



## Feed the Birds

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Now that my garden is kaput for the season, I can turn my attention to what remains. Like the coneflower heads bobbing in the frozen wind. I don't trim them in the fall, despite their bedraggled appearance, in hopes of luring a few birds to my dormant garden. But that is not enough to sustain the local birds overwintering in my area. It's time to clean and fill the bird feeders and hang out the birdseed ornaments.

Birds expend much more energy during cold periods to keep alive, while ice and snow obscure their natural seed sources. Droughts in some parts of the country this year have further reduced the amounts of seeds and berries birds rely upon. Audubon Park, a company that sells wild

bird feed, gives these 5 tips for keeping your local birds happy this winter:

- The right seed – research what the birds in your backyard prefer to nibble. High-fat (high-energy) foods like suet and sunflower seeds help keep them warm during frigid winter nights.
- Multiple feeding stations – mix it up by setting out various types of seeds in different areas, such as hanging feeders, platform feeders, and scattering some seed on the ground.
- Protection – place feeding spots in the sun, sheltered from the wind, and hopefully close enough to your window to provide ample glimpses of your visitors.
- Wet their whistle – offer clean water for drinking and bathing. Bird bath heaters keep water from freezing. Fountains with gently moving water will attract attention from birds.
- Landscape for the birds – Birds appreciate a variety of plants regardless of the season. Shrubs, tall grasses, and trees provide shelter from wind and predators as well as nesting space.

For more information on what and how to care for the birds in your neighborhood this winter, check out: [www.bhg.com/gardening/design/nature-lovers/bird-feeding/v](http://www.bhg.com/gardening/design/nature-lovers/bird-feeding/v)

