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Open a bird café

www.lgoal.org

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Feed the birds

At this time of year, life is hard for birds that stay behind. In a cold snap they will need more energy to keep warm and the short days leave less time to find food.

If you feed birds it is worth considering putting out food in different places in the garden or patio to reduce competition between birds. This way more birds can feed at any one time.



Don't throw out wrinkly old fruit, birds like starlings will enjoy them.

Establish a feeding regime.



Put out food and water on a regular basis but in severe weather, you should feed twice daily, ideally in the morning and in the early afternoon.

Birds require high-energy (high-fat) foods during the cold winter weather so that they can maintain their fat reserves.

Use only good-quality food and scraps.



Never allow uneaten foods to accumulate and once you establish a feeding routine, try not to change it as the birds will become used to it and time their visits to your garden.

Different ways to feed birds



Create a bird table

Bird tables are suitable for many species. You can buy bird tables, but you could also make one.

Put out a tray or dish with a rim to retain the food, make sure that there is gap at the corner for rainwater to drain away and that you can clean the tray easily.

Some birds feed on the ground, and others feel safer raised off the ground. Change the food regularly to make sure there are no unwelcome guests.



Make sure you get a good view of your bird table.

How many species visit it?

Bird feeders

A large number of birds eat seeds and will be attracted to your garden if you hang up a peanut or seed feeder. Many different types and sizes are available from shops. Some have a 'cage' around them to discourage squirrels and larger birds.

You can make your own with a plastic bottle and a twig.

Poor quality peanuts can carry the aflatoxin fungus, which kills birds if they eat it. Make sure you buy peanuts from a reputable supplier.

Never put out any food in mesh bags. These may trap birds' feet.



Buying bird seed



Small seeds, such as millet, attract small birds, blackbirds love flaked maize, while tits and greenfinches prefer peanuts and sunflower seeds. Mixes that contain chunks or whole nuts are suitable for winter feeding only.

Pinhead oatmeal is excellent for many birds. Wheat and barley grains are suitable for pigeon and dove, who feed on the ground. They will deter the smaller species from visiting.

Bird cake

To make a bird cake use kitchen scraps such as cheese and dry porridge oats. Mix with melted lard or suet and set in the fridge overnight.

- ✓ Lard, suet or coconut fat
- ✓ Unsalted peanuts
- ✓ Currants, Sultanas
- ✓ Oats, Bread or Cake crumbs
- ✓ Grated cheese

The best ratio for this recipe is one-part fat to two parts dry mixture.



Bird cake and food bars

Fat balls and other fat-based food bars are excellent winter food.

You can make your own bird cake. Here is our recipe.

1. Thread string through an old pit or paper cupcake mold.
2. Mix ingredients in a pot.

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Bird cake

You can also combine peanut butter with bird seed and press the mixture into a pine cone. Make sure the bland you use is low in salt.

1. Mix your dry ingredients together in a pot. Melt some lard or suet in a pan and add the dry mix. Stir well until the fat has all been absorbed and the mixture sticks together.
2. Make a hole in the bottom of a yoghurt pot and thread through a length of string, then pack the pot with your warm fat mixture.



Bird cake

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1. Place in the fridge to set, cut through
2. Peel away the pot. Tie a knot at one end of the twine to secure.
3. Hang them outside in an open space where birds will be safe from cats.

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Kebab

You can thread seeds, Berries and fruit onto wire and hang it from trees. This is useful if you don't have berries in your garden.



Drinks and a bath

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Don't forget to put out water for birds to drink and to bath in. Make sure that it is changed regularly and that the ice is broken in cold weather. This bird bath is made from an old dustbin lid.

