

## Winter Bird Feeding

As fall fades to winter, most of us start preparing for the cold days ahead. According to Kathleen Gass, Horticulturist for the University of Illinois Extension Service, now is also the time to start thinking about the birds that will be visiting your yard this winter.

If you are interested in feeding birds this winter, give consideration to the type of feeder and type of seed you will be using. The species of birds attracted to your yard will depend on both of these variables.

A variety of birds will be drawn to your yard when a mix of different types of seed is used. Each species of bird at the feeder will be searching for its favorite seed. To obtain these favorite seeds, the bird will methodically drop or kick the other types of seed out of the feeder. This seed often goes uneaten, although doves and juncos will feed on this seed from the ground. The seed not eaten will be contaminated by dampness or droppings.

To avoid this type of loss, Gass recommends separate feeders for different types of seed. In this way, each species of bird will feed on its favorite seed and losses will be kept to a minimum.

Different styles of feeders are also available. Tube feeders are popular and easy to obtain. The feeder is a clear plastic cylinder with perches next to the holes where the birds feed. Small perches will attract smaller birds, larger perches can support more weight therefore attract larger birds.

A house feeder or platform feeder are also popular. These can be supported by a pole in an open area of your yard. This set-up helps to control unwanted squirrel visits to your feeder. House and platform feeders are sturdy supporting a variety of birds.

Following is a list for attracting specific birds:

### Tube with black oil sunflower

Finches, woodpeckers, titmice, chickadees, nuthatches, crossbills.

### Platform feeder with black oil sunflower

\*the previous list plus — cardinals, jays, purple finches, towhees, thrushes, goldfinches, pine siskins, juncos, housefinches, redpolls, doves, grosbeakes, grackles.

### Tube feeder with niger thistle

goldfinches, purple finches, pine siskins, chickadees, dark eyed juncos, house finches, redpolls, doves, song sparrows, white throated sparrows.

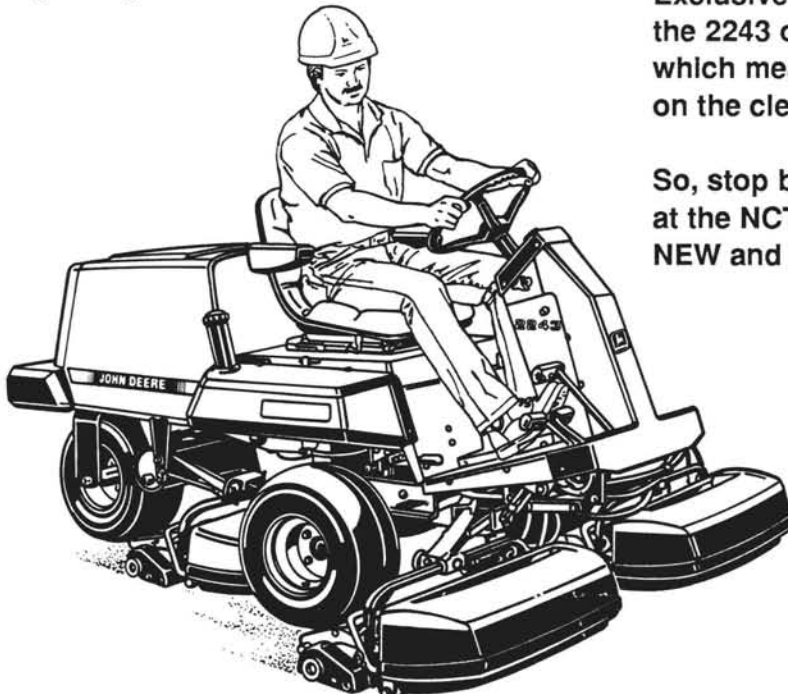
### Platform with corn

starlings, grackles, juncos, doves, house sparrows, jays, bob-white quail, ring-necked pheasants.

Bird watching can be fun and educational. Spice up a dull winter with the entertainment Mother Nature provides, and feed the birds!

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