



**The Bird Store**  
and more...

**Inside:**  **Fall Seed Sale!**  
October 1st -31st

**News**  
from the bird store



## Product Update Bird Seed and Seed Bags



With the ongoing drought in the Mid West states the seed crop has been hampered. The ongoing cry is we need rain. Maybe we should send our rain to the mid west! As of Friday 8/13/21 we received the latest crop report from Lizzie Mae "The crop report came and went today. Really not too much to report other than we still need rain. Commodities are so exciting"

Sometimes the Lizzie Mae guys just have to keep us laughing so here is their report "Sometimes we look at the past to forecast the future and sometimes we just don't have a clue. Historically in the Bird Food Industry (going back 36 years, 2 months and 4 hours is my window for historically) seed sales would come to a screeching halt in August and September and then the fire drill would start in October.

Over the last decade we have seen the trend shift to decent sales through the beginning of August and then a major slow down that often times runs through October. Typically, we would be hunkering down, updating any equipment that needed updated, plopping an extra storage bin in, if needed, and just basically gussying the place up during the lull.

The slowdown in October over the last 10 years has come from a lot of factors including changes in how seed is marketed at retail with less emphasis on loading customers up at the beginning of October vs ongoing marketing plans to keep them coming into the store regularly. With September and October being at the end of all the growing seasons for crops, there is plentiful food natural food for the birds without having to come to the feeders.

We can say unequivocally, we have no idea what to expect for bird seed demand through the next couple months. Pandemic, Cicada, Mysterious Bird Diseases, Drought, Global Warming, the alarming rate of divorce in Arkansas (10.7%), and don't forget Mayhem, have a way of making historical data just about worthless.

As Walter Cronkite told us Monday through Fridays "And that's the way it is." 2021 Version: "No crying in Bird Seed, even though there are days you need the Kleenex"

### Seed Bags

As you all know, our seed has been in a multitude of bag colors over the last number of months. Recently Lizzie Mae has been packing in a tan colored recyclable bag and in clear plastic labeled bags. Many of you have made comments about the plastic as you preferred paper. We reached out to Lizzie Mae to find out about the bag situation. Rob, one of the Lizzie Mae partners sent the following information.

"We just wanted to give you an update on empty packaging. The simplest way to put it is right now we are getting what we can get.

The supply chain for many items is broken with empty bags, pallets, empty boxes all being an issue. Our long term plan is to have fully recyclable bags. Even if the supply chain wasn't an issue we aren't there yet but that is the plan."



### Did You Know?

The more dee dee dee's at the end of a chickadee's call the more agitated they are and that there could be danger about.

Continued from cover

That said, we looked into the brown plastic bags currently in use. They are #4 LDPE recyclable. What is LDPE? LDPE is an everyday plastic, low-density polyethylene plastic, or LDPE, is the kind of transparent plastic you'll find in things like shrink wrap, produce bags, and squeezable ketchup bottles. Its oil resistant, chemical resistant, flexible, and often transparent, making it ideal for all kinds of applications.

If you would like to know how to recycle them, here is a great website that is recycle type and location specific. [Earth911.com](http://Earth911.com)

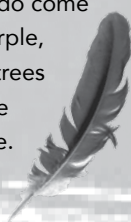
Do not put number 4 LDPE plastic into a recycling bin unless you are sure it is accepted otherwise you could contaminate an entire batch of recycled plastic. If it is accepted make sure to remove the string stitching at the bag ends.



## Did You Know?

Cardinal feathers get their red pigment from the foods the birds eat, and the color is deposited before the birds molt new feathers in the fall. The dogwood tree grows bright red autumn berries – a favorite food of the Northern Cardinal and a source of red carotenoids. When the cardinal metabolizes dogwood berries, the carotenoid pigments are sequestered in the liver and then transported to the bloodstream for eventual deposit in growing feather follicles where they crystallize. Cardinals acquire orange, red, and yellow pigments from many seed sources, continuously keeping red plumes vibrant.

