

Feeding Tips For Wild Birds

What a great, mild January we have been experiencing! I would love to see this mild weather continue, but we can never be sure what Mother Nature may have in store for us. I heard a lady say the other day, "it has been so mild that I have not even had to feed the birds." And thus, a new topic for this newspaper was created.

Just because it has been mild, we still need to encourage our feathered friends to come and eat. There are several things that I would like to remind people about when it comes to bird feeding. First of all, feeders should be cleaned out on a regular basis with warm water and if moldy, a light bleach solution. Make sure that you rinse the feeders thoroughly after using any bleach solution, and they are dried completely before filling with any seed. Always keep seed in a dry place away from rodents, as they can contaminate large amounts in a short period of time. Seed should be used in a reasonable time to prevent it from going stale. Black oil sunflower is the most popular of all the seed and will attract the widest variety of quality birds and squirrels. Never feed and then suddenly stop feeding in the winter months. Birds become accustomed to a food source and will rely on it for survival. Place a used Christmas tree or greens out to the rear of the year to help provide a safe haven and shelter from cold weather.

January garden tips: Remove old blooms from your Christmas cactus as they fade. Allow the plant to go completely dormant for five weeks, no water and no fertilizer. Resume a regular watering and feeding schedule in mid-February, and you should have a second set of buds appear around late March.

Bulbs that were purchased in the Fall and never planted must get into the soil. Bulbs that are held even in a refrigerator will dehydrate and not bloom and will often die. Pour these bulbs out on top of the ground outside and cover with at least 6 inches of good potting soil that contains no fertilizer and water in well. These bulbs will root in and start to put up top growth. They can be easily pulled apart and planted in the right depth in your preferred spot in the Spring.

Spring is coming!

Mark