



BACKYARD BIRDING AT WILDBIRD & BACKYARD

SUMMER 2009

Our Earth, Our Responsibility

We hear it everywhere today..."Green:" this and "Green:" that. Why the big push? Is this the phrase of the day? Will we forget about this in a few years and move onto a different phrase? We don't think so.

Over the years, we, as residents of our planet Earth, have been negligent in taking care of our resources and habitat. It's time we change and become more responsible to the heirs of our planet, so future generations can enjoy what we may have taken for granted.

At **Wildbird & Backyard**, we try to do our part and make a conscious effort to make available products made from recycled materials. Those plastic milk jugs are filling up our landfills when they could have been used for other purposes. We have an increasing selection of birdfeeders and birdhouses made from those used milk jugs. These feeders and houses are not only environmentally beneficial, they are beautiful and have a longer life expectancy than the same item made from wood. They will look better and last longer than their counterparts. Let's save a few trees and reuse those milk jugs to make something useful.

What about the backyard? There is an increased attraction to vegetable gardens, growing your own produce or purchasing locally grown. Gardens are "in:" again. Get interested in composting, stop using artificial fertilizers and garden products. Our local nature centers offer classes on making your own compost bins, rain barrels and teach natural gardening. We can make this fun, interesting and inexpensive. We offer a natural product that has been endorsed by the National Master Gardeners Association for keeping pesty animals away from your outdoor plants. Our birdbath and birdfeeder cleaners are soy based, making them non-toxic and friendly to the environment. We can all do our part to maintain a healthy planet. This is a start, it's our responsibility.

Because We Care



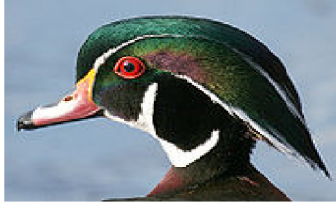
Remember when the first restaurants went "smokeless?" It was a major commitment by those owners to go against the norm. *Wildbird & Backyard* is going to take a giant step to go against the norm in a different fashion. In order to do more for the environment, we have decided in the near future to go "bagless". Our own brand of mixed birdseed comes in paper bags because we feel these are easier to handle and better for the environment. Smaller bags will continue to be plastic. For all your purchases we will encourage you to use REUSABLE BAGS instead of placing them in paper or plastic. REUSABLE BAGS are available in most of your retail stores. Likewise, we have our own *Wildbird & Backyard* RESUABLE BAGS available for sale at our cost. We don't want to make any money on them, but we do want you to use them. So many of us keep bags in our car but forget to bring them in the store to use them. As an encouragement, to get in the habit of using your REUSABLE BAGS, we have begun donating funds to be given to local nature centers when you use your own bag; a penny if you use any REUSABLE BAG, a nickel if you use ours. When our donations total \$50, a local nature center will be the recipient of a \$50 Gift Card to be used toward their needs. Local nature centers will receive these funds on a rotating basis. Everyone comes out a winner!

During the months of July and August we will also donate a quarter for each bag you purchase AND with each REUSABLE BAG purchased you can enter a drawing for a RESUABLE BAG filled with a variety of items from our store. We will draw 3 winners at the end of each month. More winners! And the biggest winner is our planet.

We are a nature store, we want to help preserve our beautiful planet for our future generations. We can all help - it doesn't take that much effort. We don't need "paper or plastic" in our store.



Wood Duck



The Wood Duck is a medium sized perching duck. A typical duck is about 19 inches long, about 3/4 the length of an adult Mallard Duck. The adult male has distinctive multi-colored iridescent plumage and red eyes. The female, less colorful, has a white eye-ring and a whitish throat. Both adults have crested heads. When swimming, wood ducks bob their head back and forth in a jerking motion, which makes them easy to spot.

