The fat in suet provides twice the caloric energy of protein. This fat energy helps birds sustain activity levels between meals.

Not Your Granddad's Formula

Originally, suet came from the fat surrounding the organs of butchered animals. It was traditionally hung out in the winter to help the birds through cold weather. This practice was fine as long as the cold preserved the fat. As the temperature warms, suet can spoil or become rancid and harbor bacterial and fungal growth that may be harmful to

birds. In addition, melting suet can coat feathers and interfere with their natural waterproofing and insulating functions. Furthermore, the smell of melting suet may attract predators and cause damage to hard surfaces and plants. Finally, it makes a terrible, wasteful mess.

Fortunately, today's suet cakes and plugs are rendered, or melted repeatedly, to remove impurities and raise the melting point. Today's processed suet products typically won't melt until temperatures are consistently above 90°F. No-melt formula suet is mixed with grain, cornmeal or seeds to bind the cake together. These may also be called "suet dough." (continued on page 4)



▲ *Attractor™ brand all-season suet plugs*

You ♥ Birds. We ♥ You.

Thank You for Rounding Up!

We are so grateful for the generosity of our customers. In May, we partnered with Minnesota Audubon for our **Round Up for Birds** campaign to support Project BirdSafe.

RoundUP
for birds

We are thrilled to report that you rounded up your purchases and made \$1,855 in donations. As promised, we are matching every dollar and have presented a check for \$3,710 to Audubon Minnesota's Project BirdSafe.

Project BirdSafe is a far-reaching program that is dedicated to reducing bird window collisions in Minnesota and beyond. Window collisions are one of the deadliest threats to our migrating songbirds and they're very preventable. Up to one billion songbirds perish every year in window collisions. Know that your contributions are making a difference and saving precious lives. Thank you!

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.



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

SEASONAL CHECKLIST

JULY
&
AUGUST

Late Summer

By Minnetonka Manager CAROL CHENAULT

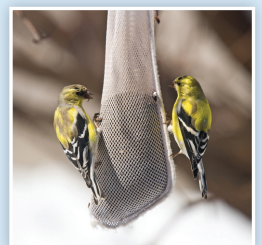
- ☐ Hire us, through our **Feed and Fill service**, to take care of your birds while you are on vacation. Call our Wayzata store at 952-473-4283 for more details.
- ☐ Occasionally clean baths with 9 parts water to 1 part bleach, then rinse well.
- ☐ Attract more goldfinches with The **Best Nest Builder** nesting material. Goldfinches are the latest nesting songbird in our region, nesting in July and fledging young in August.
- ☐ Add **Bird Bath Protector** to your just-cleaned birdbath to provide healthy drinking water.
- ☐ Keep your feeders clean and full to attract songbirds. Goldfinches feed their young a slurry of seed, including **Nyjer™**.
- ☐ **Fill nectar feeders. ► Hummingbirds are active at nectar feeders and flowers into October, with the females and juveniles staying the latest in the fall.**
- ☐ Provide mealworms, suet pellets and suet to help adult birds feed their young.
- ☐ Protect nectar feeders from bees, wasps and bald-faced hornets by applying pure mint extract on nectar ports.
- ☐ If it's in the yard, let it be: Remember, most fledglings do not need human assistance. Adult birds are nearby and will return to feed the young after you leave the area.
- ☐ Provide mealworms, nectar, grape jelly, oranges and/or dark grapes for the Orioles; they'll visit backyard feeders through the first week of September.
- ☐ Add a **Water Wiggler™** or **Easy Mister™** to your birdbaths. Moving water attracts more birds and prevents mosquitoes from laying eggs in stagnant water.
- ☐ Replace your **WindowAlert™** decals every six months to prevent window strikes. For some birds migration begins in August.
- ☐ **Set out your birdbaths! ► Having a couple of baths set in various spots around the yard will help birds beat the heat throughout the entire day.**
- ☐ Fill feeders with golden safflower or white safflower as birds gather in pre-migration flocks to avoid large numbers of grackles and starlings at feeders. Use our improved recipe **Bye, Bye Starling** to provide a sunflower mix while still discouraging European starlings.



