

Los Gatos Birdwatcher

IN THIS ISSUE

PAGE

Holiday Open House	1
Galapagos Photo Presentation	1
Avian Housing	2
Hummingbirds and Red Nectar	3
Services Available	5
Who's coming who's going	5
Hulled Sunflower Shortage	6
Annual Festival of Trees	6
Kid's Corner	6
Look What Freddy Found!	7
Field Trips & Outings	7
Sage Advice	8
Dates to Remember	8

Holiday Open House - Sunday, October 23

What is important this holiday season? Great Selection! Unique Gifts! Saving Money!

All our Christmas and Holiday merchandise, including ornaments, will be ready for your selection – **all at 15% off**, during our Holiday Open House. Sunday, October 23 from 12:00-5:00 pm.

- Look for other special sale items throughout the store.
- Christmas and Holiday merchandise.
- All optics and accessories.
- Homemade goodies will be served.
- Free gift with every purchase.



All Holiday Merchandise will be **15% off** and limited to stock on hand



All optics will be **10% off** and limited to stock on hand

Galapagos Photo Presentation

Visit the Enchanted Islands of the Galapagos through the lens of Jim and Sue Liskovec
Thursday, November 17, 6-7pm

The Galapagos Islands, 600 miles west of Ecuador on the equator, were on Sue and Jim's long-time wish list and the place where Charles Darwin spent five weeks of his five year journey.

Much of what he saw became the basis for his theory of evolution by means of natural selection. Sue and Jim spent eight days in 2002 observing and photographing the islands and the wildlife.

No Charge
- Call to reserve your place.
408/358-9453



Avian Housing

Bird Houses make great gifts!

Bird houses make a great gift for any occasion. Many people collect them. Many people would like to attract birds but don't want the upkeep of a feeder. We have a variety of houses for many different birds. Especially for the collector, we have a grand selection of Rosso's houses that are sweetly decorated and have all the requirements for an acceptable place for cavity nesting birds to raise their young. Some of the have a metal roof and for safety come with a backing that protects the babies from getting too hot.

General Guidelines

Not all birds use nest boxes. All birds have specific nesting instincts. Some will nest on the ground (juncos and towhees). Some will nest in shrubs and trees (bushtits, hummingbirds, robins, and many others). Still others will nest in tree cavities or nest boxes (chickadees, titmice, nuthatches, swallows, wrens and some woodpeckers).

Habitat

Habitat is the single most critical factor in whether or not you will be successful in attracting certain bird species. The kinds of trees and vegetation, both on your property and in the surrounding area, will determine what kinds of birds will nest on your property. Feeding birds and noticing what species come to the feeders is an indication if a nestbox will be attractive to the resident birds. Cavity nesters are most likely to use a nestbox as dead trees or snags are not readily available in most of our local area.

Size and design

Along with habitat, nestbox dimensions are extremely important in determining what kinds of birds will nest in the box. Boxes designed for specific species are better than a "one size fits all" approach. If you are interested in designing your own avian housing, ask to see the table of recommended dimensions at store. The size of the entrance hole is particularly crucial. Make it too large and you'll likely lose the box to starlings and house sparrows. Make it too small and the birds you want to attract will look elsewhere for accommodations.

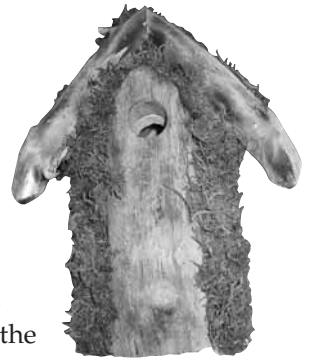
Perches near the entrance hole are not advisable as they primarily assist house sparrows and other predators such as jays. Cavity nesting birds are perfectly capable of clinging to the outside of the box, exactly what they would do in the wild when using a tree cavity.

Ventilation and drainage are two other important features of properly functioning nestboxes. Simplicity and natural wood are also crucial. If you do want to paint the outside of the nestbox, use lead-free paint and leave the inside of the hole and the inside of the box unpainted.

What makes a good nestbox?