They breed in wooded swamps, shallow lakes, marshes or pond areas. They are one of only a few North American ducks that nest in trees. Wood Ducks nest in natural tree cavities, sometimes abandoned by woodpeckers. Natural cavities are scarce and the Wood Duck readily uses nest boxes provided for it. Nesting pairs typically select cavities in deciduous woodland areas in close proximity to rivers, wetlands and other suitable aquatic habitats used for brood rearing. Cavities located 30 feet or more above the ground are preferred, but the height can vary from near ground level to 65 feet. They prefer nesting over water so the young have a soft landing, but will nest up to 150 yards from the shoreline. The day after they hatch, the young climb to the nest entrance and jump to the ground. The baby ducks can swim and find their own food by this time.

The early diet of ducklings consists largely of insects, aquatic invertebrates, small fish and other high-protein animal material. Adults feed on a variety of nuts and fruits, aquatic plants and seeds and aquatic insects and other invertebrates. Acorns are their primary winter food.

The Wood Duck is a migrating duck, common to our area in the summer, wintering in the southern US near the Atlantic coast.

The population of the Wood Duck was in serious decline at the beginning of the 20th century as a result of severe habitat loss and the market hunting both for meat and plumage for the ladies' hat market in Europe. Their population has increased over the years due to hunting restrictions and the work of many people conserving vital habitat along with widespread construction of nest boxes in their habitat to increase breeding.

Backyard Maintenance



Ah! Summer has finally arrived in Wisconsin. For a while we weren't sure if it would find its way, but the calendar surely states it is here! As we find time for all the outdoor fun activities, we need to remember our backyard feeding stations do need some special attention during these warmer months. The birds are bringing their fledglings to the feeder and we need to be sure the feeder is clean and has a fresh supply of seed to keep them healthy and keep them coming back. As the temperature rises we should be changing our fruit/jelly/nectar more often for the orioles and hummingbirds. They recognize stale food and will not visit your feeders or may become sick. There are various brushes and soy-based, environmentally safe cleaners that make clean up quick and simple. Take a few minutes and refresh your feeders.

Water for drinking and bathing is a must, lets keep that clean and abundant. Again, soy based non-toxic cleaners make cleaning your birdbath quick and easy. Just a few sprays, a stiff brush to clean, then rinse with a hose. We also have liquid birdbath protectors to reduce the sludge, stains and algae in your bath/pond. Just a few drops should keep unwanted growth to a minimum.

Now, that didn't take long at all; sit down, put your feet up and watch nature from your favorite patio chair. The sites and sounds are better than whatever the best HD-TV can offer!

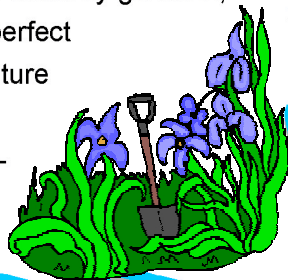


When "Home" is your vacation...

The popularity of "Staycations"

Many of us are staying close to home this year for our vacation - for many different reasons. We are finding fun, inexpensive and interesting places to visit within a short distance from home. No reason to travel to far away destinations to find pleasure and relaxation, they are as close as our neighboring communities or our own backyard. It's time to check out what our community has to offer, why others come here to visit! Save on gasoline, save time, see Wisconsin. Visit a Nature Center, explore our lakes and rivers, take a picnic lunch. Make it a fun project to make your backyard an interesting place of beauty. We are seeing an increased interest in backyard ponds, soothing water movement, good for nature, good for beauty and relaxation. Add a squirrel feeder and let the squirrels entertain you for a while. We have birdhouse kits to keep the young ones busy, make a keepsake stepping stone to add to your yard, watch bird activity through your scope or binoculars. Check out our selection of books, some with inexpensive projects to add fun to your day. Check into butterfly gardens;

you'll find out how easy it is to plant the perfect garden. Grow a vegetable garden. Nature and a beautiful backyard can make wonderful memories for you. Sometimes the best times are spent in our own backyard! Happy Summer.



Natural Remedies

Try some natural remedies for common backyard dilemmas.

