**Black Oil Sunflower**

This is the most popular seed at feeders. It is a small, all black sunflower seed that has a high oil content and a thin shell that is easy for birds to open. FortWhyte offers black oil sunflower in a variety of bag sizes (5lb, 25lb and 50lb). Often it is placed with other seeds to form what is called a mixed seed. It should be the start of any feeding station.

**How to offer:** It is best offered in hanging tubular feeders and hopper feeders.

**Birds who like it:** It attracts a lot of species of birds including chickadees, nuthatches, goldfinches, house finches, cardinals, grosbeaks, and jays.

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**Mixed Wild Bird Seed**

FortWhyte sells a premium blend of mixed seed available in a variety of bag sizes (5lb, 25lb and 50lb). It contains black oil seed, millet, milo and cracked corn.

**How to offer:** It is best offered in hanging tubular feeders and hopper feeders.

**Birds who like it:** It attracts species of birds including chickadees, nuthatches, and sparrows. It may also attract grackles and blackbirds.

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**Hulled Sunflower Seed**

This is sunflower seeds without the hulls. It comes as either complete hulled seeds or as sunflower chips. There are advantages for you and for the birds. For you, there is no accumulation of hulls under the feeder that needs to be cleaned up; for the birds, it is easier to eat.

**How to offer:** This is best offered in a tubular hanging feeder or a hopper feeder.

**Birds who like it:** This attracts a greater variety of birds than sunflower with the hulls on because birds that normally could not crack open the shell can eat it. These include woodpeckers and wrens, along with chickadees, nuthatches, goldfinches, house finches, cardinals, grosbeaks, sparrows, and jays.
Peanuts
Increasingly, more nuts are being offered in seed mixes. These include mostly peanuts in the shell and peanuts shelled.

**How to offer:** Seed mixes with nuts can be offered in hopper feeders, on trays, scattered on the ground, or in a specifically designed peanut feeder.

**Birds who like it:** Most birds that eat hulled sunflower seeds eat nuts. A favourite of woodpeckers and blue jays along with chickadees, nuthatches, goldfinches, house finches, and grosbeaks.

Thistle Seed
This is a very tiny black seed. It does not come from our native thistle plants but is imported from Ethiopia and India. It is sometimes referred to as “nyjer” seed. It usually comes in smaller bags.

**How to offer:** Since this seed is so tiny it must be offered in special feeders that have small seed portals so that it does not all spill out. These are usually plastic tubular feeders, wooden feeders with fine wire mesh, or just plain wire mesh feeders.

**Birds who like it:** This is one of the favourite seeds of goldfinches. Other related birds who like it are house finches, purple finches, pine siskins, and redpolls.

Striped Sunflower
This is a larger type of sunflower seed that has a lower fat content and a harder shell. It is black with white longitudinal stripes. It is harder for birds to open and thus not favoured by birds as much as black oil sunflower seed. (This seed would need to be special ordered at FortWhyte.)

**How to offer:** It is best offered in hanging tubular feeders and hopper feeders.

**Birds who like it:** It attracts the same birds as black oil sunflower seed—chickadees, nuthatches, goldfinches, house finches, grosbeaks, and jays.

Millet
Millet is a small round seed about the size of the head of a pin. There are several different types. White proso millet is light colored and the most popular with birds. Red and golden millet are somewhat less liked by birds and less often available in stores. Millet is often a major component of seed mixes.

**How to offer:** Millet can be placed in a variety of feeders, such as hanging tubular feeders, hopper feeders, and tray feeders. It can also be just sprinkled on the ground.

**Birds who like it:** Millet is liked by doves, sparrows, juncos, cardinals, and buntings.

Safflower
This is a large seed with a white coating. It is often used as a substitute for black oil sunflower in cases where people are trying to discourage grackles, starlings, and house sparrows, for they do not seem to like it as much.

**How to offer:** It is best offered in hanging tubular feeders and hopper feeders; it can also be sprinkled on the ground or tray feeders.

**Birds who like it:** It attracts many of the same birds as black oil sunflower seed but not quite as readily. The birds include chickadees, nuthatches, goldfinches, house finches, grosbeaks, and jays. Cardinals are particularly fond of this seed.

Cracked Corn
This is dried corn kernels that have been cracked into smaller pieces. It is available by itself but is more often found in seed mixes. It is generally less expensive than some other seeds.

**How to offer:** Cracked corn is best offered in seed mixes in hopper feeders, tray feeders, or scattered on the ground.

**Birds who like it:** A wide variety of birds that like to feed on the ground come to cracked corn. These include pheasants, doves, sparrows, blackbirds, grackles, and jays.

Gone Birding!

Did you know that FortWhyte Alive offers a variety of programs for bird lovers? Join us for guided bird walks, Birding and Breakfast, and more.

**Learn more by visiting** [www.fortwhyte.org/learn/birding](http://www.fortwhyte.org/learn/birding)