

Frequently Asked Questions About Finch FOOD:

Q. What do Finches eat?

A. Finches utilize many small grass seeds and flower seed in nature and are built to shell tiny seeds easily. At Backyard Bird feeders they will consume Nyjer Seed (traditionally referred to as “thistle” in the bird feeding industry, but now more correctly referred to as “Nyjer”). They also consume Black Oil sunflower Seed and LOVE Sunflower HEARTS whether whole or in fine chips. In recent years, more and more backyard birders are feeding Sunflower hearts (which does not have a shell) either alone or combined with the traditional Nyjer seed (which DOES have a shell). Because they have become familiar with Sunflower hearts in recent years, Gold-



A Purple Finch (left) enjoys Sunflower Hearts and an American goldfinch (right, in winter plumage) munches on a 50/50 blend of Sunflower heart chips and Nyjer Seed .



Frequently Asked Questions

Q. Do Goldfinches migrate in winter?

A. In much of the US, including the Midwest, Goldfinch are year-round residents. There are areas of the US that only experience Goldfinch in the Winter and parts of northern US and Canada only have them during breeding season. Check out the notable difference between the Goldfinch’s plumage in the winter and during breeding season on the cover of this brochure!

Q. What other finches can I see at feeders used by Goldfinch?

A. Year-round House Finch as well as non-finch family birds like chickadees, tufted Titmouse, and Downy Woodpecker will enjoy your finch feeder. In the winter months Pine Siskins, Purple finch, and even a Redpoll might share your finch feeder. **See the inside of this Brochure form more detailed info on these special birds!**

Q. When do Goldfinch nest?

A. American Goldfinch are considered Late nesters, usually nesting in July. Therefore, they are not as territorial as other birds in the spring and we get to see them flocking together at our feeders! Goldfinch are easily attracted to nesting material of natural cotton fibers, hair and fur.



Birds - I - View

FAQ about Goldfinches and Finch Food!



Winter plumage



Breeding season plumage

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Committed to providing Products & Information that Benefit Wildlife



Sunflower heart Chips
No shell and 100% food

Nyjer Seed
Has a shell and is about 40% Food

BIV Special Finch Mix (50/50 sunf heart chips + Nyjer)

finches will often chose this shell-free food over Nyjer. One important note: Squirrels also prefer Sunflower hearts over Nyjer seed!

Q. Is Nyjer Seed the same seed as the noxious invasive thistle seen growing in fields and yards?

A. NO! Nyjer is related to aster plants and not the invasive “Canada thistle” that has been detrimental to our native plants. Confusion about that arose due to the traditional habit of bird seed vendors referring to Nyjer as “Thistle Seed”.

Birds-I-View Learning Page

Comparing:

Common Redpoll, Pine Siskin, and American Goldfinch

Many areas of the U.S. are fortunate to have Common Redpolls, Pine Siskins, and Goldfinch during the Winter months— some winters in great numbers, other winters not so many. Although American Goldfinch are present all year long in many areas, they certainly have brighter, more vibrant plumage during the summer breeding season than during the winter.

Often, these three species can be found together foraging for natural food in trees, or at bird baths and feeding stations.

The next time you have a winter flock of Goldfinch in your yard, be sure to take a closer look to see who else might be there, too!

*All Photos by
Steve Garr*



Above: Both the Pine Siskin and House Finch show striping at this angle...however the Siskin has a forked or "notched" tail, while the House Finch's tail is more squared.

Making Comparisons at your feeder!

Sometimes the only "view" of birds at your feeder is the angle that blocks your view of much of the birds! It is helpful to be able to identify who is at your feeder with out having to see the bird's head. Check out the differences in these birds by looking at their tails. (see notes under photos left and right)



Above: Both the Pine Siskin and Goldfinch have "forked" or "notched" tails, however note how white the underside of the Goldfinch is compared to the stripes on the Pine Siskin.

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