

Bird Bath and Feeder Hygiene 101

Do I Need to Clean My Bird Bath and Feeder?

Yes! When you invest in bird baths and feeders to attract birds to your garden, you also commit to keeping wildlife safe. Not only will clean bird baths and feeders look nice, but they will also keep your birds healthy. Regularly putting out food and fresh water for birds requires some house cleaning. You provide the goods, and they entertain you with their antics and songs. Birds will continue to be attracted to your yard and grow reliant on you.

What Will Happen if I Don't Keep Bird Baths and Feeders Clean?

The birds can become ill. Stagnant water, especially with their feces, in bird baths can carry pests and disease. Disease can spread rapidly among bird populations if they access the same food and water source.

What's the Best Way to Clean Bird Baths and Bird Feeders?

The best cleaning method depends on the type of bath or feeder and what you are trying to clean or prevent. Feathers, algae, droppings, and organic materials can contaminate both birdbaths and bird feeders. How frequently you need to clean them will depend on how many birds are making pit stops in your yard, so keep a close eye and create a cleaning schedule based on the quantity of birds visiting.

Cleaning Concrete or Stone Bird Baths

There are many ways to clean a concrete or stone bird bath, and you likely have most of the supplies you will need in your home already. You can use hydrogen peroxide, baking soda, or distilled vinegar to clean out your concrete or ceramic bird baths. No matter which substance you use, always start by dumping out the old water and gathering some basic supplies like gloves, a bucket or bowl, a designated scrub brush, and your cleaning product.

Distilled Vinegar: Mix nine parts water with one part vinegar. Fill the bird bath with the mixture and use a scrub brush to get rid of debris inside and outside the basin.

Hydrogen Peroxide: Mix one part hydrogen peroxide to one part water. Just like the vinegar method, soak the basin with hydrogen peroxide mixture, scrub thoroughly, and rinse thoroughly afterward.

Baking Soda: Sprinkle soda over the bird bath, scrub well, hose down thoroughly, fill the basin, dump, and fill again to ensure no baking soda remnants are left behind.



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Preventing Bird Bath Algae With Copper Pennies

Algae is a big problem in bird baths because it can be toxic to birds. While it may seem strange, copper is “biostatic,” which means that organic material will not grow on it, namely, algae. Some bird baths have a copper basin, but any bits of copper in the water can help. You don’t need to go overboard; throw some copper pennies into the water basin like your very own wishing well. Every time you clean out your bird bath, you can wash the copper pennies too.

Methods for Cleaning Bird Feeders

There are so many different kinds of bird feeders you can feature in your yard, but not all feeders are created equal. When it comes to selection, find a bird feeder that will not let seeds get wet and soggy. Wet seeds are a breeding ground for mold.

Tube Feeders: Tube feeders are quite easy to care for and keep clean. A brush and warm water will do the trick for cleanings, but if you see any signs of mold you can wash with bleach as well. Always rinse thoroughly after using bleach or other harsh chemicals.

Wooden Feeders: While wooden bird feeders are classic and adorable, they are also more challenging to clean. Wood is porous and will absorb debris and oils. If you can’t replace your wooden feeder, be sure to clean regularly with warm water and bleach.

Bonus Cleaning Tips

It's not all copper pennies and hydrogen peroxide! Here's a few more bonus tips to get those bird feeders and bird baths in tip top shape for your feathered friends:

- Be sure to clean the area around and below your bird feeders; those areas are also a hub for bacteria, mold, and disease.
- Regularly sweep up and dispose of old seeds, hulls, and feathers. When cleaning your bird baths and bird feeders, make sure you let them soak in their cleaning solutions to really loosen up and get rid of any debris.
- Make sure bird baths and feeders are thoroughly rinsed out to reduce any chemical remnants.
- Finally, make sure your bird feeder is completely dry before filling it with food.