

What are the Best Types Of Bird Seed And What Birds Will They Attract?

Types Of Bird Seed



Black-Oil Sunflower Seed - Considered the #1 choice to feed and attract the greatest variety of birds to your feeders. Rich in oil, black oil sunflower seeds give birds the energy they need to live. The thin shell makes it an easy bird seed to open, even for the smaller birds.

Offer this type of food in [Hopper](#) or [Tube type](#) bird feeder. You'll attract Cardinals, Nuthatches, finches, and a variety of others. If you are going to offer only one type, give black oil sunflower seed a try.



Hulled Sunflower Seed - This type is the same as above except that the shell has been removed. Because it is more expensive, Offer it in a [squirrel proof type feeder](#).

The nice thing about offering sunflower hearts and chips is that there is no mess, since all of the bird seed will be eaten. Sometimes black oil sunflower seed left on the ground prevents some plants from growing.

If this is a concern in the area you are feeding birds try using hulled seed instead. You'll attract the same birds without the mess.



Safflower is a favorite seed of the Northern Cardinal. House Finches and Mourning Doves will also feed on this type. The nice thing is that squirrels will leave it alone and you can place it on a platform feeder. Cardinals can more easily feed from tray/platform feeders rather than ones with small perches.



Nyjer - Thistle Seed Thistle, or more accurately, Nyjer seed, is a finch favorite. A specialty food loved by Goldfinches, Purple Finches and even Mourning Doves. This tiny black seed from India and Africa is available at most places that offer wild bird food. Long used in Canary mixes and now common as a wild bird food source.

Goldfinches are attracted more to the nyjer than sunflower seed. Every year we present both kinds, and every year the finches arrive. Pine Siskins also like nyjer seed. And yes, even as tiny as this seed is it still has a shell (hull) that will pile up on the ground. Fortunately, the seeds will not sprout as the seed is sterilized before brought into this country.

A special feeder with small ports will be needed when offering this seed. For a variety of these feeder see: [Thistle Feeder](#)



Striped Sunflower - While most birds prefer black oil sunflower to striped sunflower seed, it still remains a cheaper alternative. Try placing some on a platform feeder to prevent squirrels and raccoons from raiding your feeders. Place it away from your other feeders.

The shell is harder than black oil sunflower seed making it more difficult for small birds to open. Still, Bluejays, Cardinals, and some Woodpeckers will make use of striped sunflower.



Cracked or Whole Kernel Corn - will attract Eastern Bluebirds, Jays, Pheasants, and other game birds. By offering cracked corn throughout the year, you'll be able to watch birds that normally don't visit your other feeders. Available at feed supply and birdwatching aisles of most stores.

It is best to place cracked corn on platform feeders or scattered on the ground for game birds. Be aware that mammals will also be visiting. These include raccoons and opossums along with rodents.



Premium Mixes - These are packages of a mixture of bird seeds that are attractive to a variety of birds. Generally consisting of black oil sunflower, peanut, millet, striped sunflower, and others mixed together.

Personally, we prefer to offer each separately. Less desirable birds may drive the more desirable birds away.

Cheap Mixes - While they won't be labeled as such, cheap mixes rarely attract the most desirable birds. Generally consisting of red and white milo, cracked corn, wheat, striped sunflower and other seeds.

Any desirable birds that feed on these types of bird seed, will readily come to eat at any of the other types you place in your yard. Most of the cheaper mixes are derivatives of the poultry industry. And as such, are not suited for bird watching enthusiasts.



Suet - While not a bird seed, so many birds are attracted to suet that it must be discussed here. Suet is made from beef fat. Most bird watching stores offer suet with bird seed, berries, and peanut butter mixed in with the suet.

Some of the birds that enjoy suet are: Black Capped Chickadees, Woodpeckers, Nuthatches, and Wrens. Offer suet in a [suet feeder](#), a special wire cage made to hold suet.

When choosing wild bird seed to place in your bird feeding station, determine the types of birds you want to attract. Try to set out several varieties and be sure to include a source of water both in summer and winter.

SOURCE:

