Bird Feeders and Nest Boxes

Feeders are important supplemental food sources in areas where native habitat is shrinking. They can also add a personal human touch to our yards.

These homemade feeders combine elements of Tray and House feeders.

There are 6 basic types of feeders, which attract an assortment of birds. If you put up a feeder, birds will find it. Give them a few days and keep your binoculars handy.

1. **Platform or Tray** feeders offer no protection against rain, leading to moldy or sprouting seeds. A screen bottom permits better drainage, but regular cleaning is necessary to remove bird droppings. Neighborhood squirrels will clean a tray feeder out in no time, unfortunately.

2. **Hopper or House** feeders protect seed better from weather, but if the seed within does get wet, microbes and fungi will thrive. Hoppers attract large and small species and become squawking centers of avian competition. They also attract squirrels.

3. **Window feeders** can provide up-close views of small birds, but they should be cleaned daily due to droppings.

4. **Tube feeders** can cater to different birds depending on the size of the perches and seed-access openings. They keep seed fairly well protected.

5. **Suet feeders** are beloved by woodpeckers, chickadees, and nuthatches. The suet can be fortified with peanuts and seeds. Suet melts in the hot summer months, so this is a seasonal feeder.

6. **Hummingbird feeders** hold high-sugar nutrient liquid which is also an excellent bacterial breeding ground. Use boiled water to make your nectar and clean often to provide safe, adequate nutrition for these special birds.

For more details go to [https://www.allaboutbirds.org/how-to-choose-the-right-kind-of-bird-feeder/](https://www.allaboutbirds.org/how-to-choose-the-right-kind-of-bird-feeder/)
Adding **nest boxes** to your yard extends the native plant habitat you have created and improves the probability that birds will move in to stay.

There are certain design elements that are important to different species you may wish to attract. For example, if the entrance hole is 1/8-1/4” too large, you may get lots of house sparrows instead of the chickadees you wanted. Think about which birds you would like to support and have as close neighbors, then research proper nest box design and placement for that species. Employees at a high-quality birding supply store can be valuable resources during this process.

NestWatch.org also has an excellent online tool to help with this. Go to [https://nestwatch.org/learn/all-about-birdhouses/right-bird-right-house/](https://nestwatch.org/learn/all-about-birdhouses/right-bird-right-house/) and select your region and environment type.

A list of native birds will be generated for you, complete with nest box placement details and a plan for construction of the appropriate bird box. Handy carpenters can build these, or you can just check the dimensions and purchase a commercial nest box to those specifications.

The image at left is a snapshot of the first four birds on the list for the PNW, open woodland habitat.

Within your list, each bird can be clicked on to open a page all about that bird’s habitat preferences, geographical spread, nesting period, and helpful tips about the species.

Invite birds to your yard with food, water, cover, and nesting sites. Then relax with your binoculars and the thrill of living with modern dinosaurs.