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WBU-1 Keeping Birdseed Fresh and Healthy

Fresh, top quality seed and seed blends are the foundations for successful backyard birdfeeding. Under normal storage and use conditions, seed will stay fresh and healthy for birds until it is completely consumed. However, unusually wet or humid weather conditions or periods of slow bird activity can potentially cause birdseed to deteriorate or spoil. The following recommendations will help to ensure that the seed you provide your birds will always be healthy and nutritious:

- Always use high quality seed. If you are unsure about the freshness of the seed, it is best to discard the old seed and provide fresh new seed.
- Always discard moldy, rancid or foul-smelling seed as it could present a health hazard to birds. Clean and disinfect all feeders and storage containers that have been in contact with spoiled seed. A 10 % bleach solution (9 parts water to 1 part bleach) is recommended.
- In wet weather, make certain to shake feeders to keep seed & moisture from collecting on the bottom of the feeder.
- Seed should always be stored in rodent - and insect - proof containers to avoid contamination. A 20-gallon galvanized metal trash can with a tight metal lid works very well.
- Line the storage container with a heavy-duty plastic trash bag and replace it with every new bag of seed. This helps to reduce the risk of any insect infestation by removing insect eggs and larvae that would normally attach to the inside of the can.
- If seed containers are kept outdoors, secure the lids so that animals cannot contaminate the seed. Always store seed in a cool, dry location.
- During periods of warm weather, store no more than a two-week supply of seed at a time -- always in a cool and dry location.
- Never mix old seed with new seed.
- During the winter, store only the amount of seed that your birds can consume over a 30-day period. Seed stored longer than a month may run the risk of attracting insects and absorbing excess moisture.
- Discourage insect problems by completely using your winter supply of birdseed before warm weather arrives.
- Keep your feeders filled with a one - or two - day supply of seed. By lessening the amount of seed in the feeders, you ensure that the seed is eaten quickly and always stays fresh.
- When using a feeding-tray type of feeder, or any feeder that will spill seed directly on the ground, use only the amount of seed that the birds can completely consume in one day.

A note about birdseed and bugs:

Any seed can become infested with grain moths and weevils. While this is not a preferable situation, it does not mean the seed is unfit for use. In fact, the insects will be eagerly consumed by many of the birds at your feeders.

Should your seed become infested, be sure to store the seed outdoors and not inside your house or attached garage as these moths can become a pantry pest. Once these pests are introduced into a home, they can quickly spread to grain and cereal items in your cupboards. If you wish to eliminate the bugs in your remaining seed, place it in a freezer for five days. For ease of use, divide your seed into smaller baggies and remove them from the freezer the day before you intend to use it. Once the infested seed is used, be sure to thoroughly clean your storage containers before refilling with fresh seed.

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