



## BAFFLING THE CRITTERS

Don't give up feeding the birds just because you are overrun with squirrels and raccoons. There are several ways to "baffle" the critters and keep them from raiding your feeders.

### **Squirrel-Proof vs. Squirrel-Resistant**

There are several feeders on the market that are labeled "squirrel-proof". Buyer beware – many of these feeders are only squirrel-resistant. Here's the difference: squirrel-resistant means squirrels should not be able to damage the feeder, squirrel-proof means they should not be able to damage the feeder nor get to the seed within. Some squirrel-proof feeders are tube type feeders enclosed in a wire cage. Small birds can get through the wire but squirrels cannot. Another very effective squirrel-proof feeder has a weight activated perching bar. Birds only weigh a few ounces, so even several birds will not activate the perch, but a squirrel's weight will cause the bar to close the feeder.

### **Pole Mounting Feeders**

You can mount a feeder on a pole or hang it from a shepherd's crook, and keep the critters out as long as you place it at least 10' from a "launching pad" (tree, fence, wall, bush, etc.), and place a baffle on the pole at least 5' from the ground. A baffle is a barrier device that fits around the pole and prevents the squirrel from climbing. Remember: squirrels can jump 8-10' horizontally and 4-5' vertically. They can also drop onto your feeders from tree limbs!

### **Tree Hanging Feeders**

Baffling a feeder hanging in a tree is very difficult. The only successful method is to hang the feeder, with a baffle above it, at the very end of a lone branch, 10 feet from the trunk and 5 feet off the ground.

### **Deck Mounted Feeders**

This is a situation where the only real defense against squirrels is to use a squirrel-proof feeder. Even deck arms that extend 3-4 feet off the deck won't stop a squirrel from jumping onto the feeder from the deck rail or simply climbing out on the deck arm.

### **Safflower Seed**

Another way to discourage squirrels is to change the seed in your feeder to safflower seed. Safflower is a white, oil seed similar in shape and size to black oil sunflower seed. Squirrels usually do not like safflower seed while the songbirds (cardinals, chickadees, titmice, nuthatches, finches, etc.) relish it!