http://www.wild-bird-watching.com/Bird_Seed.html

CHART FOR FEEDING BIRDS

Bird Feeding Chart Provided by Dad's Woodshed LLC

Type of Bird	Food Preference
Blue Jays	Sunflower seed, safflower, cracked corn, peanuts, suet, bread, peanut butter, lard mixes, seed mixes
House Finch	Mixed seed, peanuts, fruit, suet, nyjer, sunflower, safflower,
Gold Finch	nyjer, sunflower seed, hulled sunflower, millet, fruit, suet, peanuts
House Wren	Suet, bread crumbs
House Sparrow	Mixed seed, sunflower seeds
Wrens	Suet, suet mix, peanut butter, bread, apples
Indigo Bunting	Peanuts, millet, variety of seeds
Northern Flicker	Suet, peanut butter, sunflower seeds, fruit, meat, bread
Oriole	Oranges, apples, grape jelly, oriole jelly, sugar water, soft raisins
Painted Bunting	Sunflower seeds, seed mixes
Pine Grosbeak	Sunflower seeds, grain
Pine Siskin	Nuts, rolled oats, nyjer, mixed seeds, sunflower seeds, sunflower chips, millet, suet
Purple Finch	Sunflower seeds, nyjer
Red Crossbills	Sunflower seeds, nyjer
Red Poll	Suet, bread, sunflower seeds
Red Winged Blackbird	Bread, cracked corn, mixed seeds, sunflower seeds, sunflower chips, millet, suet
Robins, Bluebirds, Thrushes	Apples, sunflower seed, bread, grapes, suet, mealworms, berries, raisins, nut meal, seed mixes
Rose Breasted Grosbeaks	Sunflower seeds, grapes, orange halves
American Gold Finch	Sunflower seeds, nyjer
Black Billed Magpie	Meat, bread
Bobwhite Quail	Sunflower seeds, seed mixes
Brown Headed Cowbird	Bread, cracked corn, sunflower seeds, seed mixes
Bushtit	Bread, sunflower seeds, bird seed mixes
Cardinals	Cracked corn, nuts, sunflower seeds, safflower, millet, peanuts, apple, bread
Black Capped Chickadees	Sunflower seeds, peanuts, bread, suet
Crows	Bread, scraps, corn, suet
Magpies	Scraps, suet, peanuts, bread
Downy Woodpeckers	Sunflower seeds, corn, cornbread, peanut butter, suet, shelled peanuts, sunflower seeds
Grosbeaks	Sunflower seeds, safflower, apple, fruit, suet, millet, bread, peanut kernels
Buntings	Sunflower seeds, safflower, apple, fruit, suet, millet, bread, peanut kernels

Grackles	Sunflower seeds, bread, scraps
Titmouse	Sunflower seeds, suet, bread, safflower, peanuts, peanut kernel
Chickadees	Peanut kernel, sunflower seeds, suet, bread, safflower
Nuthatches	Suet, suet mix, sunflower seeds, nuts, cracked corn, bread
Creepers	Suet, suet mix, sunflower seeds, nuts, cracked corn, bread
Mockingbirds	Halved apples, fruit, bread, suet, sunflower seeds, nuts
Thrashers	Halved apples, fruit, bread, suet, sunflower seeds, nuts
Flycatchers, Phoebes	Bees, wasps, ants, mealworms
Kinglets	Suet, bread
Waxwings	Berries, raisins, sliced apple, canned peas, currants, grapes
Warblers	Suet, suet mix, water, fruit, breads, sugar water, nut pieces
Tanagers	Suet, fruit, sugar water, mealworms, bread
Song Sparrows	Sunflower seeds, seed mixes, bread, nyjer, millet
Starlings	Bread, scraps, suet
Stellers Jays	Nuts, scraps, suet
Tree Sparrows	Wild bird seed mixes, millet
Sparrows	Millet, peanut kernels, suet, bread, canary seed, sunflower seed
White Breasted Nuthatches	Peanuts, sunflower seeds, suet, safflower
Hairy Woodpeckers	Sunflower seeds, nuts, cheese, apples, bananas, suet, peanut butter
Yellow Bellied Sapsuckers	Nutmeats, suet, fruit
Quail	Cracked corn, millet, berries
Pigeons	Cracked corn, sunflower seeds, milo, bread, nyjer, nuts
Doves	Cracked corn, sunflower seeds, milo, bread, nyjer, nuts
Roadrunners	Meat scraps, suet
Hummingbirds	Plant nectars, small insects, sugar water, instant nectars
Woodpeckers	Insects, fruit, sunflower seeds, suet, nuts, sugar water
Western Tanagers, Scarlet Tanagers	Orange halves, grapes
Juncos	Millet, sunflower seeds, cracked corn, peanuts, bread, nut meats, nyjer, suet
Towhees	Millet, sunflower seeds, peanuts, grapes, cracked corn, suet
Rufhouse Sided Towhee	Bird seed mixes, thistle, sunflower seeds, millet, cracked corn
Baltimore Oriole	Suet, orange halves
Brown Thrashers	Orange halves, cracked corn
Carolina Wrens	Suet, sunflower chips
Cat Birds	Raisins, grapes, orange halves, suet
Mourning Dove	Millet, nyjer, sunflower chips, safflower, cracked corn
Pileated Woodpeckers	Suet
Red Bellied Woodpeckers	Suet, sunflower seeds, peanuts, orange halves, safflower, cracked corn