



JANUARY

2020

TREE RECYCLING

After you've enjoyed your cut Christmas tree for the holidays, take it to one of the free disposal sites provided by Sedgwick County. (Remove all decorations first.) The trees will be chipped into mulch that will be free for the taking. Check the sites periodically to see when the chips are available. Bring your own shovel and container.

Christmas trees can be dropped off at these Wichita locations through January 23:

- Boston Park, 6655 E. Zimmerly
- Buffalo Park, 10209 Hardtner
- College Hill UMC, 1st & Erie
- Earhart Magnet School, 4401 N. Arkansas
- Edgemoor Park, 5815 E. 9th St.
- Extension Edu Center, 7001 W. 21st St. N.
- Great Plains Nature Center, 6232 E. 29th St. N.
- Old Cowtown, 1865 Museum Blvd.
- Osage Park, 2121 W. 31st St. S.
- South Linwood Park, Hydraulic & Mt. Vernon

Other cities in Sedgwick County also offer drop-off sites.

There are other ways to use your old Christmas tree instead of putting it out with the trash. You can cut off the branches and use them to mulch tender plants like perennials and bulbs. Or put the entire tree in the corner of your yard or near a bird feeder to provide winter shelter for birds.

WINTER BIRD FEEDING

Shelter, as provided by shrubs or your old Christmas tree, is a great start for attracting birds. Water and food are the other two requirements. The birds will drink, bathe and generally delight in thawed water during the freezing months. It's easy to provide thawed water by using a bird bath heater.

Now for the feeder and seed. The best initial feeder is some type of platform stocked with black oil sunflower seed or mixed seed containing black oil sunflower seed. A second option is a tube finch feeder with nyjer (niger) thistle seed. Using a mix that contains sunflower chips too, will attract woodpeckers, wrens and chickadees as well as finches. The sunflower chips can be an attraction to squirrels as well, so if they are a problem stick to straight nyjer. From these basic types you can expand into specialty feeders as your interest and feathered population dictate.

If you want to attract some of the more interesting birds, try our "Gardener's Choice" bird food mix made exclusively for Johnson's. This premium mix contains mostly peanut and sunflower chips. All birds love this mix and will eat your feeders clean with no waste.

Other good choices to feed birds include the following:

- **Black Oil Sunflower Seed** — Great all-around seed that appeals especially to cardinals.
- **Safflower Seed** — Cardinals will eat this seed, but squirrels, starlings and grackles will not.
- **Peanuts** — Set whole peanuts out and it will bring bluejays in like you've rung a dinner bell. Larger woodpeckers and, of course, squirrels like them too.

To reduce squirrel raids on your bird feeders, give them a feeder of their own with peanuts or corn. That way they won't bother your bird feeders as much, and you might find yourself quite entertained by their antics.

LANDSCAPE PLANTS

If the winter is dry and we have a warm (above freezing) spell, water the landscape, especially newly planted trees, shrubs and grass.

GARDENS

Shop for seeds now to get your 'garden fix'; then you'll be ready to start them inside. Watch for seed starting tips in our February calendar.

HOUSEPLANT WINTER CARE

Most houseplants need as much light as you can give them in the winter; even a lamp turned on gives them a boost. Reduce fertilizing to once a month and monitor for insect problems that can build up indoors.

Some common pests that might cause issues include fungus gnats, whiteflies, aphids and spider mites.

Fungus gnats look like fruit flies; they hatch out in moist soil. Use **ferti•lome Triple Action** or **Hi-Yield Systemic Insect Granules** in the soil to control the larva. Applying sand or rice hulls as a barrier on top of the soil and letting the soil dry between waterings also helps.

Spray for whiteflies with **ferti•lome Triple Action** or **Indoor/Outdoor Multi-Purpose Insect Spray**. A yellow sticky trap placed near the plant will attract and catch the adults. Triple Action will also control mites and aphids. Wash plants off with water in a sink or shower first, then spray every 10 days to maintain control.