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Christmas Trees Are For The Birds!

If you would like to extend the usefulness of your Christmas Tree, you could give it to the birds. That's what they used to do years ago.

Before the end of the 17th Century, two Christmas traditions had merged. The Christmas tree of Germany and the Swedish custom of placing sheaves of grain on the rooftops for the wintering birds to feed on.

Combined, the bird's feast tree came into being and became very popular. Throughout all the countryside 'after Christmas Trees' could be seen, decorated with garlands and bells of edibles. Little homemade trays were tied to the branches and filled with seeds or table-scraps. Then, through the years, the charming custom of the feast tree almost disappeared. However, now it is having a revival.

If you decide to have one, be sure to place it in a prominent place in your yard, where you can see it from a window. Just watching will bring hours of enjoyment. It is ideal for entertaining a shut-in.

First of all, make sure the tree has a good firm stand. One way is to put the end of the trunk into the middle hole of a cement building block. Drive a couple of wooden wedges in the hole beside the trunk to make it fit snugly so nothing can tip the tree over. If you haven't used Christmas trees, just decorate a tree already growing in your yard.

With a needle and long lengths of No. 10 thread, string popcorn, cranberries, and garden peas to make garlands to drape around the branches. Raisins, currants, and cubes of cheese may also be threaded. These will attract chickadees, catbirds, and mockingbirds. It is best to let popcorn set two or three days after popping. It becomes a little soft and threads without breaking.

Beef suet balls appeal to most birds and are easily made. Boil 1/2 cup of sugar and 1 cup of water together for a few minutes. Melt 1/2 lb. of ground suet and add to the syrup and

stir. Let the mixture cool. Then, before it becomes solid, add breadcrumbs, cornmeal, nuts, or whatever you may have. Roll into balls. Wrap a piece of netting around each one, tie with string and hang on the tree. Put these on the highest branches. Dogs will make short work of them if low enough to reach.

Bits of pork fat, tied to the branches, will attract blue-jays, nuthatches, and woodpeckers. Bread, biscuits, cookies, and bits of piecrust will please all birds.

Doughnuts, even stale ones, hung on the branches, attract many feathered friends. Especially if smeared with peanut butter mixture. Peanut butter alone, will choke birds. But mixed with a little cornmeal, it is a favorite delicacy. Dabs of the peanut butter mixture may also be put along the branches and trunk of the tree.

Aluminum foil containers from 'store bought' tarts or individual pies, make ideal feeding trays. Punch two tiny holes in the bottom, about one inch apart. Put the ends of a piece of wire through from the top of the dish, and twist tightly around the branch. Fill with whatever seeds or scraps you may have.

Barley, uncooked rice, and sunflower seeds will bring birds galore.

Birdseed mixtures, for feeding wild birds, are available in all supermarkets.

Rolled dry oats appeal to many species. Scatter it under the tree or put in feeder trays. Hang dog biscuits on the higher branches to attract birds instead of dogs.

To make the feast complete, put out a pan of water every day. Otherwise, your feathered guests may have to fly quite a distance for a drink.

Children love to make garlands to decorate their Christmas tree. There is also an educational value as they learn about birds and their habits.

The effort it takes to deck the tree will be repaid a hundred fold as you watch the birds feed. Trying to identify

the different species is an added enjoyment.

The pleasure of having a feast tree lasts all winter long. Providing shelter and food for the birds is rather like carrying the spirit of Christmas far into the New Year.

In The Spotlight

(Continued from Page 2)
tion, my attitude toward myself and others, and the nature and extent of my fears." (Omigosh, what had I let myself in for?)

When I visited Mr. Peckitt, he showed me the results of his analysis and some of the ways he had arrived at these conclusions. One of the tools in his scientific bag was a small, clear plastic card called an "emotional responsiveness gauge." It divides 180° into thirteen specific areas by degrees. These areas measure the angles, forward and back of one's handwriting. No sample of handwriting yet analysed has shown a constant angle. Using information gleaned with the aid of this gauge, Mr. Peckitt prepared what he called a "perspectograph." It was a bar graph prepared from the angles of one hundred upward strokes. The first of his conclusions reached from this graph was that I am "a subjective type person, strongly influenced by the emotions". (Oh, oh...)

He then produced a sheet with approximately five hundred check points out of which about one hundred had notations beside them. These were traits which had shown themselves in my writing to varying degrees. (I allowed myself the luxury of biting one fingernail as I scanned the page). It seemed every flourish, each crossed "t", dotted "i" and unconnected letter had been accounted for. Not only that, some traits were repeating themselves frequently! Could I reveal that much so easily?

The part of the analysis I was given to keep consisted of five typewritten pages. I did recognize myself in most of the notations — not all of them favorable — and it was amazingly accurate in my opinion. However some were definitely not my traits. (I am deceiving myself Mr. Peckitt?)

As the very active president of the OCIGS, John would be happy to address any groups, organizations or individuals about the science of graphoanalysis. He is currently working hand in glove with York University — analyzing students' writing for achievement quotients. He adheres strictly to the IGS code of ethics and maintains the professional standards it sets down. You may contact him at Box 1135, Stouffville, if you are interested in graphoanalysis.

It's a fascinating field John Peckitt... and as for me, I intend to use a typewriter from now on!

Tuesday Group Has Education Improvement Ideas

Minister of Education William Davis for his consideration.

