



# Ohio State HCS News

HORTICULTURE & CROP SCIENCE IN VIRTUAL PERSPECTIVE - THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

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## Buckeyes for Birds Attracts New Visitors to Campus



Recycled Christmas Trees are adorned with treats to attract birds to the Chadwick Arboretum & Learning Gardens.

The OSU Chadwick Arboretum & Learning Gardens are not just for people this winter. Wild birds have been welcomed to visit through the "Buckeyes for Birds" program.

Recycled Christmas trees were "planted" in containers and adorned with a variety of tasty treats. One treat made from a peanut butter, cornmeal & seed combination strongly resembles a buckeye candy and the buckeye fruit, hence the name "Buckeyes for Birds".

Conceived by Learning Gardens horticulturist and wildlife enthusiast **Kathy Burkholder**, "Buckeyes for Birds" is attracting many feathered friends to the gardens surrounding Howlett Hall and Kottman Hall. Burkholder enlisted the help of Horticulture & Crop Science (H&CS) staff, faculty, and a dedicated group of Chadwick Arboretum volunteers to create the ornamental edibles for the birds. The birds have quickly discovered the special invitation to the OSU Learning Gardens and are feasting on the treats. Students in the H&CS 438 Theme Gardens class will try their hands at making the treats as part of the unit on Wildlife Gardens and replenish the display soon.



Treats attract wild birds to any garden, bringing movement, song and color to an otherwise stark winter landscape.

"In addition to providing food, the evergreens offer protection from the weather and predators for the birds," explains **Laura Burchfield**, landscape designer and H&CS instructor. "Wild birds add a wonderful element to any garden by infusing the space with movement, song, and color that is often lacking in the stark winter landscape. Backyard bird feeding is a great way to attract birds, learn to identify them, study their behavior, and help them out by providing winter food."

The "Buckeyes for Birds" program is also meant to inspire home gardeners to establish their own backyard bird feeding locations. An informational flyer can be found in the garden kiosk that includes the recipes and other useful tips for attracting wild birds that visitors can take home to their own gardens.



Chadwick Arboretum volunteers helped create the ornamental edibles and hang them from the recycled Christmas trees.

"Our demonstration uses commonly available materials and recycled Christmas trees. Species which have rigid branches, such as spruces and firs, work the best in order to hold the heavier bird treats," notes Burkholder. "Different species of birds prefer different types of food, so a good book on backyard bird feeding will help you decide which species you want to attract and what they eat. In general, winter bird food preferences can be divided into fruit, seeds, nuts, and suet (beef or mutton fat). Our recipes include all of these

items."

### Buckeyes Recipe

- yarn or string
- small pinecones or sweetgum balls
- 1 1/2 cup cornmeal
- 1/2 cup all-purpose flour
- 1/2 cup chunky peanut butter
- 1/2 cup vegetable shortening
- Small sized bird seed such as niger (preferred by goldfinches) or shelled sunflower seeds

Attach string or yarn to the base end of small pinecones or sweet gum fruit, leaving several inches of yarn to serve as a hanger. Mix cornmeal, flour, peanut butter, and vegetable shortening. Mold the peanut butter mix around the pinecones to make a ball, then roll the balls in the bird seed.

Story by Laura Burchfield and Victor van Buchem. Photos by Laura Burchfield and Sherril Massey. Web publishing by [Victor van Buchem](http://Victor.van.Buchem).  
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