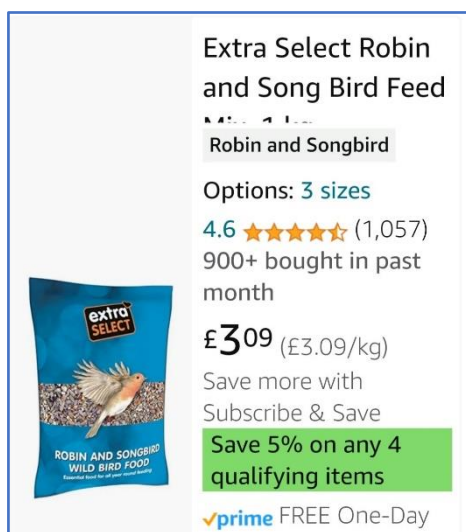


Winter is here and it is time for me to change my bird feeding strategy. Note that this is my personal choice but I think it is worth considering.

I tend to avoid feeding Starlings throughout the summer months when there are more insects around but all birds find it hard to survive the winter so I change my feed tactics as follows.

I use a Robin blend of feed in with my sunflower hearts at a ratio of 90% hearts and 10% Robin blend. This mix normally contains protein from small pellets of suet and crushed dried meal worm as well as many other seeds. Robins in particular will eat most of the ingredients direct from the feeder or on the ground in a dish or similar. Starlings will be fixated on the meal worm so if you can afford it, you can leave one feeder full of sunflower hearts and the other with the Sunflower Hearts and Robin mix. The Starlings will mob you for a short while and then leave so that smaller birds can also benefit. This two feeder strategy may also help if your sunflower hearts are failing to attract Goldfinches, Greenfinches etc. These birds may be more inclined to visit if they see other birds feeding in your garden. They will hopefully see the sunflower hearts and maybe increase their visits to you.

Photo attachment.



Example for purchasing Robin mix from Amazon. There are cheaper way available based on amount etc

It is very important to wash your feeders regularly. The higher fat content from the Robin mix suet and meal worms will clog up the free flow of the mix as time and weather conditions pass. If this becomes a regular problem for you, I would consider only filling your feeders to half full. When cleaning I recommend a bucket of hot soapy water and a bottle brush, followed by a spray with work surface sanitiser spray. Leave for 10 mins and rinse thoroughly in fresh clean water to

remove the disinfectant. Birds can transmit various diseases to one another and us by feeding together and being in close proximity to each other. Bird flu, parasitic infections and salmonella can be contracted from the birds saliva so keep your feeders clean. (I do this once every week).

Remember - clean your hands too with antibacterial hand wash every time you finish handling your feeders.

Graham Holloway CANS wildlife representative.