



**Jim Gardner is shown with his own example of a homemade platform feeder. Vent pipe metal around the legs helps deter four-legged visitors. Below the platform, holes at the top of the legs are filled with suet in winter, attracting hungry woodpeckers.**

The Gardners favour the platform or tray feeder, since they don't get a great variety of different species coming to their winter feeders, yet attract a large volume of birds, such as blue jays who take up a lot of room.

"Last winter, we'd have 35 blue jays at one time out there on the platform feeder," he explains.

Unfortunately, this type of feeder can promote the spread of disease, since infected

individuals defecate in the same area where others are feeding, thus increasing the risk of more birds picking up the disease. Scraping the platform feeder regularly and soaking it with disinfectant, can help reduce this risk.

The Gardners also use the silo feeders, primarily for chickadees, goldfinches and other small birds. These have the advantage of warding off, not all, but most, of the bigger "bully type" birds like red winged black

birds. An ingenious invention, the silo feeder takes advantage of the fact that goldfinches instinctively know how to feed upside down, so the perch is above the exit hole, where the seed is let out.

In keeping with the unexpected element, however, Mr. Gardner was amused watching a red winged black bird at the silo feeder last spring.

"It took him about half a day, and he



learned how to [feed upside down] too, so they are adaptable. They can learn new tricks."

Sometimes, the Gardners put a hopper feeder out if they're going away overnight and have a lot of snow buntings around. It has a removable lid and the feed trickles from a little chute exiting the sides. Hopper feeders are handy because they can be loaded up and even the hungriest flocks of birds take quite a while to empty them.

Basically there isn't one type of feeder to

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