If you'd like to help cardinals keep their color, there are several plants that you can grow right in your own backyard. Cardinals love native fruit (and many native fruits are packed with the carotenoids these birds need). Keep wild grapes, raspberries, or even a flowering crabapple tree. Dogwood berries are by far and away the most popular treat among cardinals everywhere. These trees generally flower in white, although they do come in a few shades of pink and purple, but the red berries that these trees produce in the fall will keep the cardinals coming back for more.



# Fall Seed Sale

## It's That Time of Year Again!

The Seed Saver Cards will be on sale during the month of October.



**Please use up balances on your 2020 card by the end of September.**

From **October 1st through the 31st** you will be able to purchase a **SEED SAVER CARD** in any denomination that you choose. The **SEED SAVER CARD** will be good for all SEED purchases throughout the year regardless of the bag size. All seed purchased with the **SEED SAVER CARD** will receive **15% off** up to the value of your card. The **SEED SAVER CARD** will not be valid with any other offers, promotions, discounts, or bucks.

## What the seed card does for you:

- You don't have to store your seed; it will be fresh when you want it.
- You are not limited to certain size bags – Some of you like your seed in smaller bags and had not participated in the sale in the past.
- All seed is available for purchase on your seed card, not just specific types.
- You can purchase it when you need it, and don't have to buy large quantities.



## The rules:

- You must purchase your card between **October 1st -31st**. This is the only time that a **SEED SAVER CARD** will be available for purchase. The **SEED SAVER CARDS** will be available for use the same day as purchased.
- You will have to purchase your card here. We do not have the cards available on our web store.
- You must present your card prior to your purchase so that we can apply your discount.
- The **SEED SAVER CARD** cannot be combined with any other offers, promotions, discounts or bucks and will not earn bucks.
- The **SEED SAVER CARD** can be used on any size bag of seed.
- The **SEED SAVER CARD** gives you a discounted price off of the regular retail price. If prices go up or down the discount will be off of that price.



**If you are planning to pick up a large number of bags please check with us first to make sure they are available.**

# Bird Disease UPDATE

With the summer being so odd between the bouts of rain and heat the birds have used the feeders more than ever. Many of you have been concerned and took your feeders down due to the bird disease warning. Let us try to clarify some of that information for you. The fall season is when many birds start to cache seed for the winter, and scout out food sources. They may not be at your feeders now but they know the feeders are there. This is a good time to make sure they are in good repair so they will be ready for the winter season. This means clean and disinfected with bleach. Our migrants will be moving south soon but rest assured the northern migrants will be making their way into our area as the days get shorter and we will pause and say "Is that a Junco that I hear".

When rumblings of an unknown bird disease circulated in the Mid Atlantic, many states including our own advised to take the feeders down. Although reading further in the **mass.gov** statement it said that "While there is always an increase in reports of dead birds at this time of year due to natural high mortality rates of young birds, MassWildlife is encouraging the public to report any observations of sick or dead birds (with unknown cause of mortality) as a precaution to help track this widespread mortality event. **However, the mystery disease is not known to be in any of the New England states at this time.**

**This is an important statement that everyone seemed to overlook.** We advised, as we always do, be vigilant in cleaning your feeders and disinfecting them with a 1-10 bleach solution. You should be doing this on a regular basis as the bird conjunctivitis has been around for years and is highly transmitted by birds touching their eyes and feathers on the feeders while feeding.

Even Mark Blazis, a well known bird banding researcher in our area, and guest columnist in the Worcester Telegram & Gazette made a statement explaining the same thing in his column on 7/2/21.

**Cornell Wildlife Health Lab** has been monitoring the situation and has released information that they are not overly alarmed by the mysterious songbird sickness. This was posted on 7/28/21 (read it in it's entirety [https://www.ithaca.com/news/ithaca/cornell-experts-not-overly-alarmed-by-mysterious-song-bird-sickness/article\\_ae73fa12-efc6-11eb-9a3f-ef82b40e923f.html](https://www.ithaca.com/news/ithaca/cornell-experts-not-overly-alarmed-by-mysterious-song-bird-sickness/article_ae73fa12-efc6-11eb-9a3f-ef82b40e923f.html))

## Excerpts from the article

In just the past few weeks, the Wildlife Lab has received widespread news of declining cases and dropping mortality rates. "Information coming out of the National Wildlife Health Center and some of the other states said that the cases were declining all of a sudden, that would not be typical of an infectious disease outbreak. You wouldn't expect an infectious disease to just spontaneously go away." The most recent working theory is that the outbreak is related to the emergence of the cicadas this year — the geographic

distribution and the timing of the undetermined songbird illness directly coincides with the arrival of the cicadas.

