

# FEEDING SCHOOLYARD BIRDS



## Welcome to the wonderful world of feeding birds!

We hope you and your students will enjoy discovering the world of birds with your new Pennington® window bird feeder. Birds inspire learning while connecting us to the natural world. Take a few moments to learn how to install, maintain, and inspire inquiry with your new feeder. Check out

**Feathered Friends** lessons to get even more out of your Pennington® window bird feeder. [birds.cornell.edu/k12/feathered-friends](https://birds.cornell.edu/k12/feathered-friends)

## CHOOSING THE RIGHT SEED

Seeds differ in taste, hardness, and nutritional value. Different food and feeder combinations will attract different species.

Black-oil sunflower seed is a great choice that will attract many hungry birds. Avoid anything larger than black-oil sunflower seed to keep seed flowing through this feeder. Mixed seed, like Pennington® Birder's Blend and Songbird Blend, will also attract a variety of birds to your feeder.

Project FeederWatch has developed an online interactive to help you learn the most likely birds you'll see based on the type of seed and feeder you use.

[feederwatch.org/learn/common-feeder-birds](https://feederwatch.org/learn/common-feeder-birds)



## INSTALLATION & MAINTENANCE

The best way to help reduce fatal window strikes is to hang feeders close to windows or farther than 30' away. Your new Pennington® feeder, suction-cupped to your classroom window, is a safe way to feed your local birds.

Check feeder often to make sure food is fresh. Moldy food is unhealthy.

Clean feeder every two weeks—more often during heavy use. For best results, wash in hot, soapy water. Dry thoroughly before use.

You may notice birds eating dropped seed on the ground. If birds or other wildlife don't eat the fallen seed, clean it up or move your feeder periodically to prevent waste accumulation.



# CREATING A BIRD-FRIENDLY HABITAT

**Habitat** provides the basic needs of birds: food, water, cover, and space. Now that you've begun feeding birds with your Pennington® feeder, we invite you to continue creating a bird-friendly habitat. Because each species has different habitat needs, a diverse landscape will attract a wider variety of birds. Here are some ideas to help you get started.

- **Food:** In addition to bird feeders, add native plants. Plants provide food for birds through their seeds and nectar while also attracting insects, a major source of protein for adult and nestling birds. For example, goldenrod, thistle, and sunflower provide valuable nectar for butterflies and bees. In fall, seed heads from these plants form, attracting goldfinches and other song birds. Choose native plants that maximize flowering and seed production.
- **Water:** A simple birdbath will draw birds in like a magnet! A small pond can provide home for amphibians and aquatic insects while also offering drinking water for all kinds of creatures in addition to birds.
- **Cover:** Although dense shrubbery, tangled vines, and dead trees may challenge your vision of an orderly habitat, they create ideal nesting and foraging sites. Does your habitat have a thicket that birds could use for nesting, perching, or escape? If not, consider adding nest boxes to your habitat.



## SPARK STUDENT CURIOSITY

### FEEDER INQUIRY

- After hanging up your feeder, you may notice students beginning to ask science questions. Save these questions with an "I Wonder" Board. Have students write questions on a sticky note and hang them up. As time allows, have students search for answers.
- Questions such as, "Do birds prefer different types of seed?" and "Will we see more birds in the morning or afternoon?" are great opportunities for scientific study. January's inquiry activity in *Feathered Friends* is designing a feeder experiment.
- Challenge your students to develop their own feeder experiment using their new bird feeder.



### TEACHING TIPS

- As hungry visitors flock to your feeder, become familiar with your common feeder birds.
- To help identify birds visiting your feeder, use field guides or the free Merlin bird ID app. Download Merlin to your phone or tablet. [merlin.allaboutbirds.org](https://merlin.allaboutbirds.org)
- Make a classroom guide! Ask each student to research one of your common feeder birds, present to the class, and post its image, name, and a few fun facts near the window feeder.
- Go further by using free *Feathered Friends* lessons. [birds.cornell.edu/k12/feathered-friends](https://birds.cornell.edu/k12/feathered-friends)



**We'd like to thank Pennington® for making this program possible.  
And THANK YOU for connecting your students to their local habitat.**

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