



Christmas in July!



July 27th - 31st 2020  
See back cover for details

News  
from the bird store



What makes Fireflies Glow?

Fireflies, also called lightning bugs are not flies at all. Fireflies are actually beetles, and their "light" is used for communication amongst their species. The light itself is called bioluminescence and is produced from photocytes or light cells located in their abdomen. The bioluminescence happens by a chemical reaction of two substances luciferin and luciferase reacting with one another when exposed to oxygen. The firefly can regulate the flow of oxygen to its abdomen and in effect, turn its taillight on and off

The main purpose of a firefly's light show is to attract a mate. Males fly around while turning their lights on and off, hoping to get the attention of a flightless female waiting in low vegetation.

If a male's flickering impresses a female, she will flash back a response to the twilight glow. The brighter the female's response, the more interest she has in the male.

Fireflies are most abundant in the eastern half of North America, from Florida to southern Canada, but different species can be found anywhere in North America. They like meadows and marshes and fields and prefer cool, damp, dim conditions.

Try to find an area with very little light pollution: a meadow, the edge of a forest, or even your backyard.



Go out to look for fireflies soon after sunset. If you stand still and watch carefully, you just might see a few!



Fireflies don't come out until its warm; so wait until May, June, and July to search for them. The best way to attract these blinking bugs is to turn your yard or garden into the ideal firefly environment.

Fireflies appreciate shrubs and low trees for daytime shelter, so consider planting some to keep them around.

Fireflies like to hang out in grassy meadows, so if you want them to visit your property, let some parts of your lawn grow out or plant tall ornamental grasses. They enjoy perching on the tips of long blades of grass while searching for a mate.

Place bird baths in grassy areas or near shrubs; fireflies will appreciate the water source.

Don't use mosquito-repelling chemicals in your garden, as these will also repel fireflies.

Fireflies taste horrible to predators like birds and mice. They release a bitter defensive chemical when eaten, which helps to keep predators away.

All fireflies are bioluminescent as larvae (which is why the larvae are often called glowworms), but not all of them shine as adults. Even though their light is triggered by oxygen, fireflies do not have lungs. Instead, they inhale oxygen through tubes called "tracheoles."

Fireflies are only about 1/2 inch long, and they have very big eyes so that they can see the flashes of other fireflies. A lightning bug's flash can be yellow, green, or even blue!

Fireflies (as well as their larvae, glowworms) help to control garden pests like snails, slugs, cutworms, and aphids, so be sure to keep them around if you have them in your garden.

**Did you know** A lightning bug's flash can be yellow, green, or even blue!



## Solar Fountains — Why We Don't Recommend

When it comes to keeping the bird bath water moving, and having a pretty fountain sprinkling we have one thing to say. Moving water is great, Solar Fountains – not so great. We have tried and tested numerous of the solar fountains and because there is not a storage battery in them they do not work if there is the slightest shadow. We field-tested a solar fountain recently in our parking lot in the blazing afternoon sun. Not a cloud in the sky and no shadows. It sprinkled the water out of the bath! Until, the stem of the fountain made a shadow on the solar panel. Then in the blazing sun it stopped working completely!

The only Solar Fountains that seem to work were the ones that had a separate wired solar panel that could be staked to the ground in a direction that will get the most sun. The company currently is not manufacturing this product and any other ones that we have tried seem to have the same shadow problem. The other problem is if any, and I mean ANY algae gets on the solar panel it stops working. If you want moving water try a birdbath dripper, they work great and you will always have fresh water in your bath.

## Danny Boy



### A Happy Story in these Crazy Times

**Three years ago one of our customers raised a Rose breasted Grosbeak. We recently received this note from her:**

*I just wanted to pass along the return of 'Danny Boy' the Rose Breasted Grosbeak for a third year. He was wintered over here as a late fall baby who got a large chunk of his wing eaten by a cat or fox (judging by the distinct bite). Anyway you guys helped me research the optimum time for release the following summer with a soft release of his choosing from the window where he grew up. He returned to his window at 5:12am last week, singing until I went out, he jumps around his familiar branches, follows me around the yard and helps in the garden. His family has grown over the past 3 years and they are at the feeders as I type...but there's only one Danny Boy who knows the yard, trees.... and me.. Danny Boy exists because his battered little body mattered (as St Francis reminds us). As you guys know... injured animals place themselves in our path, some people help.... thanks for yours.*

**Take good care,  
Marie**

## Egg Painting Why Birds Eggs are Different Colors



Most bird's eggs start off pretty much white, which is the color of the calcium carbonate that the eggshells are made of. For the most part it is genetic to the bird what color the eggs will be. The color is deposited on the egg by glands in the oviduct as they pass through to be laid.

Speckled eggs are a little bit stronger than plain eggs, and if the bird is running low on calcium the eggs tend to be more speckled. According to Dr. Curt Stager it is similar the way you decorate Easter eggs. There are these glands in the tube or the oviduct, the tube the egg passes through as it's developing in the mother's body. There are little glands that open up into that as the eggs are passing by the opening of the gland, almost like little paintbrushes coloring the eggs. There are two basic chemicals that make the colors; one of them makes green or blue, and one of them makes reds and browns. It comes out and gets into the shell.

## Why Birds Need Water



Water is one of the most important things you can add to your yard to attract birds. All bird species need water, and adding one or more water features to your yard will quickly attract birds, including those that may never visit feeders.

Birds need water for two reasons: drinking and bathing. Water helps to keep the birds body cool both from the inside and outside. Use of birdbaths can also remove dust, loose feathers, parasites, and other debris from a bird's feathers helping to keep them clean.

