

## The MOST overlooked aspect of deterring unwanted guests at Bird Feeders:

### Bird Feeding happens Outside!

Feeders, tree branches, and other objects in your yard change positions from wind, the weight of rain or snow, deterioration from age and sometimes UV degradation. Pets, other animals, and even people may impact the position of feeders and feeding station components. Trees and shrubs grow and change shapes. Inside our homes we may have complete control over where objects around us are placed and where they stay, however this is really not the case outdoors!

We should **be prepared to make adjustments** for a subtly changing environment.

#### Things you should know about Gray Squirrels:

- Squirrels can easily climb metal poles (even tall, thin poles)
- Squirrels can **easily** jump horizontally 8 feet from a stand still—frequently YOUR squirrel will jump farther!
- Squirrels can and do chew through metal
- Squirrels greatly prefer bird seed over corn
- If you block a squirrel's path from reaching a feeder from one direction, it will *immediately* seek an alternate route.
- **It IS possible to achieve squirrel-free bird feeding! Let us help!**

*Steve and Regina Garr, Birds-I-View*

**BIV Disclaimer:** Books have been written and Industries have been built addressing the issue of keeping squirrels out of bird feeders! **SO**, it would be impossible for our little brochure to solve ALL squirrel problems . Hopefully, we have armed you with some basic info and guidelines to assist you on your way to squirrel-free bird feeding.

#### Types of Squirrel Proof Feeders/Systems

- **Weight –activated:** MANY styles available, some great, but some very poorly designed... we can help! **Be certain that weight-activated feeders hang at least 16-18 inches away from ANYTHING**

(including the pole from which the feeder hangs.) Most weight-activated feeders are designed to be squirrel proof only when the entire weight of the squirrel is on the feeder. Positioned correctly, well-designed weight-activated feeders are often the most successful at keeping squirrels out. Look for weight - activated feeders which either close when squirrels get on ANY part of the feeder OR are tall enough or large enough to prevent the squirrel from reaching the seed port without closing it. Battery-operated weight- activated feeders are also an option and of course only work as long as the battery is charged and ready to go.



- **Caged feeders:** make sure food source is more than “squirrel-reach” inside cage. Realize most caged feeders will exclude Cardinals and larger woodpeckers. You may need to choose a bird food that will not easily shake or fall out of the feeder, or position the feeder so that squirrels cannot easily grab and shake it.



- **“Top Baffle” feeders:** designed to stop squirrels from accessing feeder from the TOP—NOT from the side or below. (So, correctly position in a tree or long overhang— not on a standard shepherd hook or deck/ fence mount hanger. )



- **Pole Baffles:** Endless varieties! Some are very species-specific, and ALL MUST be positioned correctly
- **Other:** Other options abound! Visit us for details and info

# Birds-I-View

*presents*

## What you should know about Stopping unwanted guests at your Bird Feeding Stations!



Basic techniques for helping you achieve bird feeding stations free of squirrels, raccoons, opossums, deer, starlings and grackles  
....but MOSTLY squirrels!



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# Before you Start

## I. Determine WHERE you plan to feed birds.

Examples:

- A. On a pole in the yard 10-12 feet from any objects. *(consider feeders on a pole with a properly positioned pole-mount baffle, or a weight-activated feeder on a pole specifically designed for such a feeder)*
- B. Off of a deck or fence (Or on a pole over 18 inches from fence or deck) *(Consider properly positioned weight- activated or cage feeders. Also read the section in this brochure on “empty feeders” and little dishes)*
- C. Hanging from a tree or overhang from the house or another structure. *(If the ONLY access to the hanging feeder here is from above, consider a hanging squirrel baffle over most any feeder, or using one of the “Top Baffle” style feeders described in this brochure. A weight-activated or caged feeder could also be used).*

**II. Determine (generally) which types of birds you want to attract and feed** (Some squirrel-proof feeders have cages that exclude Cardinals and some are intended only for specific species, such as woodpeckers or for Finches)

## III. Determine your personal level of tolerance for Unwanted Guests!

- A. It is OK for squirrels to eat at your feeder as long as they don't damage them. *(Lots of choices!)*
- B. It is OK for squirrels to be in your yard but NOT OK for them to eat from the bird feeders. *(Lots of choices!)*
- C. Make them stop looking at my feeders! *(See the advice in this brochure about “empty feeders”, Hot Pepper Suet, and feeding in small dishes. )*

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## Types of Squirrel Proof Feeders

Based on your answers and selections from the “Before you Start” section of this brochure, choose a feeder or system that is right for you.

See descriptions of Squirrel Proof feeders on **back of this brochure** and visit our website at:

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

**Why is Hot Pepper Suet** generally more successful at deterring mammals (like squirrels) than adding Hot Pepper to Bird Seed? The high fat content of suet products “holds” the intensity of the heat longer than trying to add hot pepper to bird SEED. It is also more uniformly hot. The best hot pepper suet does not have seeds /seed pieces which will dilute the intensity of the heat.

**FYI** Concerned about feeding hot pepper to birds? Evidence abounds to put your mind at ease, however this brochure is too small to thoroughly address that topic. We will note though that birds DO love to consume hot peppers from gardens!

## Are Empty Feeders a Bad Thing?

**Not always**, especially when it comes to deterring squirrels! If you are having significant issues with squirrels at feeders consider only feeding very small amounts of quickly –eaten foods (like live mealworms, hot pepper suet, even home-made recipes) in small dishes or trays within 2-3 feet of your house or even in small feeders attached to the window, at approximately the same time once or twice each day. Generally the birds you desire to feed will come and gobble up the treats with in 15-20 minutes– while you can watch, enjoy, and protect them! The feeders will remain empty the rest of the day and night.

Squirrels and raccoons tend to hang around yards where feeders are well-stocked and have a consistent supply of food. Empty feeders are less of an enticement to them.



# What can go Wrong

Beware of these **Obstacles to Success:**

- Attempting to “squirrel proof” when you really have a raccoon, opossum, or deer problem.
- Weight-activated squirrel proof feeders placed less than 16 inches from poles, limbs, or other objects.
- Cracked, chipped, rusty, or dirty Baffles (Pole mount or hanging) can give squirrels a “toe-hold” to reach your feeder.
- A sloped yard may require more strategic baffle placement for pole-mount baffles.
- Feeder not secured properly: the best squirrel proof feeder can't work if wind or animals constantly knock it to the ground

## Deterring Raccoons, Opossum, and Deer:

**For the most part these “unwanted guests” mostly invade our** feeders at night, so simply removing and taking in all feeders at night is one solution. If your feeding station is on a stand-alone pole system 10-12 feet from any objects, a correctly positioned CYLINDER style metal baffle over 22 inches long and at least 6 inches in diameter can work very well to keep raccoons and opossums out of feeders. Other than bringing feeders in at night, placing feeders 10.5 feet high on a pole has kept them from being reached by deer. One low-maintenance option for discouraging raccoons, opossums and deer is to only feed good quality Hot Pepper Suet.

## Deterring Starlings and Grackles:

Safflower Seed ALONE (not mixed with ANY other food product) is a very good solution. Many desirable birds like Safflower seed but Starlings and Grackles usually won't eat it. Caged feeders which hold the food far enough inside the caged area of the feeder are also very good options. (realize most of these will exclude cardinals). Helpful but certainly not starling and grackle –PROOF is only providing food in small feeders with very little or no perch area. Some weight-activated feeders can be adjusted to exclude starlings and grackles.

## The problem with “Magic Bullet” thinking:

*Often the assumption is that the last strategy implemented was the one that succeeded when, in fact, it was more likely a combination of right methods.*