

## WILD BIRD FEEDING DURING THE SPRINGTIME

MARRIAGE'S

While fauna, flora and fruits are beginning to grow during the spring, it can be a hard time for any early migrant birds to find food naturally. Usually our gardens provide an abundance of fruits, seeds and insects for birds, however we're now in a period known as the Feeding Gap which occurs in spring time when natural food supplies are depleted following the winter. By providing filled bird feeders in your garden you are providing easy foods for the birds to take advantage during a time when they really need to replenish.

Springtime is a really busy time for birds as they claim their territories, search for a mate, build nests and begin to raise their young. Not only do the parents need to hunt all day to find the right food for their young, they also need to find food for themselves. A well fed parent is better able to gather food for its young.

By July and August there are millions more hungry mouths to feed. For tits, finches and sparrows garden feeders -whether hanging or ground, provide a real lifeline.

The job of finding hundreds of caterpillars a day is hard work for a pair of blue tits, so any extra food to maintain their own energy levels will always be welcome.

### The Best Spring Bird Foods

In any season, providing a variety of different foods for garden birds will attract a wide range of species into your garden. Feeding different foods provides a well-rounded nutritional support to breeding birds and parent birds feeding their young. Always feed peanuts through a mesh feeder if whole, or kibbled if in a mix to prevent choking in young birds.

**Wild bird seed:** All our garden birds will be grateful for seed mixes or straight seeds during the springtime. Sunflowers (Black Sunflowers or Sunflower Hearts) are the most universally nutritious and attractive choices in any season.

A high energy mix is a great all round food, high in protein and soft to eat so perfect for fledglings or a quick energy boost for adult birds that don't have the time to break shells and husks.

If your garden is proud it is worth looking into a no mess food such as a 'Won't Grow' mix which does as it says and won't grow on the floor surrounding bird tables and feeders due to the seeds being heat treated or kibbled to prevent germination.

**Dried Mealworms** can be added to mixes in feeders or alone as a treat in small dishes or on bird tables. They are an ideal treat for our insect eating birds such as Robins, Wrens, Thrushes and Blackbirds who can struggle in our wet weather when foraging can be difficult.

**Fruit:** apple chunks, raisins and other fruits offered on a bird table or specialty feeders will be appreciated by many spring birds. Ideally kept off the floor as can attract not so welcome visitors.

