



**GARFIELD COUNTY
EXTENSION**

Master Gardener News

Garfield County OSU Extension Center, 316 E. Oxford, Enid, OK 73701 580-237-1228

JANUARY 2023

Next Meeting Date – January 10th, 2023

Executive Meeting: 8:30 a.m.
General Meeting: 9:00 a.m.
Location: Garfield County OSU Extension Office
Program: Turfology– Kent Surratt



DIVISION OF
**AGRICULTURAL SCIENCES
AND NATURAL RESOURCES**
NEWS RELEASE

Attracting birds to the landscape in the winter

**Message from Barbi Oliver
Garfield County Master Gardeners President**

What is going on in the yard? There seems to be some photosynthesize. Can the soil be improved? What does the soil need? Jesse Frost has written “The Living Soil Handbook.” He points out that for photosynthesize, a plant needs sunlight, carbon dioxide, water, soil organisms, and nutrients. He breaks down the soil web and talks about the plant producing exudates which feed the microbes in the soil, which in turn break up the soil particles and provide nutrients for the plants. The book covers three different kinds of compost, cover crops, mulch, and several other topics. The three principles that he tries to follow are: disturb the soil as little as possible, keep the soil covered as much as possible, and plant as much as possible. He also talks about Fertility Management, Transplanting, Interplanting, and Path Management. He gardens in Kentucky and also has a YouTube channel called “No-Till Growers.”

It will soon be time to experiment with the yard. Each year some things work, and some trials are complete failures. If the food that is consumed is grown on your property, you know how that food has been produced and what it has been subject to.

Barbi Oliver

Aside from the beautiful flowers, shrubs and trees in a lush summer landscape, these elements serve another purpose other than being visually attractive – they also attract birds to the area. Now that the cold weather has set in, what can you do to entice these feathered friends to continue to visit?

Food is very important to birds in the winter-time. During the warmer months they can easily nosh on plants and insects in the landscape, but during the cold part of the year, birds are much more dependent on humans to provide them with sustenance. Harsh weather conditions coupled with less food can be a challenge for the feathered population. To help keep bird mortality low, consider hanging a few bird feeders from the trees in your yard.

Birds get the energy they need to survive the winter weather from foods high in oil and fat, including suet, peanuts, sunflower seeds, peanut butter and Nyjer (thistle). Offering a smorgasbord of choices is nice, but tailor the selections that suit the species of birds found in the landscape.

It’s also important to match your birdfeeders to the type of bird you want to attract. Smaller birds such as chickadee, tufted titmouse and finch prefer the tube feeders. Larger birds, including cardinals and blue jays, prefer

hopper or platform feeders, and birds such as the morning dove eat seed on the ground.

Don't limit the food offerings to seed and suet. Fruit feeders are a great way to provide needed energy for birds. Load them with wedges of orange or apple or sliced bananas.

While birds may be on the hunt for food this winter, they're also looking for a water source. Birds can melt snow and ice for water, but providing it in fresh, liquid form is best. A heated birdbath is a great addition to the landscape, adding not only texture and color, but a needed resource for birds. Gardeners may be surprised at the number of different species they may find at the watering hole.

Birds will also use the water to keep themselves clean. Clean feathers insulate much better against the cold than dirty feathers. Be sure to clean the birdbath regularly to avoid spreading illness.

Along with food and water, providing shelter for birds is another way to help them survive through the winter. Small piles of limbs can provide a place for birds to shelter from the wind and hide from predators. Bird houses and bird roost boxes are good methods of protection, too, especially when placed out of the northern wind. Gardeners can help by providing nesting materials such as yarn, scraps of cloth or even dryer lint for the birds to use as insulation.

During the cold winter months, looking out into your landscape and seeing a variety of birds can be an enjoyable activity for the family. Pick up a book about birds and see how many different species you can identify. Providing these creatures with food, water and shelter will help ensure they'll hang out in your landscape all year long.

For more information on attracting birds to the landscape see the [Oklahoma State University Extension](#) fact sheet [HLA-6435 Landscaping and Gardening for Birds](#).

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The Garfield County OSU
Extension Office
will be closed on
Monday, January 16th for
Martin Luther King, Jr. Day



<i>Liz Breitenkamp-</i>	<i>January 16th</i>
<i>Pam Denker-</i>	<i>January 8th</i>
<i>Pam Lyon-</i>	<i>January 27th</i>
<i>Linda Severin-</i>	<i>January 18th</i>
<i>Susie Skaggs-</i>	<i>January 4th</i>

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Rick Nelson
CED, Extension Educator, Agriculture/4-H