Offering water in your yard will attract more birds than just food sources, since water features can still tempt birds that would not normally visit feeders.

Moving water will attract more birds more quickly because the motion catches their eye and they can hear any dripping, sprinkles, or splashes. Splashes can be heard from quite a distance and will attract a wide range of bird species.

Moving water in the bath by use of a dripper that connects to your faucet will help get the bath noticed and keep it clean. Standing water becomes stagnant and must be cleaned daily.

Recently I watched a Phoebe land in the birdbath, take a look around and then wade around the bath. She kept looking around; It was amusing to watch her antics as if she didn't want anyone to see her taking a little cool off in the bath. I had as much fun watching her, as she did wading around the birdbath!





New England Cottontail



Eastern Cottontail

## All Those **Bunnies** in the Yard are they Eastern Cottontails or New England Cottontails?

The New England Cottontail was the only rabbit east of the Hudson River until the Eastern Cottontail was introduced in the late 1800s. Today the New England Cottontail is restricted to less than a fifth of its original range compared the early 1900s, whereas the Eastern Cottontail can be found throughout New England. New England cottontails once lived from southeastern New York north into Vermont and southern Maine. Today the species still inhabits parts of New York, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Maine.

The New England cottontail has a grayish brown pelt flecked with black, and a white tail. The New England cottontail looks much like the eastern cottontail. However, most New England cottontails have a small black spot on their forehead, whereas about half of all eastern cottontails have a white spot in the same place. The New England cottontail's ears are slightly shorter than those of the eastern cottontail and have a line of black fur along the outer edge.

The New England Cottontail is a forest species that depends on areas of thick shrubs and young trees that grow up following natural disturbances. Eastern cottontails are frequently found in yards grazing on clover, while New England cottontails are reluctant to venture away from thick cover. In order merely to survive, a single New England cottontail requires at least 2 ½ acres of suitable habitat. Over the last century, forests throughout New England have aged. As shade from the canopy of mature trees increases, understory vegetation thins and no longer provides sufficient New England cottontail habitat. Eastern Cottontails seem better able to survive in the increasingly fragmented habitats of New England, including open fields, forest edges, small thickets, and even golf courses and suburban lawns.

## Did You Know Our Store Hours Have Changed

As of June 1st of this year we made a decision to change our store hours and **CLOSE on SUNDAYS**. We needed to switch things around in order to have 2 people at the store every day. This was necessary because the face of business has changed. We now are processing orders online, for shipping or store pickup, by phone, and in store.



It was becoming impossible for one person to do the work. We are truly grateful to be busy, but we could see that adapting our way of doing business was necessary. We looked at all of our options and decided the best solution was to close one day a week. We chose Sunday, as we only had one person on staff on both Friday and Sunday. This allowed us to have 2 people on Friday, and even God rested on the seventh day. So you might say we are going "old school". Remember when everyone was closed on Sunday!

That said, there are some things about the new face of business that won't change.

—We will still be here to provide you with great customer service; we'll listen to your stories, find solutions to your problems, and give you a hard time, just like we always did!

—Many of you have been enjoying our Store Pickup in the Garden Shed. This was always an option on our online store, but now it's being used much more, even though the store is open. If you need an order just send it online and we will get it ready for pickup at your convenience, even

if we are not open. We will send you an email when the order is available for pickup. For Sunday pickup make sure get your order in by 4PM on Saturday. We will process it before we leave for the day and you can grab it on Sunday. Nice and Easy!

—We will still have Seed Cards for sale in the Fall and will find a way to process the orders online for pickup in the Garden Shed if necessary. More to come on that as we get closer.

—Lastly, you can always call us, but because the phone has gotten so busy leave us a message if we don't answer and please be patient. We promise we'll get back to you as soon as we can!

### Did You Know?

Birds which build in trees generally have blue or greenish eggs, either spotted or unspotted, while birds that build in bushes or near or on the ground are likely to lay speckled eggs.



**July 27th - 31st 2020**

Nothing is normal this year, so we've decided to move our Cash & Carry Event to July!

From **Monday July 27th till Friday July 31**

we will have a selection of Overstocked,

Discontinued, and Slightly

Damaged items

available at

incredible prices!

**Stop by and Save!**



## OUR ANNUAL Baby Bird Reminder

It is the nesting season and every year we receive numerous calls about baby birds that are on the ground. Please be kind, these little fuzz balls are fledgling birds and the parent bird is usually around and will continue to feed the baby on the ground as well as helping it learn to fly. If you think the baby bird is in jeopardy take a basket, fill it with grass, then place the baby in the basket and hang the basket on a tree branch close by but away from danger. The mother bird will find and feed the baby. Don't take it home, to us, or to the vet. The baby is usually fine (it just hasn't quite got the hang of flying yet) and the mother bird will be quite upset if her baby goes missing.

The babies are coming to the feeders now so watch their antics as they beg for food from the parents and learn to land on the feeders. It takes them a while to figure it all out and watching their behavior is a treat.

**Bird Store Hours:**  
10:00am-6:00pm  
Monday - Saturday  
**CLOSED SUNDAY**

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 736, Fiskdale, MA 01518

Phone: (508)-347-BIRD

thebirdstoreandmore.com

Sturbridge, MA 01566

(Route 20, Cedar Street Intersection)

4 Cedar Street,



Shop.thebirdstoreandmore.com

SHOP ANYTIME!

PRRST STD  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
PERMIT NO. 65  
SOUTHBRIIDGE, MA