Mosquitoes: They lay eggs in water, so best to keep your water moving, not stagnant. "Mosquito Free" is a natural tension remover for your bird baths. Try a "Water Wiggler" for water movement.

Chipmunks: A few drops of Pine-Sol near your plants may keep them away. Or, a small container of ammonia around your plants might work. They hate that odor.

Deer: Sprinkle your garden with a mixture of crushed garlic, garlic powder and pickle juice. OR, try our Plant Saver, a mixture of natural ingredients endorsed by the National Master Gardeners.

Bees/Wasps: Glass bee catchers attract the bees when filled with sugar water. The bees can enter but cannot leave the container, they are trapped.

Flies: Place small sachets of crushed mint around the house to discourage flies. So will a potted sweet basil plant.

Showcased Product: Hawk Eye Nature Cam

Have you every wondered...what happens inside your bird house? Now there is a convenient way to watch the bird activities without their knowledge, without fancy obtrusive lights. This unique small camera can be placed into any bird house (even a bat house), any backyard area, anywhere you want visual access. It comes with

100 feet of cable that simply plugs into the audio/video outlets in your TV. Just place, plug and watch. It comes as just the camera OR installed in a bluebird house by Birders Choice. This camera uses infra-red light, no other lights are necessary, no matter what time of the day or night. Actually, the uses for this camera are endless, just use your imagination (nursery, front door, backyard activity, etc.). This opens up a whole new realm of vision. Be sure to stop in and see this terrific tiny camera in use in the store. You'll be amazed how easy it is to set up -- just enjoy!



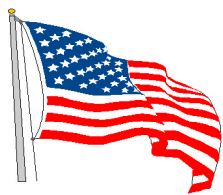
WILDBIRD & BACKYARD

2700 W. COLLEGE AVE #2

APPLETON, WI 54914

(920) 731-0601

www.wildbirdbackyard.com



Store Hours

Monday-Friday 10-6

Saturdays 9-5

Sundays Noon-4

(See Summer Hours Below)

MESSAGE FROM MIKE

Mike's message is always fun for me to write because I can say whatever I want, it's MY message!

Last issue I talked about being a co-sponsor, bringing in Stan Tekeila for a book-signing in the store, followed by an evening seminar event at Heckrodt Wetlands. The program was a tremendous success. Stan was greeted by so many people, signed so many of his books, shared his photography equipment and answered a ton a questions. The evening program was prepared for a room full of guests, after adding chairs it was "standing room only." Stan's 45-60 minute presentation lasted almost 90 minutes, and even then he had to cut the questions short. He is so knowledgeable, witty and just down right funny, a terrific speaker. Tracy, from Heckrodt, and I both heard from many attendees, asking to please bring him back again, as he was so interesting. We asked, Stan said yes, and he'll be back again.

It is early June and as I write this and I am thinking of building an ark. Rain, rain, rain. I have it on good authority the weather should turn nice by August for a few days.

I've been overcome with questions concerning what to do about the grackles and starlings this year. They seem to be causing more problems than usual and unfortunately there is no simple answer.

Feed straight safflower and they will usually leave the feeder alone. Or, another solution is a feeder designed to keep off squirrels and heavy birds. Some of my feeders will allow cardinals (weighing about 2 oz) to feed but shut out the grackles (weighing about 4 oz). The feeders may not be inexpensive, but neither is birdseed.

As most of you know, Nyjer seed was in short supply in the US earlier this year. Our stock is back, the price went up only marginally and other than an occasional shortage, we should be in supply for the rest of the year.

Thanks again for your continued support during these challenging economic times. Enjoy nature and all the beautiful birds.

Happy Birding, Mike, Pat and Staff



Skip Willis (from WNAM) and Stan Tekeila 4/18/09

Summer Store Hours
July and August
Monday - Friday 10am - 6pm
Saturday 9am - 5pm
Sunday 10am - 2pm
Closed July Fourth & Labor Day