



St Alban's going for Bronze in 2024

We will try to make St Alban's church more eco-friendly and over the coming months we will pass on ideas for becoming more Eco friendly at home too.

Let's talk BIRDS, and how we can attract birds into our garden all year round.

Attracting birds to your garden is easy. You can supplement naturally available food with bird food but remember to keep feeders and tables clean, so the birds stay healthy and disease-free. Position your feeders in a relatively open area away from predators - the birds will feel safer and visit more!



Make sure food is available at all times as birds have different needs throughout the year, such as feeding young.

Types of bird food:

- Straight seeds – as the name suggests, these seeds aren't mixed with anything. Straight seeds include black sunflower, niger, oil seed rape, peanuts, and red and white millet.
- Seed mixes – here the seeds are mixed into different blends, with the main advantage being that a greater mix of seed types attracts a greater mix of bird species. I use this type of seed.
- Husk-free seed mixes – similar to the above, the seeds in these mixes have had their husks removed, so there is much less mess to clear up and birds that can't crack husks (such as blackbirds) can also eat the mix. Some husk-free mixes also contain other foods like dried mealworms and suet pellets.
- Suet (also called fat) – this food comes as blocks, balls, and pellets. Lots of birds like suet and it provides a vital source of energy for them, particularly in the winter months. I use fat balls.
- Mealworms – a brilliant food to provide in the breeding and fledgling season. Robins particularly like mealworms – I used the dried variety.

Ways of providing food:

- Hanging seed feeders - these will attract robins, tits, goldfinches, house sparrows, greenfinches, and siskins.

- Niger/Nyjer seed feeders - designed to hold tiny niger seeds, these attract goldfinches, siskins, and redpolls.
- Mesh peanut feeders - these allow birds to take only small chunks of peanut, rather than whole nuts that they might choke on. They will attract sparrows, starlings, chaffinches, and tits.
- Ground and table feeding - birds such as blackbirds, collared doves, thrushes, dunnocks, and robins will not use feeders, preferring to feed off the ground or a bird table.

Then just sit back and wait for the birds to come and visit.

RSPB - Big Garden Birdwatch 2024

The Big Garden Birdwatch is the UK's largest garden wildlife survey. It's been running since 1979, and every year, around 700,000 people take part. It takes place over the last weekend in January each year.

In 2024, the Big Garden Birdwatch will be on **26-28 January 2024**.

You'll need to register to take part, once you register, the RSPB will keep you updated with top tips on how to get ready for the birdwatch.

Register here www.rspb.org.uk/whats-happening/big-garden-birdwatch

It's easy to take part – you simply watch the birds in your garden or local park for one hour, and record what you see.

- 1.** Count the birds you see in your garden, from your balcony or in your local park for one hour over the Big Garden Birdwatch weekend. It doesn't matter what time of day you do your Birdwatch, but you'll see more birds if you do it first thing in the morning.
- 2.** Only include birds that land, not those flying over. Count the highest number of each species you see at any one time. For example, if you saw four Starlings together, then two Starlings later, your final count will be four (not six).
- 3.** Go online and tell the RSPB what you've seen! Even if you didn't see anything at all in your hour, please let them know. It's all really useful information.

I've done this for the past 5 years and it's been great to see an increase in birds in my garden.

I hope you enjoy feeding and looking at the birds in your garden.



Janet