FINCH FOOD Q & A

Q. Do Those Seeds Really Taste That Good?

A. Birds do have taste buds but only a few dozen to a few hundred compared to our ten thousand. They also have salivary glands that help goldfinches moisten and digest all those seeds they consume. It seems taste preference may not be as relevant as nature and nurture when it comes to Nyjer™ and goldfinches.



American Acrobat: The Goldfinch

By Minnetonka Manager CAROL CHENAULT



Flitting and Singing Through Life

The American Goldfinch is a small songbird whose cheery “po-ta-to-chip” song and rollercoaster, undulating flight is familiar to backyard bird watchers. Most of North America is graced with their presence throughout the year but it’s a special time all throughout Minnesota during their summer breeding—that time when they are delightfully active, vocal and colorful.

In spring and summer months the males display their bright yellow plumage. Their black streaks are shiny and the bills are bright orange. (For comparison, males in winter resemble the dull olive yellow of the females.)



▲ Female (left) and male (right) goldfinches

This summer color display is not just for show. The bill color indicates to peers rank or dominance in the flock. The more orange the bill the more the bird demonstrates dominance, aggression and status. Orange bill color also seems to be a sign of robust health and therefore suitability as a mate.

Entertainer of the Year

American Goldfinches perform feats of balancing on weeds and seed stocks in a delightfully entertaining, acrobatic display. In between acts, they socially mill about under feeders. All this behavior is instigated by lust for a good meal—and it takes hard work to get at those tiny, delicious seeds! To remove the meat from the Nyjer™ seed, a goldfinch uses its tongue and bill to move the seed into position to be cracked by the sharp edges of the bill. Each Nyjer™ seed must be cracked, the meat removed and shell dropped to the ground or feeder tray. Seems like an awful lot of work, but it sure does provide an entertaining display!

Weeds ‘n’ Seeds Feed Finches

The goldfinch is intimately intertwined with the Canada thistle plant. One of the latest nesting songbirds, goldfinches don’t get started on nesting until late June or early July. This appears to be timed with the life cycle of the late-blooming Canada thistle plant, which provides both nesting material and food for goldfinches. This correlation may explain why goldfinches are more attracted to Nyjer™ feeders during nesting season. Often in late fall throughout winter goldfinches are more interested in golden safflower and shelled sunflower than Nyjer™ and Nyjer™ mixes.

In addition to weed seeds like Canada thistle and dandelions, goldfinches especially like small seeds from alder, birch, cedar and elm trees. They’ll also eat from cones, catkins and fruit-tree buds.

It’s All About the Thistle

The commonly sold bird seed called “thistle” is actually Nyjer™ seed and it’s technically a fruit; the scientific name is *Guizotia abyssinica*. It is a non-native plant that has difficulty surviving in our climate year round. When Nyjer™ does grow, you’ll notice a plant with clumps of two to three yellow flower heads, not to be confused with the pink and purple blooms of the Canada thistle plant. If you find a Canada thistle plant in your yard, it didn’t originate from you feeders.

Building a Happy Home

American Goldfinches prefer yards mixed with low shrubs, deciduous saplings and mature trees. Planting purple coneflower, zinnia, cup plant and sunflower will also help to attract goldfinches to your backyard.

Goldfinches favor nesting in the fork of a deciduous shrub or small tree but can be found in small conifers. The nest is a small, compact cup of plant fibers, grass and spider silk lined with plant down and hair.

Housewarming Gifts

During summer months, goldfinches appreciate any help they can get in building the perfect nest. Providing nesting material and stocked feeders will assist adult birds during this busy season. Suet feeders hung in a bush or from a shepherd’s hook and filled with The Best Nest Builder™ or dog, cat, horse or human hair also provides great backyard entertainment: It’s a wonder the birds can see when their bills are so stuffed with the nesting material.

Since feeding time is such hard work, goldfinches more than appreciate a variety of feeders in the yard, including those stocked with Nyjer™, Nyjer™ and Chips, Finches’ Choice, golden safflower and/or sunflower out of the shell. Keeping feeders clean and well maintained and filled with fresh seed is a must for these particular birds. Goldfinches ignore seed that has become too dried out by wind or moldy from moisture.

They also love to socialize at the water cooler. Actually, they need water to moisten and digest seeds. Locating birdbaths throughout the yard will attract more birds. You’ll often notice goldfinches in a ring around the bath as they drink.

