

WINTER BIRD TREATS



**Male Yellow Warbler
At the Chatfield Reservoir**

From our Master Gardener Meg Gaeta

As soon as the bears go to sleep...

Our Colorado black bears are absolutely frantic to consume 20,000 calories a day before they go into hibernation. They prefer chokecherries, blackberries and raspberries, which are in sparse supply due to the late spring and dry summer. "Castle Pines Village has had numerous sightings recently as the bears raid bird feeders to forage what they can. Don't be tempted to supply the birds (and possibly tempt the bears) until the weather is consistently cold enough to send them to hibernation.

But you can prepare for that day. If you have children or grandchildren to help with a holiday project, here are some bird food recipes.

Pine Cones/peanut butter/birdseed Treat

Collect some pinecones and tie twine so you can attach the finished product to a branch within sight of a window. Spread them with peanut butter and roll them in birdseed. If the children are under 7 years of age, you may want to put the seed in a bag, add the pinecone with the peanut butter spread, and shake the bag. Tie the finished cones on a clearly visible tree. The bird acrobatics will be entertaining.

Bird Cakes (from fellow master gardener Rita Krupp)

Heat together:

1 quart water

1 stick margarine or lard

2 cups hot cereal mix (Oatmeal, Maltomeal, or Farina)

Cook until thickened

Add $\frac{3}{4}$ cups peanut butter and blend

Add 1 cup total: chopped nuts, apples, and/raisins

Cool, then add $\frac{3}{4}$ cup birdseed, and nuts

Drop into small muffin tins or ice cube trays and freeze.

(At this point you may want to bury a piece of twine for hanging)

When frozen solid, remove from trays and store in a freezer bag