**Winterize Your Yard for the Birds.**

**Food:**

• Messy provides safe places and food for the birds.

• Resist the urge to tidy up. Leave seed heads in place, piles of leaves on

the ground (or at least rake them into piles a few feet from your

feeders. Lots of bugs and wiggly things will hide out there and create a

bird banquet.)

• Adding a reliable source of high calorie food to help them survive will

keep them healthy for a reproductive spring.

• An array of foods: nuts, seeds, fruits, nectars will attract a variety of

birds and support them through the winter.

• Fill your feeders and continue to do so through out the winter.

• Suet feed stations: Birds need high levels of saturated fat, such as

raw suet and lard.  These high energy foods will keep the birds warm in

during the worst of the winter

weather. Their body reserves are quickly used up, particularly on cold

winter nights. (THINK SHELTER TOO)

• Make your own suet cake by pouring melted fat (suet or

lard) onto a mixture of ingredients such as seeds, nuts,

dried fruit, oatmeal, cheese and cake. Use about one-third fat to two-

thirds mixture. Stir well in a bowl and allow it to set in your container

• Going native: Nothing beats native vegetation to feed the birds in your

area. So plant a variety of native plants that supply food year-round.

(We will get to that in another article in the late winter in time for spring

plantings.)

**Shelter:** Birds need places to tuck in out of the weather, to hide

from predators and to spend the night.

• In the winter, evergreens and dense thickets offer critical cover. Trees

shrubs and rock walls all provide shelter.

• The eaves of your house may sound an unlikely place, but it can offer a

shelter, a warm place.

• Place you Xmas tree a few feet from you feeders so ground-feeding

birds can have a wide field of view and can make a fast get away if

needed.

• Lacking a dense thicket, a rock wall or evergreens for shelter?

• Make a brush pile with fallen branches, your raked up leaves, a pile of

firewood or rocks can provide escape places. Start with the larger

pieces on the bottom then start layering.

• Snow insulates and under the snow-covered vegetation is a refuge.

• Lock up those predatory cats. Please keep them from hunting.

**Water:** During the winter months when natural supplies may be

frozen, water is particularly important. Birds get the

liquid they need from their food, and by drinking.

Seed-eating birds have a dry diet s0 they do need to

drink more.

• Providing a clean, fresh source, you will attract more species than will

visit bird feeders, but please place your bird bath/waterer about 15 feet

from their escape hideouts.

• Water heaters will keep the water free of ice during winter months in

colder climates.

**Tend to your wild and you will be graced with the presence of a bird.**