The Tuesday group includes two school inspectors, a school administrator, a teacher, a professor, an engineer, an editor and several businessmen, all retired. They are: William McLeod, Tom Lamb, Reg Green, Joseph Gibson, Harry Selkirk, Ralph Harris, Alex MacKay, Duncan Smith, William Wagner, Allan Bales, Wes Ankenman and Dr. Hardy Hill.

In the covering letter to Mr. Davis it was explained that there are two vital points:

1. The present educational system frequently lacks both sound practical guidance and direction on the types of further education within the scope of each pupil.
2. A large percentage of the students now at universities are merely marking time at public expense and should not be there.

In detail, the "Ideas for Education Within the Present System" runs as follows:

CORRECTIVE MEASURES

As part of the corrective measures we offer the following:

Elementary Schools
Many pupils lack the ability to express themselves so that others can understand them. Therefore:
● Concentrate on basic subjects, particularly the expression of ideas, both written and verbal.
● Include "Responsibilities to themselves and the Community" as a subject.
● Step-up discipline in the classroom.

Secondary Schools

Many pupils lack the ability to express themselves so that others can understand them. Therefore:
● Provide sound and practical annual guidance through a qualified board of two or more by appraising each student's capabilities on an annual basis.
● Recognize that the latent talents can develop.
● Include the student and parents if possible when discussing specific career possibilities and tell him why he should attend university, or college or take vocational training or work as labor.
● Explain how he can improve his education if his latent tal-

ents develop after leaving secondary school.

Universities
Many students are over-exposed to higher education which they cannot assimilate. Therefore:
● Insist that an applicant must have high merit, a positive professional goal and the desire to reach that goal.
● Provide financial help only where it is needed.
● Eliminate or restrict general courses like General Arts and BA.
● May continue to Ph D. etc. Colleges

● Colleges could provide general courses and grant diplomas in say two or three years.
● The applicant would have lesser merit, lower aptitudes or uncertain goals.
● The student could move onto university with credits if his latent talents develop sufficiently.
Vocational Schools
● The student has practical skills, or practical goals; alternatively he may not know what he wants to do or be or his aptitudes are uncertain.
● Grant "Technicians Diploma."
● Could advance to college with credits if his latent talents develop, but he would not be eligible for university.

Labor
● They could attend night school or junior vocational schools to improve their education.

V. O. N.

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Count 5,138 Birds In Annual Census

The 14th annual bird census by the Richmond Hill Naturalists' Club took place last Saturday. This is part of the 71st over-all bird census for the North American Continent. Our records will be sent to the American Audubon Society and to the Kitchener-Waterloo Club that comprises all the Ontario records.

Why do we go to all this effort? Mostly because we are interested in birds and possibly want an excuse for some winter activity. It also provides an opportunity to take part in something useful. The actual value is to provide some numerical record of the number of birds for each species. It is not considered accurate but it is indicative. It provides information on the shifting of wintering areas of species; of large fluctuations in numbers within a species and indicates where detailed studies of bird populations may be necessary or advisable.

For instance, a steady decline in the census records of the bald eagle and the peregrine falcon led to studies which proved conclusively that these species were having reproduction problems. The great abundance of the blackbird family has been clearly shown in records over the years and, in contrast, the decline of the bluebirds.

A bird census day adds up to a lot of work, some more and some less, depending on the weather, depth of snowfall and driving conditions. This year provided better conditions than either of the two previous years. The westerly to north westerly wind was very light in early morning gradually increasing to 15 miles an hour by 4 p.m. The temperature from 20 degrees to 38 was ideal and the mostly overcast sky was easy on the eyes.

The total number of birds counted was 5,138 and the total species, 49. This was the highest count ever achieved in this area. It was partly due to the excellent weather and possibly the addition of some new expert birders. The 15-mile area radius was the same. There were nine teams, totalling 38 persons. It took thirty-seven party miles on foot and 327 party car miles to cover the area. Birds seen for the first time: Pigeon Hawk, Snow Owl, Chipping Sparrow and White-crowned Sparrow. The Starling count almost doubled — the Maple Dump must be providing more than an adequate food supply this year! Northern shrikes, Flickers, Rough-legged and Sparrow hawks, Mourning doves, Downy woodpeckers and Cardinals were more numerous this year. Area three had the good fortune to observe a flock of 24 Cardinals, feeding on Yellow Birch seeds in one gully. A very memorable and unusual sight to remember. The winter finches were scarce which might be an indication that their food supply is ample farther north.

The many feeding stations certainly are the best spots to



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Nature Notes

stop when numbers of each species are to be counted. The two at the Maple Research Station, supervised by Charlie Weir, were the most exciting. The open water and plenty of evergreen cover make the area a perfect winter haven. A very well fed black squirrel eats an atrocious amount of the bird food and, in the process, scatters a lot on the ground. This gives the tree sparrows and juncos a wide spread area to feed without coming in conflict with the squirrel. It is amazing how often one wildlife species unwittingly helps others.

The Toronto Brodie Club census was on December 27 and they passed on to us information, including locations, of rarities that they had observed. For instance, they located a Varied Thrush, A Snowy Owl, three Glaucous Gulls and one Iceland Gull all in our area. The thrush and the Iceland Gull remained elusive but it added excitement to the day to try and find them. The Maple Dump for gulls is an experience by itself. It was hard enough to try to pick out one Glaucous amongst the constantly whirling, fighting gulls without even attempting an Iceland (anyway it hadn't been back since the Brodie Census we found out later).

After the survey we all met at the Russell Tilt home where everyone enjoyed telling of the day's experiences. Gord MacKenzie compiled the data while most of the others consumed vast quantities of food & coffee.

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