

What to do with Pumpkins and Pumpkin seeds for wildlife

Halloween coincides with the time of year in which birds in the U.S. need energy for migration and winter survival. Pumpkin flesh is enjoyed by a number of animals. Just cut it up and put it out in your yard. You can also compost the pumpkin flesh. Be sure to remove any candles or wax and don't put out any pumpkins that have been painted as that can be toxic for wildlife. Pumpkin seeds are a good source of minerals, protein and beneficial oils.



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About 100 million carving pumpkins containing 20 million pounds of pumpkins seeds are sold in the U.S. each Halloween season. An average Halloween pumpkin contains enough seeds to feed up to 20 birds for a day. That is enough seeds to feed all of the sparrows, finches, chickadees, cardinals, jays and other seed-eating birds in the U.S. for a day. You can watch the video on preparing pumpkin seeds here <https://youtu.be/TQP4dKtzEnI> or follow the easy directions below.

Directions to prepare pumpkin seeds for birds:

1. Just place the pumpkin pulp containing the seeds from your Halloween pumpkin in a 2-quart container with a lid.
2. Fill the container about half way with water and shake vigorously for about a minute.
3. Pour the water and pulp out and place the seeds on a kitchen towel outside to dry overnight. It's OK if some of the pulp is still attached to the seeds.
4. Larger birds like cardinals and jays will take pumpkin seeds whole.
5. To help smaller birds like chickadees and sparrows, break the seeds open by folding the towel over them and crushing them with a meat mallet or a rolling pin.
6. Place the pumpkin seeds out in a bird feeder, deck railing or other flat surface for the birds to find.



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