

Bird feeders offer serene scene and activity for kids

Last week I stepped off more like Oscar Wilde's the never-ending Möbius strip I call garden Dorian Gray, in which seasons to give a gaggle a portrait ages while its of neighborhood kids a hedonistic subject does little Nature perspective.



FELDER RUSHING

You know what a Möbius strip is, pop artist M.C. Escher's twisted drawing of large ants crawling forever around what at first glance looks like a simple figure eight. It's also used to reduce the wear on belts in car engines.

Anyway, I see my garden like that, as it advances from its current paperwhites and camelias through forsythia, azaleas, and then mums, fiery maple leaves, and sasanquas back to paperwhites. Throw in weather extremes and it's a rollercoasting ride I can't seem to fall off, in spite of it going around and around seemingly nonstop. Truth is, gardens can be



Easy bird feeder

get them into feeding and identifying wild birds, and making them stick with it responsibly as a daily chore.

My go-to bird feeder for young children is disposable, a shoebox

seed from blowing off, used "black oil" sunflower and have nailed big plastic pot saucers on posts, with drilled rainwater drainage holes. Stick bare branches here and there for perches, and the birds will come flocking, especially with a shallow sky-reflective bird bath nearby.

That's about all it takes to attract and enjoy the color, motion, and drama of wild birds. That, and a big window, and some way to keep the neighborhood cats from turning a serene scene into a feeding frenzy. Oh, and an appreciation of squirrels, which are wildlife, too, especially to kids who don't have to shoulder the cost of feeding expensive bird seed to "tree rats."

I've heard and read all about this and that kind of bird feed, from interesting mixes and specialty blends, to that squirrels reportedly won't touch (FYI, red pepper powder only deters them for a minute or two). But for a couple of decades now I've just

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