Raising a Family

The female incubates the clutch of 4–6 pale blue eggs in the nest for 10–12 days, and only has one brood a year. The male arrives nearly hourly to feed regurgitated seeds to Mamma. After hatching, the young are raised on seeds, unlike the regular insect diet of other baby songbirds. For 11–17 days after the fledglings leave the nest, adult goldfinches continue to feed the young partially digested (regurgitated) seeds. From there the goldfinch–seed dance will be shared with future generations. ■

SEASONAL FEEDING TIPS

(Summer Suet, from page 1)

Warm-Weather Precautions Easy as 1-2-3

In addition to purchasing new suet cakes with no-melt formulas, other precautions can be taken to safely provide suet for warm-weather birds.

1. First of all, place the feeder in a cool, shady area. It is preferable to receive that shade later in the day when temperatures are higher. Add a baffle or cover to provide shade.
2. Portion suet cakes or plugs out in halves or thirds so that you only put out what the birds will eat in a day. Another trick is to freeze the suet. Birds aren't put off by hard cakes

(the edges will soften even while the center remains frozen).

3. Finally, use a tray to catch drips for easier clean up and to preserve hard surfaces and plants under the feeder.

Give 'Em the Good Stuff!

Although suet used to only be a winter-time food, modern processing and innovations have allowed us to continue providing energy-packed treats to our birds year round. By implementing a few guidelines, you may soon see bird parents bringing their young to the suet feeder to show them where to find "the good stuff"! ■

Suet attracts a variety of bird species to your yard! ▶



FEATURED PRODUCTS

Best Nest Builder™ Provide Material for Nesting Goldfinches

The **Best Nest Builder** is a perfect addition to your backyard birdhouses. This pre-assembled nesting bag provides nesting material for your backyard birds. Hang it from a tree limb or post and watch the birds come and snatch some of the all-natural fibers to use in building their nests. Goldfinches in particular absolutely love it. It lasts all season and is waterproof. ■



▲ Goldfinch on Best Nest Builder

Favorite Finch Foods Options For Filling Your Finch Feeder

Nyjer™ is the basis for all good finch mixes.



▲ Nyjer™, Nyjer™ & Chips, Finches' Choice, Fine Sunflower Chips

Served alone in a finch feeder, it provides food for goldfinches, chickadees, House Finches, Indigo Buntings, Pine Siskins and

Redpolls. Good-quality Nyjer™ should be a shiny black color, reflecting that it's still holding its natural oils.

Our **Nyjer™ and Chips** is the perfect blend of premium Nyjer™ seed and fine sunflower chips. The sunflower chips are just small enough to fit through the finch tube-feeder openings. Chickadees, sparrows, nuthatches and all finches love this combination.

Finches' Choice a great mix for feeding finches. The combination of fine sunflower chips, Nyjer™ seed, canary seed, millet and flax is appealing to many smaller birds, and it's small enough to fit through the finch-feeder openings. Goldfinches, House Finches, Indigo Buntings, chickadees, nuthatches and juncos love it.

Fine Sunflower Chips consist of the "meat" of the sunflower, and are made small enough to fit through finch tube-feeder openings. There's no hull to crack open so it saves birds energy. All small birds enjoy these chips in the summer, including goldfinches, chickadees, nuthatches, House Finches and Indigo Buntings. ■



▲ Pacific Bird & Co. suet varieties

Summer Suet No-Melt Suet Varieties



▲ C&S Peanut Delight

Avoid the worries of feeding suet in the summer by using one of our no-melt suet varieties. These suet options are specially formulated to resist melting in high summertime temperatures. Try our **Attractor™ No-Melt Peanut Butter suet plugs** in your birch-log feeder. It contains oats to bind the suet as well as supplemental vitamins, minerals and electrolytes. Or if you have a cake feeder, try **C&S Peanut Delight**, which includes corn and peanuts in addition to the oats. **Pine Tree Farms suet dough** is available in orange and peanut flavors; the orange appeals to orioles as well as other suet-loving songbirds and woodpeckers. For insect eaters like bluebirds, wrens, nuthatches and woodpeckers, **Pacific Bird™ and Supply Co.'s** suet cake mix of mealworms and crickets are tasty year round. Come in and see our selection of summertime suet cakes and plugs. Your birds will thank you. ■



▲ Pine Tree Farms suet dough

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.