



Don't forget our garden birds -
they need you more than ever!

You may think that because the weather has been so mild, our garden birds no longer need our help. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Unlike mammals small birds have a high body temperature and high metabolic rate which means that they must feed regularly. During a normal winter they use a great deal of energy just trying to survive and it is vital that they replace that energy by having access to food from dawn to dusk. Their biggest enemy is the cold; if temperatures plummet and they can't find food during the day, they may well not survive overnight as they will either starve or freeze to death in a very short time.

More than ever the birds will rely heavily on our providing food for them in our gardens and will visit regularly. It is really important to make sure that supplies of food and water are constantly available as this may well be their only source of food, particularly later in the day. Fresh water is fundamental to them, not just for drinking, but they also bathe in it to maintain their feathers, which is vital for flight and to help insulate them during the cold.

Different species eat different foods, for example Finches and Sparrows prefer seed based foods, such as whole sunflower seeds, sunflower hearts and mixed wild birdseeds, which are all fairly economical products to buy. Seed eaters also enjoy peanuts, which are typically more expensive and are imported. On the other hand, if you want to attract Goldfinches, they are particularly partial to the smaller specialist seeds such as the nyjer.



Tits, Robins and House Sparrow are all insect eaters and need high energy foods such as suet based fatballs, which can be placed in a feeder or directly on the bird table. If you mix them with dried insects, mealworms, berries or fruit this will enhance the nutritional value of the fatballs and will be particularly welcome during the cold winter months by Blackbirds Redwings and Fieldfares. Rotten fruit is also a tasty treat, so rather than clear it away when it falls to the ground let the birds do it for you!



At Parrish Farms we have now harvested most of the maize crop and drilled the winter wheat crop. We have also introduced a range of suet-based bird cakes including one with berries and another with mealworms and we are currently trialling suet pellets, which contain a mixture of our farm grown seeds. These will be an alternative to peanuts, which can potentially be lethal because they can contain a naturally occurring fungus called aspergillus, which produces toxins that are poisonous to wild birds.

Many of our customers have problems with squirrels and we are testing a product with added chilli which the birds can't taste, but which squirrels can taste and dislike. So watch this space... more new products are on the way!

For further information on our products please email James Parrish at info@parrishsfarm.co.uk or go to www.parrishsfarm.co.uk.