

## FOR THE BIRDS

By Bill Brearley

Now being a new "County Boy", or the politically correct "County Person", I deemed it a good idea to "feed the birds", as the song says. In the late fall I rushed over to County Farm Supply and got 1 bag of mixed and 1 bag of niger seed. Sorry Dodie, I didn't know Milford's library was selling mixed seed at a good price; well maybe next time!

We have two feeders, a large plastic one out front and a ceramic one at the back. For those of you new to this hobby, you might not expect to get such a diverse population for the two feeders. The niger seed attracts gold and purple finches. They eat in groups of twos, threes, or fours, rather like well behaved children. There's no pushing, shoving or rushing; a teacher's dream class. The only disturbance occurs when a madcap chickadee invades their feeder, scattering the seed, at which time the finches fly to a more civilized location.

Behind the house where there's mixed seed the chickadees eat one at a time. Sometimes they will arrive and depart within a second. It appears that they have a pecking order, with the boss chickadees getting more than their fair share of seed, while the new guy on the roost gets very few seeds being frequently chased off by Mr. or Mrs. "Big". Chickadees tend to fling seed all over the ground, rather like children picking their choice of biscuits from that Christmas

assortment and ditching the rest.

One day I observed the nearby rosebush bent over to the ground and much seed spilled out of the feeder. There were no birds for several days and the feeder was all askew. I suspect our neighbour's roaming cat tried to have a "Mac Chickadee" for lunch, by jumping from the nearby windowsill to the feeder. The thorny tea rosebush must have been a high price to pay for the "birdwich".

For some reason which escapes me, Milford Ice's feeder gets woodpeckers and bluejays, not to mention sparrows. Could they be using some secret mix, maybe the library's brand of seed? Mmmm! Well I shall have to experiment some more, and see if I can attract those aforementioned or Carl's cardinal which he assures me feeds at his uptown location.



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