Wood is the best material for nestboxes. Pine, cedar, and redwood are commonly used. Cedar and redwood are often considered to be more desirable because these woods are more weather resistant and don't warp. Wood is a good insulator and doesn't overheat in hot weather like metal or plastic can. The roof should overhang slightly to channel off rain. The box should be designed so that

it is easily opened for monitoring and cleaning; access can be through the bottom, top, side or front of the box. Generally, hanging birdhouses are not as attractive to most birds as stationary ones. Wrens do like hanging boxes, however. For other birds, use a stationary box that will be attached directly to a post or tree trunk.



Mounting the nestbox

Nestboxes should go on a tree, a pole, or possibly a fence. For most woodland species it is helpful if you can mount the nestbox within ten to fifteen feet of shrubs or other trees, so that the nesting birds will have a nearby perching spot. Try to place your boxes away from feeder activity or high traffic areas around your house. Most woodland birds prefer that the box be mounted between five and ten feet above the ground. (See table for specific guidelines.) Mount the nestbox so that the entrance hole is away from the prevailing wind. If you are putting up more than one nestbox on your property, don't mount them too close together.

Nestboxes should go up in the fall or winter. Birds start sorting out nesting territories even before warm weather hits, so your nestboxes should be in place as early as possible. For the majority of birds, nesting season begins in February and continues through July.

Resources

Los Gatos Birdwatcher has several books on building nest boxes, as well as kits to make a variety of boxes yourself.

Hummingbirds in the winter and our take on “Red” nectar

by Freddy Howell

Several years ago, I received a panicked phone call from a woman very close to tears. She said that her neighbor had yelled at her for keeping her hummingbird feeder up after Labor Day. Since the birds were still coming, she wanted to keep it up but didn't want to do anything to harm “her” hummers. My first question was, “Where is your neighbor from?” The answer was, of course, “From the East Coast.” The reason I knew this was that back east they have the migratory ruby-throated hummingbirds that tend to leave before Labor Day.

We are so lucky that our resident Anna's hummingbird stays all year, and during the summer, they are joined by the migratory Allen's, rufous, and, with rare appearances by black-chinned, Calliope, and Costa's. Since the Anna's are here all year long, it is important to keep their feeders clean and their nectar fresh all year long. During the warm to hot days, it is important to change the nectar and clean your feeder every three days or so, or, if you see the nectar cloud up. Many people have asked about the type of nectar that is best for their birds. Simplest is best - 4 parts water, 1 part sugar. No food coloring. No

boiling. Think about what hummingbirds feed from in their natural environment. Nectar from tubular flowers is clear and sweet in about 25% mixture ratio. Flat flowers that are more attractive to butterflies are not as sweet and, therefore, are not as attractive to hummingbirds. Researcher have broken down natural nectar and found that the clear recipe stated above is the closest to natural nectar. Just a reminder, white refined sugar is the purest. Do not use raw, brown, or powdered sugars and stay away from maple syrup, karo syrup, or any artificial sweetener. When you clean your feeders hot water is best with white vinegar to clean up the mold. Stay away from bleach and dish soap as they are both hard to rinse off.

The question about red food coloring keeps coming up because customers see red nectar used in the packaging and advertising by most of the major manufacturers of feeders and nectar. When we went through training as part of our previous franchise, we were always instructed that red dye was “definitely unnecessary and most likely harmful.” There



have not been any scientific studies to prove red dye's effect either way. Anecdotally, many rehabilitation experts have seen tumors of the bill, liver, and kidneys . There is an interesting article at www.hummingbirds.net/dye/html that rebuts a manufacturer's claims that red dye is safe. Red Dye #40 is FDA approved for humans and is derived from coal tar and has not been tested on wildlife. Red dye is totally unnecessary to attract hummingbirds. We recommend taping a strip of red surveyor's tape (free at the store) to attract hummers to a new feeder or if you have moved it to a new location. The addition of preservatives like sodium benzoate also contribute nothing to hummingbirds well being and could also be detrimental. Boiling can stabilize the water sugar mixture against mold but is not necessary when you change the nectar every three days and keep any extra nectar in the fridge no longer than 2 weeks.

Interestingly enough, the East coast is changing their tune to keep with the stragglers and the vagrants that they have started to see later in the season.