The cicadas emerged in Washington, DC and eleven other states: Delaware, Indiana, Ohio, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Maryland, West Virginia, Virginia, Tennessee, Florida, and Kentucky in mid May. Birds in these states started showing the unusual symptoms about a week later.

**"The distribution of states where this spontaneously popped up was an exact match for the cicada emergence map,** and it is a very strange distribution of states for this kind of outbreak," Bunton said. "It was Virginia, West Virginia, Maryland, Delaware, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and then it moved over to Tennessee, Kentucky, Ohio, Indiana but **it completely skipped New York and the rest of New England. That is an exact replica of the cicada map."**

Researchers such as Bunton believe that the ingestion of the cicadas could have had toxic effects on the birds. It is possible that individuals sprayed the cicadas with pesticides, which have chemicals that affect the brains of birds and could have caused the neurological symptoms. Cicadas also carry fungi that can produce toxins when ingested which could have also produced the illness in the birds.



## How do Hummingbirds Protect Themselves from Predators?

—**They have tiny nests** A typical hummingbird nest comes about half the size of a walnut. The reason is that these birds don't need a larger one because their eggs can fit into it. With the small size, they can easily hide their nest from predators. These nests also blend well in the surroundings, such as native twigs and leaves.

—**The females stay while the male goes away** Male hummingbirds have bright colors, and they can get spotted easily. Thus, they tend to stay away from nests to avoid getting caught. Their female counterparts are the ones that stay since they don't have bright colors. Such an appearance makes them unnoticeable to predators. Since they blend with their surroundings, they can protect their nests with ease.

—**They can be quite fast** These birds have an average flight of 25-30mph. Since they are tiny, they can easily maneuver in the air. Although their predators are faster, they can sometimes escape because of their agility. —**Hummingbirds can dive and maneuver** These tiny birds have well-developed flight reflexes. They can fly in any direction fast and immediately change whenever they need to. They can fly upside down and can dive in the speed of 60 mph. With such capabilities, they can escape from predators with ease. —**They have noisy wings** While their wings' humming sound may be a delight for us, it can confuse their predators. If a predator hears that hum, it will attempt to search for its source in other directions. As a result, hummingbirds get the chance to escape from them.



## Not a Bird Song Shriek in the Night

Recently we had a couple stop by with a recording that they asked us to identify. They said they hear this almost nightly and never see the bird. They have listened to numerous bird calls that would typically call in the evening and night but nothing comes close.

The recording was definitely a shriek, but didn't sound like a bird. After some searching we found a recording of the "bird". It was a Red Fox. On one recording the sound was referred to as the Vixen's Scream but both male and female fox use this call.

According to Critter Control, a male Red Fox makes noises similar to the sound of a screaming woman to warn off competing mates, and the female makes short shrill shrieks to attract a mate. Needless to say the mystery bird song was a Red Fox shriek.



## Remember the Bears

Just a friendly reminder that the Bears in our area are beginning to feed up for the winter. In the fall a bear can eat up to 15,000 calories a day. That's a lot of nuts, berries and birdseed! If a black bear visits your property and finds no food it will most likely move on. If your feeders are not protected then take them in overnight so they don't get damaged or destroyed. Thoughtful planning can save your feeders from being destroyed.

Try our Bear Proof  
Bird Feeder Poles



# Fall Seed Sale It's That Time of Year Again!

**Bird Store Hours:**  
10:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m. Monday - Saturday

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 736, Fiskdale, MA 01518

Phone: (508)-347-BIRD

[www.thebirdstoreandmore.com](http://www.thebirdstoreandmore.com)

Sturbridge, MA 01566

(Route 20, Cedar Street Intersection)

4 Cedar Street,



**Fall Seed Sale!**  
October 1st - 31st



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