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News
 from the bird store

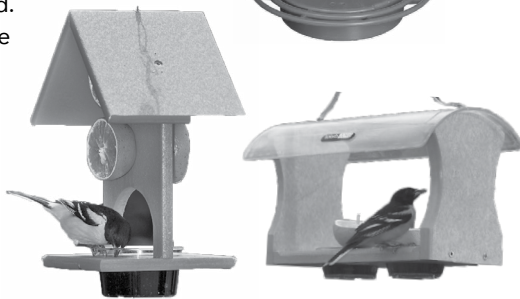
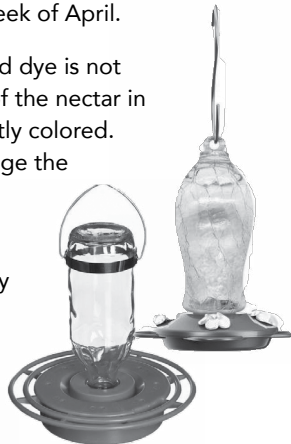
Hummingbirds AND Orioles



They will be returning soon! Make sure you get your Hummingbird feeders out by April 15th. Over the years we have had reports of the hummers showing up by the 3rd week of April.

Make sure to only use clear nectar. The red dye is not necessary and not good for them. Think of the nectar in flowers, its clear, only the petals are brightly colored. Make sure to clean your feeders and change the nectar often.

The Oriole feeders should be put out the last few days of April as the Orioles usually return in the first few days of May. They follow the flower blossoms. If your fruit trees are blossoming the Orioles won't be far behind. The Orioles favorite foods are oranges and grape jelly.



Spring Cleaning



Spring is here and it's time to clean! The birds are on the lookout for nesting sites so make sure your nest boxes are cleaned out and in good repair. We have resizing blocks and metal guards available at the Bird Store if you need to fix the opening to your nest box.



This is also the time to take those winter feeders down and give them a good scrubbing and a bleaching. As the weather gets warmer the feeders will need more cleaning to stop the spread of disease. Remember birds can easily transmit conjunctivitis while feeding, let's keep our birds healthy with clean feeders!

Birdbaths also need a deep cleaning for spring. Remember that birds poop in their water so clean it up. And while you're at it rake up the birdseed that has accumulated under the feeders, your grass will thank you. Old molding seed hulls begin to stink and get slimy when they accumulate, you don't need to slip and fall in that stuff.





What Does
it Mean to be

Free
as a
Bird



An idiom is a figurative expression that describes a situation in a creative or colorful way. Idioms are often catchy phrases that are easily remembered and commonly understood, and they can be used in a variety of contexts depending on the tone of voice or the situation they describe.

When you hear someone say I'm Free as a Bird, you think that person is lucky, not a care in the world, no entanglements. Because birds can fly they are perceived as symbols of freedom with their ability to quickly and easily escape from troubles, dangers, or complications.

There are many other bird idioms that come to mind such as like a duck to water, graceful as a swan, and as the crow flies. Each of these easily brings a picture to mind.

A person naturally and easily knowing how to do something just like a baby duck knows how to swim. Someone who carries themselves gracefully like a swan elegant and graceful on the water, and a straight path just as birds fly direct to their destination without the use of roads.

As all good things must come to an end, so we'll end it here.

Spring Walks

Our updated website now has a **News and Events tab**. The Events calendar is where we will be posting our upcoming spring birdwalks.



The Bird Store Events

« prev							April 2022		next »	
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat				
						1			2	



WHAT'S IS A Flock?



Not every group of birds is automatically a flock. The two characteristics that generally constitute a flock are:

Number of birds. In general, larger groups of birds are always considered flocks, while smaller groups may be flocks if the birds are not often seen in groups. For example, a few starlings hanging out at your bird feeder would not be called a flock, but if there are starlings covering your back lawn, that would be called a flock. Less social birds, however, such as hummingbirds or grosbeaks, would be considered a flock if there were only a few birds since they are much less likely to gather in larger groups.

Species: Any large group of birds, no matter how many different species make up the group, can be called a flock if only a general flock term is used. The more unique, specialized terms, however, are only used for single-species flocks. The exception is when all the species that make up the flock are still in the same related family. A flock of sparrows, for example, can still be called a knot, flutter, host, quarrel, or crew even if several sparrow species are part of the group.

Flight Flocks



Birds form clusters of organized groups, called flight flocks, for a reason. Experts believe flocks increase the odds of survival and safety. Flocking can increase the possibility of finding food and protecting each other from trouble and predators.

Did you know?

A flock of crows is known as a murder, a name given to these smart, social creatures because they were once thought of as omens of death, scavenging for food where there were dead bodies.

Can you guess which species of bird the flock name belongs to?