Wanted: Bookkeeper

After thirteen plus years of great partnership, our bookkeeper, **Lani Christianson**, has decided to hang up her shingle and retire. We thank her so much for all her great service, great skill, and great friendship. Now on to the next chapter. If you are an experienced retail bookkeeper familiar with Quick Books Pro and interested in adding approximately 3 hours a week to your practice, we would like to speak with you about becoming one of our clients. Services required are check preparation, journal entries, account and aging reports, and monthly ledger reports. Also, year end reconciliation in conjunction with our CPA. Don't worry, payroll services are done by an outside company.



Services Available from the Los Gatos Birdwatcher

- **Feeder Cleaning** – Drop off your feeders any day of the week. We clean on Mondays and Thursdays, asking only a donation to one of four charities (Wildlife Center of Silicon Valley, Wildlife Education and Rehabilitation Center, Nike Animal Rescue Foundation, and Friends of San Martin Animal Shelter). If possible, please bring your feeders in early in the day. We will call you by closing for pickup.

- **Frequent Buyer Program**, buy 9 bags 20# or higher of the same seed and get the 10th one free. Coupons do not apply.

- **Seed Delivery** in the local area, free for over \$40 total, \$4 charge for under \$40 total, available on Tuesdays and Fridays.

- **Monthly children’s nature programs** and children’s programs for pre-schools through 3rd grade. Also great for scout troops. For more information, ask for our new “Educational Programs Insiders Info” Sheet.

- **Outreach to community organizations** about birding. We have birding and “Show and Tell” programs ideal for gardening and other service groups.

- **Backyard Bird Consulting Program** - Freddy will come out and see what you have, what you want, and what might work. The consultation is about an hour and the cost is \$20, which will be applied to any purchase of new feeders, seed, baths, or hardware.

- **Birthday parties with Build a Seed Feeder workshop.** Bring 11 of your friends to the **Los Gatos Birdwatcher** (or at your desired location) and build a birdfeeder. Learn about the different birds that are likely to come to the small hopper feeder that you construct from a pre-cut wooden kit. (Includes a packet of seed, use of tools, and instruction.)
Cost: \$15 instructor fee + \$10/child

- We offer **Gift Certificates** and our popular “**Drop a Hint**” cards that allow you to choose a selection of gifts you would like (wish list) to be considered and when the gift giver comes in with the list, we know exactly what you want.

- Spend \$100 or more and receive our new **reusable canvas tote** with royal blue handles – quite spiffy! The tote is also for sale for \$3.99 and would make a good “wrapping” for a gift.



- 15% off one item
Coupon is available every two months. You

don’t have to bring in the physical coupon, but you do have to let us know at the time of the sale that you would like to use it. We do not apply the coupon automatically. The coupon excludes optics, trips and sale items. Coupon does not apply to Frequent Buy purchases.

Who’s coming and Who’s going?

by *Freddy Howell*

Gone are the grosbeaks. Gone are the orioles. Gone are the flycatchers and the gnat-catchers. Coming are the sparrows. Coming are the waxwings. Coming are the kinglets, the warblers, and the pine siskins. And then, there are all our wintering ducks. We saw female Northern Shovelers in a feeding frenzy up at Radio Road the first of September.

Backyard feeders will see an increase in the number of ground feeders with white-crowned, gold-crowned, and fox sparrows. Hermit thrushes, cedar waxwings with their friends the robins will be all over the berry bushes. Townsend’s and yellow-rump warblers will be very interested in your birdbaths and your suet feeders. American goldfinch are

shifting in their territory so if you haven’t had them in the summer, they are on their way and if you have had them, they are about to leave. The Lesser Goldfinch and Pine Siskin should be arriving to take their place, but don’t be surprised at all their winter plumage. The bright yellow has dulled or in some cases, turned to buffy tan. Put out the Nyjer/thistle and watch the fun.

