

feed the birds

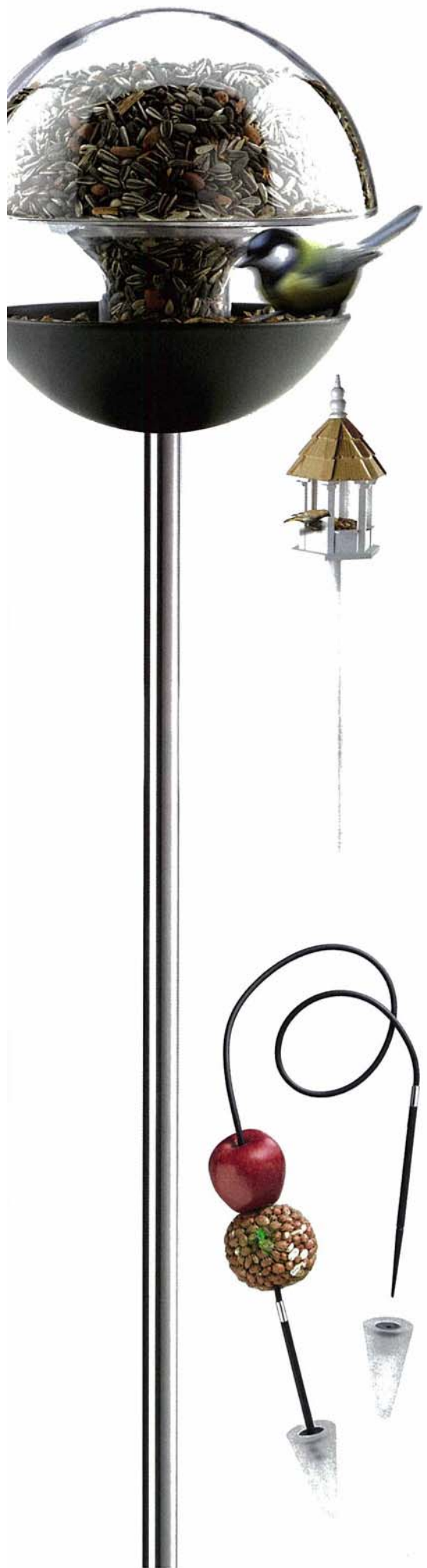
Inflation may have pushed bird feed to significantly more than 'tuppence a bag', but don't let that stop you helping out our feathered friends – and adding a stylish focal point to your garden – this autumn.

As we wave off what's left of summer it's always nice to spare a thought for wildlife that might find the autumn and winter a little hard going. Bird feeders and houses not only offer birds some easily accessible food and shelter on frosty mornings, but can also be a stylish garden ornament. They are also a great way to teach children about birds and many of us could easily spend hours on a rainy day looking out the window at our feathered friends chattering away in the garden.

Bird feeders are a great way of encouraging wildlife into the garden but what makes a good bird feeder? One of the first things to think about when choosing a bird feeder is the type of wildlife you want to encourage into your garden. Different birds enjoy different foods, but perhaps more importantly, squirrels enjoy most bird food too. If you don't want the birds having unwanted guests for dinner then choose something along the lines of a caged feeder so that the birds can easily fly in but squirrels can't get too close to the food.

The next thing to consider is the site of your bird feeder. It should be high enough to be out of reach of prying cats but also offer some protection against other predators. Don't place the feeder too near the window. Although you want a good view of its visitors, you don't want birds accidentally flying into the glass. However, don't place it too far away from the house either; you are more likely to keep it full and clean if there is little hassle to get to it. You should also make sure that any rainwater that can get in is able to drain away effectively. A damp, poorly maintained bird feeder or house can encourage disease amongst birds. Finally, once you start feeding the birds don't stop, especially during the winter months. Birds remember where the food is and will make a special journey to your garden looking for sustenance. They may begin to rely on the food you put out for them and if this is withdrawn they'll waste valuable energy looking for it. This point makes choosing your bird feeder wisely more important than it initially seems.

This page (anti-clockwise from left):
 Eva Solo 2.5 Litre Bird Feeder Table, £67 from Amaroni. Tel: 01205 260 384 www.amaroni.com
 Pavillion Bird Feeder on Pole, £24.95 from House of Bath. Tel: 0871 984 8637 www.houseofbath.co.uk
 Bird Feeder 4 String, £19.95 from Menu. Tel: +45 4840 6100 www.menu.as
 Magis bird feeder, £49 from Espacio. Tel: 020 7376 5088 www.espacio.co.uk
 Stainless Steel Bird Table, £48.95 from The Contemporary Home. Tel: 02392 469400 www.tch.net
 Ceramic Bird Box, £32 from EZ Style. Tel: 08456 520525 www.ezstyle.co.uk



This page (clockwise from top left):

Cast Iron Bird Bath, £29.95 from The Cotswold Company. Tel: 0844 984 0001 www.cotswoldco.com

Circular Garden Bird Feeder, £5 from Ingarden. Tel: 01732 832299 www.ingarden.co.uk

Straw Bird House, £8 from Swallowtail Hill. Tel: 0845 337 2948 www.swallowtailhill.com

Birdball, £30 from Plain Gorgeous. Tel: 0845 643 0873 www.plaingorgeous.co.uk

Ceramic Birdhouse, £38 from Unique British Gifts. Tel: 01925 242111 www.uniquebritishgifts.com

Bird Nest Box, £18 from Big Green Smile. Tel: 0845 230 2365 www.biggreensmile.com

Windsor Bird Feeder, £24.99 from Stylish Life. Tel: 01269 822288 www.stylishlife.co.uk

