

Jim Wilson's All-Season Suet Mixture



Hairy Woodpecker (male)

Pure suet tends to melt, drip and even become rancid during warm weather. Blending it with peanut butter seems to stabilize it and if done with the right proportions it can be used during all seasons. Blended suet drips (melts) very little in summer and many of our birds feed on it year round.

Purchase ground beef suet for mincemeat, or purchase unprocessed suet from your butcher and grind/chop your own. A food processor chops unfrozen suet well - put in 500-gram zip lock bags and freeze for future use.

- ❑ Take two 500-gram bags of ground/chopped beef suet. Melt to liquid over very slow heat.
- ❑ Add to this peanut butter (30 - 40% peanut butter to 100% suet, by melted volume - approximately).
- ❑ Melt and blend the two thoroughly, then remove from heat.
- ❑ Add five-six cups of raw shelled sunflower hearts (unsalted - available at the Bulk Barn or other source).
- ❑ Pour in 1/8 cup of molasses.
- ❑ Add 1/4 cup white sugar.
- ❑ Add some corn meal if available, as a thickener (optional).
- ❑ I usually add several handfuls of both white millet and whole black-oil sunflower seeds to further thicken.
- ❑ Mix the whole batch thoroughly.
- ❑ Pour into a flat-bottomed pan and freeze (like fudge).
- ❑ Later, cut into approximately one-inch chunks and place in a wire mesh feeder (to keep squirrels from getting it). These are available from stores that sell bird feeding equipment.

I put the frozen chunks into a home-made suet holder made from two wooden disks about 10 centimeters in diameter cut from a 3/4 inch pine board (see photo). I then make a cylinder of 1/4 inch wire mesh and place the wood disks in each end. The bottom disk is permanently attached to the wire but the top is secured with three wood screws that can be removed and the disk pulled out when I need to top up the contents. The seam up the body of the wire cylinder is crimped onto itself and then I run a "stitching" of brass wire to ensure it stays together. It's pretty solidly made, and needs to be, to deter the many Grey Squirrels we have about.

I put a screw eye in the centre of the wooden top and I use a wire to hang it up.

Good luck, and enjoy the many woodpeckers, chickadees, nuthatches and lots of other birds that will likely visit.
