

Squirrel-proof bird feeders?

For years, I've enjoyed the seasonal beauty provided by Mother Nature from the great vantage point of my dining room window.

The window has a commanding view of the world outside, a perfect place for a bird feeder, so I can watch the birds in the cold of winter.

And at this time of the year, I start contemplating putting up the bird feeder in preparation of the ensuing winter.

Of course, erecting a bird feeder is one of those tasks that I can procrastinate about for at least a month or two.

This fall, I have two bird feeders to install.

One is a nice compact wooden one that's been sitting in storage since I received it as a birthday gift from My Sidekick.

Yup, got it for my birthday, back in June.

Er, ahem... June of 2005.

Recently, she politely (but firmly) reminded me that it's STILL not hanging outside my window. (And in the interest of maintaining world peace, it WILL be installed this fall.)

That feeder is pretty straightforward—it hangs by a little rope, attached to a tree limb.

The other feeder was my dad's old one that's been hanging on a nail in the garage for three years— not exactly new, but new to me. It's one of those 'squirrel-proof' metal models.

Now the term 'squirrel-proof' is something of an issue here. I figure a bird feeder being called squirrel-proof is about as realistic as a garbage can being dubbed raccoon-proof.

It just ain't gonna happen. If a bird feeder is truly squirrel-proof, chances are it's gonna be completely bird-proof as well.

To achieve that, it would have to be welded shut, 'cuz no matter what the design, I've found squirrels will always find a way to raid it.

And I also figure getting both of my feeders installed so the squirrels can't get at them will be nothing short of a major miracle.

The squirrels behind my house are simply too damn smart.

As I surveyed the installation options out-

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side the window recently, I thought back to several years ago when the squirrels were jumping off a nearby tree and landing on the roof of the cute little feeder we had at the time.

It resembled a little tiny Swiss chalet house.

Those squirrels could empty that feeder in minutes— defying me as I stood on the other side of the window, thumping on the glass.

One of my kids thought she'd fix 'em.

She coated the steep roof of the little chalet with Vaseline.

As the first squirrel leapt from the nearby tree and landed on the feeder, he slid right off the other side, and landed on the ground.

It was quite entertaining until the Vaseline wore off (after about three or four jumps).

Over the years, I've tried various methods of mounting feeders— hanging from a wire, or mounted on a pole with an old hub cap halfway up the pole (so they can't climb the pole). I even considered cutting down the tree that overhangs the house and the feeder.

But experience has taught me that none of those measures are really very effective.

So I'll likely just resort back to the old way, and put the squirrel-proof one on a pole, and hang the other one from a branch. And I know, in doing that, I'll achieve two things for sure.

1. The squirrels will be well-fed this winter.

2. My Sidekick will be happy— thus ensuring world peace.

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