

Timely Turf Tips

January 2013

HAPPY NEW YEAR!! And **GO VIKINGS!!** Looking to accomplish a few chores before the big game? January is a great time to repot house plants, bring up pots of amaryllis from the basement to force them into bloom, check on stored dahlia tubers, canna bulbs and produce such as potatoes or winter squash (throw out anything that looks rotten) and help out the local birds with winter feeding tips below.

Winter Bird Feed Tips

When switching from fall to winter feeding, you may want to place a group of feeders closer to the house. Tray feeders and fly-through feeders can be placed on a deck railing so they are easier to access when the snows accumulate.

Water is a critical ingredient of a winter feeding program. Obviously the water needs a heating element and a thermostat. Several excellent birdbaths with heating elements and thermostats are available from the Mill. Don't worry about birds freezing if they bathe on a cold winter day. This is not a problem since the heated water is primarily for drinking. Native songbirds seem smart enough not to bathe when the wind chill is 40 below.

It is relatively easy to plan for winter bird feeding. There are three main choices of food: large seeds, small seeds, and suet.



- Large seeds include black-oil sunflower, striped sunflower, safflower, peanuts, shelled corn, ear corn and cardinal mixes that contain sunflower, safflower and peanuts. The list of birds that favor sunflower seeds is impressive: Northern cardinals, Blue jays, Black-capped and Chestnut-backed chickadees, House and Purple finches, American goldfinches, Evening and Pine grosbeaks, Gray and Steller's jays, nuthatches, crossbills, titmice, and many more.
- Small seeds include Niger seed—thistle—and is an excellent all-winter staple for American and Lesser goldfinches, Common and Hoary redpolls, House and Purple finches, and Pine siskins.
- Many wintering birds benefit from the high energy nutritional benefits of suet, suet mixes, and peanut butter. Suet can be fed in onion sacks, wire mesh feeders, wooden dowel (cage) feeders, or placed on open platforms

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