

The Squirrel War— Part Deux

There's an old saying, "Misery loves company."

And after last week's column, I realized how true that saying is. I'm not alone in this world.

Case in point— last week I wrote about dealing with squirrels raiding my bird feeders.

Pretty ordinary stuff, and I figured it was an isolated situation in my world.

Was I wrong!

I had readers responding, e-mailing me and dropping by the office, to offer their most devious schemes to combat the evil, thieving squirrels that have been raiding, looting and plundering the nation's backyards since the first pioneer drove a stake in the ground and put some sunflower seeds on a tray on top.

My first response was from 'Barb' in Georgetown who wrote:

"It's nice to see birds in the winter...but we had the same problem with acrobatic squirrels cleaning out the feeder, so we found a perfect solution. They climb the feeder for sunflower seeds, so we bought a large bag of food that doesn't have sunflower seeds in it. The squirrels don't climb the feeder any more!"

Now that was a simple solution, and I thought it had merit, until I read how she also feeds the squirrels in another location, thereby keeping them away from the bird feeder.

Wait a minute! Aren't squirrels the 'enemy'? That's collusion with the 'enemy' if you ask me.

Another reader, Thomas Kiss of Georgetown told how he was fighting the same battle and finally won, by designing his own bird feeder.

Thomas wrote:

"I have a feeder that I designed and built that is totally squirrel proof.

It's deceptively simple and has brought many a smile to my face whenever I look out and see nothing but birds, while the squirrels collect the scattering of scraps on the ground below. (like the bottom feeders they are...)"

The key to the design is the spring loaded perches placed on opposite sides of the tube. Any attempt to jump onto the feeder results in a big

Ted Brown



surprise and a subsequent tossing of the squirrel to the ground like a discarded cigarette. Just wanted to let you know there is a feeder out there that is winning the war."

Then there was Gerry Scarrow who dropped by to see me at the office. As I approached the counter he tossed a 1.75 litre plastic whiskey bottle at me. Unfortunately, it was empty.

"That'll fix your squirrels," Gerry said.

"But it's empty," I replied, "What good is an 'empty' whiskey bottle to fight off squirrels?"

He then went on to show me how one places the (empty) bottle over the wire that the feeder is suspended from, and when the squirrels try to shinny down over it, they slip right off.

I accepted the bottle, not entirely convinced it'd help, being empty and all... 'Full' would be much more effective, from my point of view.

And the final reader, Cori Robbins, sent me an e-mail with an attached series of photos, showing a black bear crawling along a rope to get into a bird feeder, with the message from Cori observing "And you thought YOU had problems!!"

I now have more solutions than I know what to do with, but will consider each option and assess it's usefulness.

(For the record, I haven't seen many black bears out on the farm ya know.)

But one thought remains— I've gotta get a 'full' bottle of whiskey to start with for one of the solutions...

(Ted Brown can be reached at tbrown@independentfreepress.com)



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