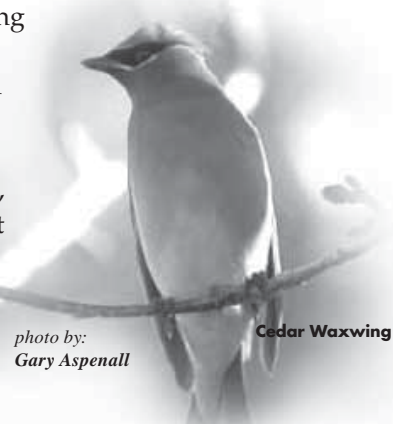


photo by: *Gary Aspenall*

Cedar Waxwing

Hulled Sunflower Chips Shortage

by *Freddy Howell*

This summer we've had some real challenges from our seed vendor, Volkman Seed Factory. Their General Manager, Herman Cordray, passed away suddenly in March. Luckily he had entered into commodity contracts that guaranteed product at a relatively stable price and delivery until July. As those contracts ran out or were used up ahead of schedule, entering into new contracts and receiving new deliveries became more problematic. To top it off, the manufacturer of their roasted peanut dices saw their roaster burn down.

According to the Sunflower Growers Association acreage is about the same but the harvest is anywhere from 1-3% lower than last year. Exports are up 20-40% because sunflower oil is used in food throughout the world. There has also been a national trend towards planting more acres of corn for biofuel. Volkman Seed Factory has been focusing on acquiring sunflower

chip blends that can be used in making our mixes which allows them to be available when straight chips are not. As an alternative to plain hulled sunflower chips, we suggest that you try Just Hearts (chips, peanut dices), Pure Patio Mix (chips, peanut dices, hulled millet), or Premium Garden Mix (chips, hulled millet, safflower.)

The new crop is usually harvested and starts to ship in November so, hopefully, we are in the last throes of shortages. When we get a short supply of hulled sunflower, we are asking customers to take only one bag at a time to allow more people to enjoy the birds. We have been able to get sunflower kernels instead of chips, so it may look different.

Unfortunately, in the coming weeks, you will see some price increases in mixes that include hulled sunflower. Also, peanuts, out of the shell especially, have skyrocketed in price due to the drought in Texas.

Adopt a Tree for the Seventh Annual Festival of Trees



Every year selected local schools, preschools, non-profits, and community organizations vie for cash prizes (\$500/\$350/\$250) by decorating trees at the shopping center. If you belong to a non-profit organization or you know a non-profit organization that would like to decorate a tree, contact **Lindsey Bolls** at lbolls@federalrealty.com.

The important thing to remember is to get all your members, all your friends, and all your family to come to King's Court during the voting period. It's "People's Choice," so it's all about the numbers (one vote per person.) Decorating begins December 4 and all trees must be completed by 3pm on Friday, December 9. The 2011 Festival of Trees at King's Court kicks off on Saturday, December 10th with voting, entertainment, and other festivities.

Kid's Corner

Call 358-9453 to **Reserve your space.** Reservation Required

Super Spiders

Thurs. Oct. 20, 4-5 pm

For ages 3 to 9 \$8/child

Come to Los Gatos Birdwatcher to discover how fascinating these often feared creatures actually are. Watch a silly puppet show, meet some very special spiders including a live tarantula, and create a spider of your own.

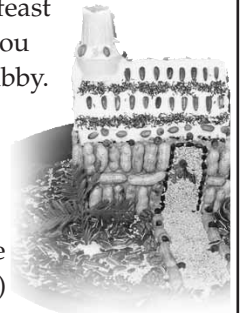
Ginger Seed House Workshop

\$25/ house

For the whole family:

Friday, November 25th, 3-4:30 PM

15% discount for those that pre-pay by November 18th (sorry, no refunds) Join our after-Thanksgiving tradition. Don't miss this special family activity as we build festive houses together out of seeds for the birds and squirrels in your neighborhood to feast on. Wear clothes that you don't mind getting grubby. A great opportunity to create this masterpiece without having to fuss with the mess! (Not appropriate for anyone with peanut allergies.)



Ginger Seed House Kits

Ginger Seed House kits will be available to take and make on your own on November 21st. A sample will be available in the store to provide inspiration. For \$25 we provide all the basics; seed block for the foundation of the house, matzo for the roof, ice cream cone for the chimney and lots of different seeds for the decoration. All you do is supply a cookie sheet, the peanut butter and your imagination! Ginger Seed House kits make great gifts for families. (We can make special "no peanut" kits upon request, just call to order.)



LOOK WHAT FREDDY FOUND!

FOR THE HOLIDAYS



Pucker Shawls

New shipment of beautiful reversible shawls in many different color-ways.



Ildanach copper jewelry

New earrings and bracelets in recycled copper by an artist couple in Washington State.