- | | | | |
|---------------|-----------|--------------|------------|
| – Charm | – Herd | – Mewing | – Fall |
| – Flamboyance | – Bevy | – Banditry | – Drumming |
| – Party | – Vatican | – Parliament | |

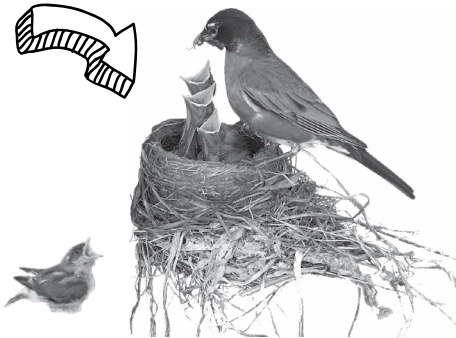
Answers are on the back page, don't cheat now!

A Thought Worth Repeating

- In life everyone suffers, but being miserable is a choice
- Enjoying nature quiets the mind and soothes the soul.



OUR ANNUAL Baby Bird and Squirrel Reminder



It is the nesting season and every year we receive numerous calls about baby birds that are on the ground. Please be kind, these little fuzz balls are fledgling birds and the parent bird is usually around and will continue to feed the baby on the ground as well as helping it learn to fly. If you think the baby bird is in jeopardy take a basket, fill it with grass, then place the baby in the basket and hang the basket on a tree branch close by but away from danger. The mother bird will find and feed the baby. Don't take it home, to us, or to the vet. The baby is usually fine (it just hasn't quite got the hang of flying yet) and the mother bird will be quite upset if her baby goes missing.

The same goes for baby squirrels. The mother is most likely around and will move her young to a safe location. If you find a baby squirrel put it in a box or basket close to the location where it was found. It may take the mother a few hours to come back to move her babies but their squeaking will lead her to them.



Because You Asked

Q: Will the sunflower hulls kill my grass?

A: Many of us have experienced how nothing seems to grow under the bird feeder that had sunflower seeds in it. All parts of sunflowers contain allelopathic toxins that inhibit seed germination and seedling growth. The sunflower hulls that fall to the ground exhibit allelopathy toward other plants, although allelopathy exhibited by the seed hulls under a feeder should be gone in two months.

Allelopathy, from the Greek words allelo (one another or mutual) and pathy (suffering), refers to the release of chemicals, by one plant, that have some type of effect on another plant. These chemicals can be given off by different parts of the plant or can be released through natural decomposition. Allelopathy is a survival mechanism that allows certain plants to compete with and often destroy nearby plants, by inhibiting seed sprouting, root development or nutrient uptake. Other organisms, such as bacteria, viruses and fungi, can also be allelopathic.

Don't panic because you have possibly warring plants in your yard. They can peacefully co-exist if they are kept at a distance. And the quality of your soil can be a factor in how long the toxins are held. The heavier the soil, the longer the toxins are trapped. Well-draining soil will move the toxins below the root zone of nearby plants.

Having a healthy soil with plenty of beneficial organisms also seems to help. It's interesting how many amazing things fungi and bacteria can do for your soil. They can breakdown, dissipate or convert the toxins into something more benign. On the other hand, there are micro-organisms that add in the allelopathic process. That's nature.

So the best advice is to keep the seed hulls raked under your bird feeder to lower the allelopathic process. This is especially important in the Spring. After a long winter of feeding over the snow your yard will be messy with the layers of fallen hulls. Raking them up or sucking them up with your shop vac and throwing them away will go a long way to regrouping your grass. You can also use a hulled seed product such as Sunflower hearts or chips which contain little or no hulls and will be cleaned up quickly by the birds. If you're feeding the birds in a flower bed it should be cleaned regularly to keep your flowers happy. Either that or locate your feeding station away from the planting areas.



Things Have Changed at *The Bird Store* *and more...*

As you may know Myrh our turtledove passed in 2020 leaving Alf the cockatiel alone and sad. We found him a cockatiel friend named Pikachu last fall and they got along great, but we found out shortly after Pikachu arrived that Alf was ill with gout which is not curable in birds. Sadly Alf

Pikachu



Eevee

passed in February. Pikachu kept his friend Alf happy till the end but now Pikachu was sad. We now have a wonderful new friend for Pikachu, a turtledove named Eevee. **Be sure to say hi to our new mascots when you stop by!**

Meet Karra

Karra is the newest member of our Bird Store team. She will be with us for the summer and hopefully much longer. Make sure you say hi and give her a hard time! She can take it and give it right back to you!



Dezzie's Been Decorating

Or I should say Dezzie and Karra have been sprucing up the Bird Store for Spring while we took a few days off. They sent us this picture of what they felt like! Welcome into Spring at The Bird Store.



Stop in to put a little Spring in your Step.

FLOCK ANSWERS: Charm = Hummingbirds, Flamboyance = Flamingos, Party = Jays, Herd = Cowbirds, Bevy = Doves, Vatican = Cardinals, Mewing = Catbirds, Banditry = Chickadees, Parliament = Owls, Fall = Woodcocks, Drumming = Woodpeckers

Bird Store Hours:
10:00 am-6:00 pm Monday - Saturday
Closed Sunday

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

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