Suet: New Ways to Serve

Drs. Foster & Smith Educational Staff

easy to serve in a variety of ways

Suet is foolproof wild bird food. It's easy to serve and spill-free. Once birds have discovered it, they'll eat it up quickly; and since suet is very economical, frequent refills are affordable.

As the bounty of summer and autumn slowly dwindles, finding food becomes increasingly challenging for wild birds. The availability of food and the changing environmental conditions determine what birds are able to eat and also what they need to eat. Wild birds adopt various strategies to cope with these changes, and suet plays an important role in their success. Suet helps wild birds prepare for the coming winter as well as the duration of the winter.

Winter Preparation and Stress

Many wild bird species migrate to warmer locations where food and other natural resources are abundant. Just as human athletes prepare for a marathon by consuming high-energy foods, our avian counterparts do the same in preparation for their annual migration. High-energy foods such as suet better prepare migratory birds for their journey.

Suet is beneficial for migratory birds and non-migratory birds alike. During their journey, migratory birds can stop for food and to refuel. However, non-migratory birds are limited to the foods available in their home range. Calorie and protein-rich foods are scarce or simply not available during winter.

As a result, non-migratory birds need to travel longer and farther in search of food. On frigid nights, they need to expend more energy generating sufficient body heat, further depleting their precious energy reserves. Needless to say, winter is a stressful period for non-migratory birds. Harsh environmental conditions, combined with inadequate diet, weaken bird immune systems, making them more

*Unauthorized use of any images, thumbnails, illustrations, descriptions, article content, or registered trademarks of **Foster & Smith, Inc.** is strictly prohibited under copyright law. Site content, including photography, descriptions, pricing, promotions, and availability are subject to change without notice. These restrictions are necessary in order to protect not only our copyrighted intellectual property, but also the health of pets, since articles or images that are altered or edited after download could result in misinformation that may harm companion animals, aquatic life, or native species.*

susceptible to disease. Suet supplements the diet of wintering birds and encourages overall health while providing crucial energy needed to survive the winter.

What's Special About Suet?

Bird suet is made from fat. Along with protein and carbohydrates, fat plays an important role as one of the three dietary sources of calories. Fats are concentrated forms of energy and, per unit weight, provide more than twice the caloric energy as protein or carbohydrates of equivalent weight.

Fats are a source of productive energy as well as essential fatty acids and serve many crucial functions regarding growth and overall health. Fats also carry fat-soluble vitamins such as Vitamins A, D, E, and K – many having antioxidant properties.

Not Just for Winter

Many factors make suet feeding more attractive year-round. Improved, no-melt formulas take the mess out of using it during the warm summer months. You can also find fortified varieties that contain seeds, fruits, and insects to attract a greater variety of wild birds, and to maximize the dietary benefits of suet – no matter what the season.

While birdfeeders bursting with seed constitute an extremely popular, tried-and-true way to feed backyard birds, you can draw many more birds to your yard by offering additional menu items. One of the most enticing offerings is suet.

Suet is high-protein, high-calorie, pure animal fat that provides a perfect food source for always active wild birds. It offers much needed energy for generating body heat, migration, breeding, and overall survival in often harsh conditions. Suet also frequently contains additional bird-favorite ingredients such as seed, fruits, vegetables, and insects. While suet is traditionally thought of as a winter substitute for insects, it can be presented year-round.

Thanks to a wide variety of styles and designs, you'll find a suet feeder to attract your favorite birds and satisfy your aesthetic preferences.

- Traditional basket feeders enclose suet in a wide mesh that's easy for birds to cling to. Some basket feeders, such as the Deluxe Suet Buffet, have multiple compartments that let you offer more than one variety of tempting suet.
- Upside-down suet feeders offer suet through the bottom of the feeder. While smaller birds like woodpeckers, nuthatches, and chickadees easily hang from the feeder, larger birds typically do not enjoy feeding upside-down and will stay away.

*Unauthorized use of any images, thumbnails, illustrations, descriptions, article content, or registered trademarks of **Foster & Smith, Inc.** is strictly prohibited under copyright law. Site content, including photography, descriptions, pricing, promotions, and availability are subject to change without notice. These restrictions are necessary in order to protect not only our copyrighted intellectual property, but also the health of pets, since articles or images that are altered or edited after download could result in misinformation that may harm companion animals, aquatic life, or native species.*

- Suet plug feeders and suet ball feeders make feeding especially easy, and generally allow large numbers of birds to eat simultaneously. Simply fill with suet plugs or balls, and refill as necessary. Convenient, economical refills make stocking up easy.

Suet Placement

Locate suet feeders at least five feet from the ground and close to a tree trunk. Most birds that enjoy suet cling to tree trunks in search of insects. The close proximity to the tree not only encourages feeding but will also protect the suet from the sun's heat. Since suet is prized food, once the birds discover it, they will quickly eat it up. Be sure to refill suet feeders throughout the winter. Wash your suet feeder monthly with a mild detergent. Sanitize it with a 1-part bleach/10-parts water mixture and rinse well. Let feeder dry completely before refilling.

Which Species are Attracted to Suet?

Chickadees, bluebirds, woodpeckers, mockingbirds, warblers, titmice, kinglets, nuthatches, jays, wrens, starlings, and other birds will eagerly visit your suet feeders.

Add Suet to Your Backyard Menu

By offering suet year-round, you give backyard birds a more varied diet, more essential energy, and better overall health. Plus, you'll enjoy hosting a wider variety of beautiful, interesting songbirds in your yard.

Never Melt Suet

Deluxe Suet Buffet

Suet Plus Blend

Stokes Select Suet Plug Feeder

The Nuttery Hexihaus Suet Feeder

Suet Balls

*Unauthorized use of any images, thumbnails, illustrations, descriptions, article content, or registered trademarks of **Foster & Smith, Inc.** is strictly prohibited under copyright law. Site content, including photography, descriptions, pricing, promotions, and availability are subject to change without notice. These restrictions are necessary in order to protect not only our copyrighted intellectual property, but also the health of pets, since articles or images that are altered or edited after download could result in misinformation that may harm companion animals, aquatic life, or native species.*