

Tip of the Week



Extension Tip of the Week (TOW) January 7, 2008 Attracting Birds to your Yard

One of the main considerations in attracting birds to your backyard this winter is the food you provide for them. Food sources for birds include seeds, fruits, berries, and insects. Purchase bird seed carefully. Many pre-mixed bird seeds contain milo (sorghum) and wheat — seeds not preferred by any birds. They are primarily fillers. Birds will throw these from the feeder looking for food that they prefer — like sunflower seeds. Find a store that sells seed separately by the pound and buy the types and quantity of seed wanted. Otherwise, buy the seed mix with the highest proportion of black (oil-type) sunflower.

One of the best mixes for attracting a variety of birds is 50 percent black (oil-type) sunflower, 35 percent white proso millet, and 15 percent cracked corn. The oil-type sunflower is all black and is preferred over the black-striped sunflower because it attracts a wide variety of birds. The white proso millet is a favorite of mourning doves, dark-eyed juncos, and most of the sparrows.

Another seed that is a favorite of several species of birds is peanut kernels (not hearts). Provide these separately in a small tubular or globe feeder. (Source: ISU Publication - *Managing Iowa Habitats - Attracting Birds to Your Yard*)

Tip of the Week (TOW) is emailed out weekly by Sherry McGill, ISU Extension Education Director in Woodbury County. To have the TOW emailed to you directly, please email Sherry at mcgills@iastate.edu.