Berets and wool caps

This year, in addition to our popular wool cloche hats, we have added caps and berets in many colors.



Bears and Birds in the woods

Couldn't resist this charming fellow!



Artisan Sweatshirts

- Chickadees reign!



Table Top Christmas

- Gift sets, Pitchers, Plates. Make your holiday table cheerful!



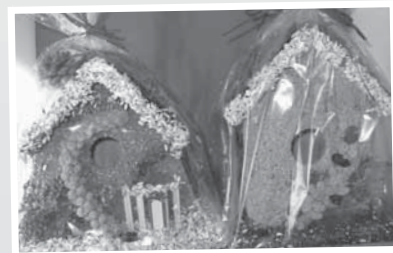
Halloween socks

Of goolies and ghosties and things that go bump in the night!



Fairies

- Her face is very sweet! Many customers have requested fairies.



Seed Houses

Wooden bird houses covered in seed for wrens, chickadees, and bluebirds.

Los Gatos Birdwatcher
King's Court Center
792 Blossom Hill Road
Los Gatos, CA 95032

#C1111

/ 2011

Pay to the order of *Our Loyal Customer*

15% Off One Item

Memo: *Expires 11/30/11*

One Coupon per customer, please.
Excludes sale items, excursions and optics.
Not to be combined with any other offers

Field Trips & Outings

Saturday Morning Local Bird Walks

Join us every Saturday morning for an enjoyable meander looking for birds. Call the store Friday nights after 7pm to find out where we are going the next morning. Except for our once a month all-day field trips, we go on a local bird walk from 8 to 10 am and return for bagels and shade grown coffee. Some of the nearby places we go to are Oka Ponds, Guadalupe Oak Grove Park, Belgatos Park, Almaden Lake Park, Shoreline and Charleston Slough.

No Charge.

Sunnyvale Audubon walks

First Wednesday of the month

Oct. 5, Nov. 2, Dec. 7 - Noon to 1pm

Bring your binoculars (loaners are available) and meet Freddy at the Sunnyvale Pollution Control Plant where Borregas and Caribbean meet off of 237. After entering the plant turn left at the first stop sign and continue to the end of the parking area. We will see raptors, shorebirds, and lots of ducks.

No Charge.

Let's Go Birding to Point Reyes with Lisa Myers

Saturday, October 29, 8:00 am to 6:00 pm

Last year we had to cancel the Point Reyes trip because of heavy rains, so we have scheduled it again for October. The Point Reyes area is a fall hot spot for birdwatchers. Just north of San Francisco, this land that forms the point that we call "Point Reyes" is a magnet for migrating birds. This open expanse of land provides ideal habitats for birds to refuel and continue southward. It also provides birders a memorable opportunity to explore beautiful open habitat. In addition to land species, we'll also scan the ocean for seabirds and shorebirds.

Fee \$25 + share of gas.

Let's Go Birding to San Joaquin County

Saturday, November 19, 8:30 AM - 5:00 PM

Join leader Lisa Myers of Let's Go Birding, as we spend the day visiting several birding hot spots of San Joaquin County. These hot spots are located around Stockton and Lodi and offer prime wintering habitat for Sandhill Cranes, Tundra Swans and waterfowl. We can also find raptors in great numbers on the eastern edge where we'll search for Ferruginous Hawks, Golden Eagles and Merlin. This will be a great day to see many magnificent species that return here to spend their winter.

Fee: \$25 + share of gas

December - No Field Trip

Los Gatos Birdwatcher



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792 Blossom Hill Road, Los Gatos, California 95032
408/358-9453
email: info@losgatosbirdwatcher.com
website: www.losgatosbirdwatcher.com

Return Service Requested



Printed on
recycled paper

Sage Advice...

Remember me well!
10/18/2000 to 9/14/2011



Dates to Remember

Closed Thanksgiving

10/10 Columbus Day (Open)	11/6 Daylight Savings Ends
10/14 Los Gatos Birdwatcher turns 16!	11/8 Election Day – VOTE!
10/31 Halloween	11/11 Veterans Day – Remember
11/1 Dia de los Muertos	11/17 Jim Liskovec's Galapogas

Store Hours

Monday – Saturday: 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Sunday: 12 noon to 5 p.m.
Phone: 408-358-9453

