



**CEDAR RIVER GARDEN CENTER**  
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**Cover photo: Garden Gate magazine**

## **Fate of Our Feathered Friends**

What can you do to help?

- Leave your gardening clean-up until the spring. Finches enjoy the seed heads of spent Coneflowers



and  
Black  
Eyed  
Susans.

- Protein rich bugs and insects are also found within the stems of plants. Leaving the stems upright during our colder months lets the birds have an easier time harvesting the tasty treats.
- Create different height levels to draw an array of birds. Some prefer ground feeding (eat

directly  
off  
the  
ground)  
while  
others  
prefer  
around  
6  
feet  
high.  
You  
can  
provide  
this  
variation  
through  
feeders  
and  
plant  
material.

- Offer  
a  
diverse  
mix  
of  
seeds  
and  
fruits.  
Often  
you  
will  
see  
a  
mix  
of  
sunflower  
seed  
with  
a  
millet  
and  
corn.

Birds that are sunflower specialists will readily eat the sunflower seed and toss the millet and corn to the ground, to be eaten by ground-feeding birds such as Juncos.

- Black  
Oil  
Sunflower

is  
a  
favored  
by  
the  
majority  
of  
birds.

- Relatively  
few  
birds  
prefer  
wheat  
and  
oats  
which  
are  
often  
found  
in  
less  
expensive  
blends.

- Do  
not  
allow  
your  
seed  
to  
mold

-  
if  
it  
does

-  
do  
not  
feed  
it  
to  
your  
birds.  
The  
mold  
can  
be  
lethal.

- The  
same  
idea  
applies

for  
suet.  
Do  
allow  
it  
to  
go  
rancid  
during  
our  
hot  
summer  
months.

- Apply window clings to prevent birds from crashing into glass. Keep bird feeders at least 4-5' away from windows to prevent accidental crashes. Audubon.org shares that over one billion birds die from window collision in the United States

alone.

Why our efforts matter:

Within the last two decades, there has been a large decline in a large number of species of North American birds. If you are not able to supplement bird diets through feeders, consider our first two tips listed. We would strongly suggest planting bird friendly landscapes throughout your yard. Not only through berries and seeds, but don't forget evergreens as habitat.

The loss of bird presence has led to the emergence of national and international initiatives for the conservation of game and nongame birds (IowaDNR). The Bird Conservation Area concept was first proposed by the Midwest Working Group of Partners In Flight (PIF) to maintain populations of breeding grassland birds. The program has expanded and now includes birds breeding in a variety of habitats, including our native wetlands, savannas, and prairies to name a few. This idea is supported by research that suggests viable bird populations require conservation efforts at a landscape-oriented level.

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## **Weekly Sales:**

### **October 12-18th**

30% Off:

\* All gift items and yard art :: includes pottery! ::

\* Deciduous shrubs

50% Off:

All evergreens (excludes new Arborvitae)

All perennials

New sale alert! All veggie seed 50% off!



*Lowest maintenance flower there is... metal!*



*Celebrate fall with new pottery!*



*Plan ahead for the holidays! 30% off all gifts.*



*Sale, sale, sale!*

## Stunted by Stump Grinding Chips/Dust

- "Can I plant directly into the pile of chips our stump grinder left?"
- "Our stumps

were  
massive.  
There  
is  
a  
covering  
of  
sawdust  
3  
inches  
thick  
all  
over  
our  
grass.  
Can  
I  
spread  
grass  
seed  
directly  
on  
to  
that?"

- "Can  
I  
put  
a  
couple  
of  
inches  
of  
soil  
directly  
over  
our  
stump  
grinding  
hole,  
leave  
the  
chips,  
and  
then  
re-  
seed?"

The answer is no to all of these. Yes, it takes extra effort and time to remove the sawdust/chips (mind you, it doesn't have to be perfect), but long term it will be worth it.

Sawdust can be very helpful to add organic matter to an existing soil or compost. The break down adds organic matter, helps retain moisture, and when placed around the surface roots regulates soil temperatures.

Just like chocolate, too much of a good thing, can be bad. Sawdust is no different. When an excessive amount of sawdust or wood chips is used as a soil amendment you might be stunting your plant growth for a season or two. Overtime, sawdust can be a great asset to your soil structure, but as explained below you will see why we would like you to remove excessive amounts of chip/sawdust.

The easiest to understand explanation comes from 360yield.com. They use corn stalks as an example, but any organic matter would go through the same process. "When the soil warms up in spring, the microbial organisms that break down the previous season's corn stalks use nitrogen as a food source. When those organisms are busy breaking down the corn stalks, they tie up nitrogen that would otherwise be available in your fields for plant use."

Should you choose to be a dare devil and leave your sawdust, we suggest you add a high nitrogen product such as blood meal to give a boost of nitrogen. This additional boost can supplement the tie-up next spring. You should apply this in the early spring, as we do not want to push any green growth on plant material this time of the year.

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**Don't forget to check out the Iowa DNR website for best fall color tree viewing.**



Larry Gilds Photography

[Click here for Iowa fall color reports.](#)



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