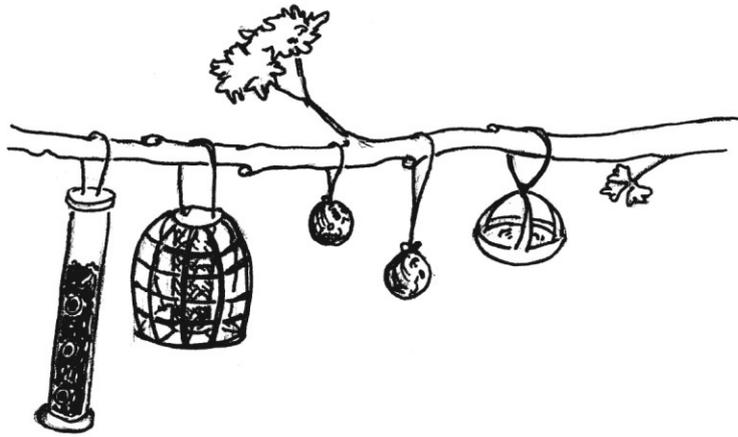


Feeding birds in your garden

Gardens in London easily support families of blue tit, great-tit, robin, wren and blackbird. The fuss around your bird table might attract the interest of others including greater spotted woodpecker, long tailed tit, greenfinch, tree creeper and other normally shy birds. Wood pigeons provide a pleasure all of their own as they balance on thin twigs. And the sound of swifts overhead is the sound of summer.

Feeding birds in London

If you enjoy feeding mallards, coots, and other water birds in your local park remember that this can sometimes have a damaging effect. Many park ponds have become seriously polluted from excess rotting bread thrown for ducks so look first for a feeding beach or check with park staff to ensure you use the right type of food. You can also feed birds in many ecology centres and city farms where have bird feeding areas and bird tables are provided.



The restaurant in your garden serves a comprehensive menu.

Nutritious bird foods for your table or feeding station.

Feed birds regularly, not just when cold weather strikes as they need to know where the food is when needed

Sunflower seeds - in a loose feeder

Grain mixes - including millet, oatmeal, canary seed, hemp and wheat in a loose feeder

Peanuts - in a mesh feeder, small birds can choke on loose nuts

Breakfast cereal crumbs - use the leftovers in the bottom of the packet

Fruit and berries

Half coconuts

Bacon rind

Fatballs in winter

Lard cake in winter - mix lard, cereals, crushed peanuts, and grains, decorate with raisins if desired

Pine cones dipped in melted lard - in winter

Peanuts in their shell - strung on a string in winter only

Mealworms and other live food in spring

Oystershell grit - to add calcium to help build strong healthy shells



Perfectly place your bird feeder station

- Where you can watch it from a window or hidden bench
- Away from bird boxes – birds are territorial and will not appreciate the company
- Among, or very near, thorny cover to hide in
- Away from sturdy trees, open fences and other cat-leaps

Don't forget water!

All birds need water to keep their feathers clean and to drink. An ageing bird bath is a wonderful focus for a garden, but could be replaced by a cheaper pot stand or shallow bowl. A shallow dish of water on your bird table will allow all who dine to drink as well. Change the water in your bird bath regularly – even birds do not like using their friends' bathwater. Make sure you rinse the bath out too.

A helping hand at nest-building time

Help home-building garden birds. Come springtime garden birds start the frantic search for materials to build and insulate the perfect nest. You can give them a hand by putting out suitable nesting materials. Try hanging bundles of straw, fine sticks, shredded woollen jumpers and bunches of grasses close to your feeding station. Your bundles should last through to the summer season for second broods.

Don't poison your birds!

Peanuts and corn can be susceptible to a deadly fungal infection. Legal standards for bird food are lower than for humans – but birds eat more peanuts than most people. Avoid the risk and always buy bird food which has been accredited by the Bird Food Standards Association. It is vital to clear up any uneaten food and clean your feeders regularly – without bleach.

Natural food is best

Your bird feeding station should act as a supplement to natural food. Plant your garden to give the maximum insects, seeds and berries, for as much of the year as possible.

Think about birds' food needs:

Blackbird	Worms and beetles, seeds, berries, fruits
Greenfinch	seeds of thistle, sunflower, teasels, alder, chicks eat insects
Treecreeper	Insects on twigs and bark
Long-tailed tit	Insects and seeds in trees
House sparrow	Seeds of grasses, cereals, weeds like redshank and fat hen, insects
Song thrush	Snails, worms, other invertebrates, berries, fruit

The Garden BirdWatch is an ongoing national survey of garden birds, phone British Trust for Ornithology on 01842 750050.



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