

Heritage Stone Art

On squirrels and window feeders

Like millions of North Americans I have fed birds in my backyard off and on almost all of my life. And like most, I have spent a lot of that time battling the generations of squirrels that raided my feeders and nest boxes. They chased away all of the birds that I had hoped to see in my feeder. I had visions of zipity doo dah but it became an impassioned war. Over the years I have developed feeders, nest boxes and systems that have won out over the squirrels to keep them feeding on the ground and my yard is now full of beautiful songbirds all year round. I must admit that I too was mesmerized by the invention of the "Soopersoaker" and did apply a variation of that technology for a while to get some joy and satisfaction in terrorizing those squirrels as I rid them for maybe a day at best.

I'm older now; I've softened as the years increased. I've actually developed a strange compassion for the critters although I still do not appreciate them raiding a feeder! My older sister has also fed the birds and I think she has done it a lot more consistently than me but I think she too reached wisdom sooner than I did. She never really employed methods to rid the squirrels though she did employ some unspeakable scare tactics and those would be left for another article. I was always impressed on my visits, seated at her kitchen table and able to look up at the window to see so many different birds and so close up. My sister feeds the birds with feeders and trays hung right outside her kitchen window, she always has. It seems so easy, even to fill the feeders she just opens the window and fills them up and in minutes the birds are back. The odd squirrel comes by and if she is nearby she chases him away or leaves him. If she isn't there, the squirrel gets his fill and goes on to do other squirrel business of the day! No harm done.

This fall I decided to follow my sister's reserve and I mounted one of my stone feeders right outside my office window. I have had more joy out of that setup! I see birds close up at all times of the day. It's easy to refill and maintain because I just open the window and tend to it. The squirrels come by from time to time but they don't stay long and they hurt nothing. In case they catch on to me that I'm not always at home I have placed a statue of a dog on the window ledge and he has been a great guard against the squirrels should they get bold enough to make the climb to the feeder.

I'm hooked! I will be putting more of my stone feeders at different windows in my house. My favorite is the kitchen window because we can then watch the birds feed close up while washing the dishes. Yah, I'm that far behind progress that we still wash dishes here by hand. In fact, I'd have it no other way! I think that was the last consistent family activity to be replaced by technology.

