

## **Birds-I-View version of the traditional “Miracle Meal”:**

### *Ingredients:*

- 3 ½ Cups yellow Cornmeal (not a mix)
- ½ Cup all Purpose Flour
- 1-tsp corn oil
- 1-Ten ounce package of “Pure Beef Suet cake” (where suet products are sold) OR approx 1 cup of Lard
- ½ Cup Sunflower Hearts (Coarse or chips– as long as there is no shell)
- ½ Cup sterilized, crushed egg shells ( see directions in this brochure)
  1. Melt beef suet or lard and stir in Sunflower hearts and egg shells
  2. Mix in corn oil, corn meal and flour Mixture will be very crumbly – if too soft and more cornmeal, if too dry add more melted suet
  3. Put the crumbly mixture in dishes or trays for the bluebirds to eat. We usually only put a small amount out each morning. Freeze or refrigerate the remainder of the batch in plastic Ziploc bags.



## Why Feed Bluebirds?

*Primarily, we feed Bluebirds for our own enjoyment. They are beautiful and fun to watch! Still, supplementing their natural diet can be beneficial to the birds, especially during times of stress. Nesting season, during particularly hot dry summers and during very cold winters when natural food is frozen and unavailable, are examples of such times. **If the Bluebirds in your yard have learned to use feeders and to eat the food you offer when they are not under stress, they are inevitably healthier and more successful during those times of high stress.***

**Will other desirable birds eat the food I offer Bluebirds?**

*Sure! Expect to see Carolina Wrens, Chickadees, Titmice, Catbirds, Yellow-rumped warblers (and other warblers), Nuthatches, **Orioles**, Brown Creepers and, depending on the feeder style, Cardinals, Woodpeckers, Brown Thrashers and more!*



## Birds-I-View

Jefferson City, MO 573-638-BIRD(2473)

## Feeding Bluebirds! and other non-seed eating birds



Photos by Steve Garr

Recipes and techniques for providing supplemental food for those Beautiful Bluebirds (and other insect and berry-eating birds) who visit your yard and garden! **Recipes for Fun family activities , PLUS quick and easy no -fuss ideas as well.**

From home-made doughs to meal-worms to shell-free foods, let us help you enjoy those special Bluebirds up-close and personal!

**[www.birds-i-view.biz](http://www.birds-i-view.biz)**

# Feeding Bluebirds and other non-seed eating Birds!

## Sterilizing egg shells

### to feed birds

Directions for feeding eggshells to birds vary but most sources agree the shells should be sterilized to prevent possible contamination with salmonella bacteria. Baking is one of the easiest ways to accomplish sterilization . If you are using shells from boiled eggs, there is no need to bake if the eggs were boiled for 10 mins)

1. Rinse eggshells (no need to crush yet)
2. Dry and bake at 250 degrees for 10 minutes (instructions vary from 10-20 mins but we find 20 mins seems to burn the shells)
3. After shells cool you may crush them by hand in pieces dime –sized or smaller and offer them in dishes or platforms for the birds to pick up.

**HOWEVER for the BIV Miracle Meal recipe in this brochure**, we prefer to use a powdery crumble of eggshells so we put the cooled, cooked shells in the blender. Pulse on the crumble setting in small batches until a powder or very fine crumble is achieved.

## What do Bluebirds Eat?



Bluebirds hunt for ground **insects** to eat by finding a perch area and watching the ground. They do consume the occasional flying insect, but predominately eat crawling insects. However, Bluebirds do also eat other food products, and will often try a variety of shell –free food stuffs during harsh weather:

- **LIVE Mealworms** tend to be the all time favorite (these are actually the larvae stage of the Darkling Beetle)
- **Sunflower Hearts** (either coarse, medium or fine chips—as long as there is no shell)
- **Raw peanut halves/pieces** (again, no shell)
- **Dried/dehydrated Mealworms**
- **SOME chopped or dried fruits** (often works best to soak these)
- **Many plant Berries** (generally eat the fleshy part and discard the seed)
- **Any number of Beef Suet or Peanut Butter base doughs** which are high in fat and may be fed in cakes, crumbles, nuggets or meal mixes.

**Bluebirds are natural ground feeders: Offer the above foods in feeders with adequate perch area for bluebirds to be comfortable. This will greatly increase their willingness to try a feeder**

## A Few Berry-producing Plants for Bluebird Food

- Hackberry
- Eastern red cedar
- Virginia creeper
- Spicebush
- Flowering dogwood
- Mulberry

***Favorite recipes*** for making food for Bluebirds are almost endless! We have met so many folks with their own special recipe which their bluebirds find irresistible. Make your OWN special food for Bluebirds! Begin with the **recipe** below and then Experiment by adding some of the food stuffs mentioned in this Brochure.

### Suet Dough Base

**1 Cup Peanut Butter**

**1 Cup lard or solid shortening or beef suet**

Melt these first two ingredients together and then stir in the following:

**4 Cups plain yellow corn meal**

**1 Cup unbleached all purpose flour**

**Want to start your own "Mealworm Farm"?** We can help! See our Educational Brochure "**Mealworms for Songbirds**" at: **[www.birds-i-view.biz](http://www.birds-i-view.biz)**

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