

Steve & Regina Garr are the owners of **Birds-I-View** and have spent many years committed to helping others enjoy and learn more about the Native Wild Birds that can visit their “space”. They have been presenting programs on attracting Backyard Wildlife for decades, with a special emphasis on attracting desirable wildlife to almost any setting.

Steve & Regina are co-founders of two separate State Bluebird Societies, and Steve is a past President and Life Member of the **North American Bluebird Society**. Steve is the current President of the **Missouri Bluebird Society** & Regina serves as Secretary. They are recipients of an “Environmental Stewardship Award” from the Tennessee Dept. of Environment and Conservation and are honored to have received acknowledgement from their local **Audubon Chapter** for their educational efforts in the area of bird awareness. Steve is a monthly columnist for the **Nature Society News**, and has been a frequent guests on many radio and television programs promoting birding and wildlife gardening. They have assisted with years of banding research on hummingbirds and other birds (including cardinals!).



Feeders with adequate perch area (usually 2 inches or more) are extremely helpful in attracting Cardinals to your feeding stations.

Utilizing baffles or squirrel-proof feeders may be necessary, since squirrels do enjoy many of the cardinals favorite foods.

## Attracting Cardinals



### Tips for Hosting Cardinals:

- Cardinals prefer feeding on the ground but certainly can be coaxed to platform feeders or bird feeders with adequate perch areas. **Usually at least two inches of perch area is preferred.** It is helpful to scatter seed on the ground below a new feeder to entice cardinals.
- **Favorite Foods** include Sunflower Seed, (esp. Black Oil variety) Safflower, Sunflower Hearts, and White Proso Millet. Cardinals also love peanuts if offered in a feeder they can negotiate.
- Don't forget to **place your feeders where you can see them often!** Cardinals particularly like to feed at dawn and dusk.
- **During nesting season**, peanut-based suet and mealworms may be offered, as these are some of the first types of food offered to the young by the parents if made available.
- **Common plants** that often attract Cardinals include: wild grape, dogwood, blackberry, pokeberry, mulberry, eastern red cedar, sumac, hackberry, sunflower, poison ivy, Virginia creeper
- **Provide a “safe approach”** to the feeders in your yard, by offering several perch areas at varying heights for cardinals on their way to your feeder. For example: an assortment of trees, shrubs, plant stands, or patio furniture, where cardinals can gather, view the feeders, and navigate a path they are comfortable with to the food!

**BIRDS-I-VIEW**  
Jefferson City, MO

## Cardinals !

Everyone's Favorite “Red Bird”



Committed to providing information & products that benefit wildlife.

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# Northern Cardinal Facts

Male Cardinal



- The Northern Cardinal is the **official state bird** of seven states!
- **Territory:** South eastern Canada and widespread throughout the eastern US, south east, Midwest, areas of the southwest and *some* parts of California. Rare west of the Great Plains.
- **Males:** bright red plumage, and both male & female have a “crest” on their heads. The male is the only native North American bird that is both red in color and has a crest. He has distinctive orange/pink bill and black on face around base of bill.
- **Females:** duller , more muted plumage than the adult male, which helps to protect her on the nest. She has the same coloring on face and bill as the male.
- **Juveniles & Immature:** Recognize young Cardinals in your yard: they are duller in color than the adults, and have a black or mottled bill, depending on their age.
- **Courtship:** Male often feeds female and both the female and male sing.
- **Life span:** Believed to live an average of 2-5 years, in rare instances have lived as long as 10-15 years.
- **Parenting:** Once the young cardinals leave the nest , their first flight will likely end on the ground ( or in low shrubs). Not capable of flying any significant distance, their dull color and lack of movement protect them from predators. “**Warning Calls**” from the adults signal the fledglings not to move. As the babies age, the adults will direct them by flying over them , and later, by perching nearby and calling the young to them. It can take **forty days** after leaving the nest before the young are fully independent. The adult male takes on most of the duties of feeding the fledglings while the female starts the next nest.

## Great Resources for learning more:

Wild Bird Guides **Northern Cardinal**  
by Gary Ritchison

Bird Watcher’s Digest Booklet: **Enjoying Cardinals More**

**Lives of North American Birds**  
by Kenn Kaufman

**Birds in Missouri** by Brad Jacobs

**Stokes Bird Feeder Book**  
by Donald & Lillian Stokes

**Don’t forget to provide plenty of clean water for Cardinals!**  
Available water is important ALL year long - Clean feathers are necessary to keep warm in the winter.



While the Cardinal’s natural diet consists of insects, spiders, berries, weed seeds, and wild fruit, they certainly will reward a well-stocked bird feeder!  
( see the “ **Tips for Hosting Cardinals**” section of this brochure for other Cardinal “ Favorite Foods”)



Female Cardinal

## **Nesting Habits**

Cardinals build a bowl-shaped nest made of leaves, grasses, twigs, and rootlets. Although the nest is usually concealed four to feet up in the fork of twigs or in branches of vines, trees, or shrubs, I have found cardinal nests as low as three feet off of the ground and as high as fifteen feet.

Cardinals usually average **2-3 nests** per season, but are capable of as many as 5, particularly if predators take the young. In this case, the time usually spent raising young will be replaced by courtship and starting another nest.

**Eggs :** Buff white with dark marks/ 2-5 per nest  
**Incubation:** 12-13 days **Fledge:** 9-11 days

## **Cleaning Bird Feeders & Baths**

We are very pleased with some of the **Natural Enzyme** Products that are currently on the market for cleaning bird feeders and bird baths. Most come in ready to use spray bottles or concentrates and do an excellent job. They contain natural enzymes specifically chosen to target bacteria and organic problems that could be an issue in feeders and baths.

**Safe for the feeders and safe for the birds!** Another option : Some organizations recommend using a solution of 1 3/4 cup of bleach per gallon of water. It may be advisable to test areas of certain decorative feeders/baths, such as glass or ceramic , or feeders/baths with glazed finishes, before immersing the entire feeder in a bleach solution.

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