



Feeding wildlife

Remember to allow native animals to remain wild. The tamer a wild animal becomes, the less likely it is to live a natural life – turning into a ‘pet’ or becoming a ‘pest’ as they become more demanding for food.

Providing a garden with a diversity of natural food sources for wildlife is the best option. Providing food such as meat for birds can encourage more aggressive and potentially problematic birds such as butcherbirds and the pied currawong, which may attack vulnerable, smaller birds. The feeding of sugar or honey and bread to nectar-eating species can cause serious health problems as well as potentially increasing the density of more aggressive species such as rainbow lorikeets.

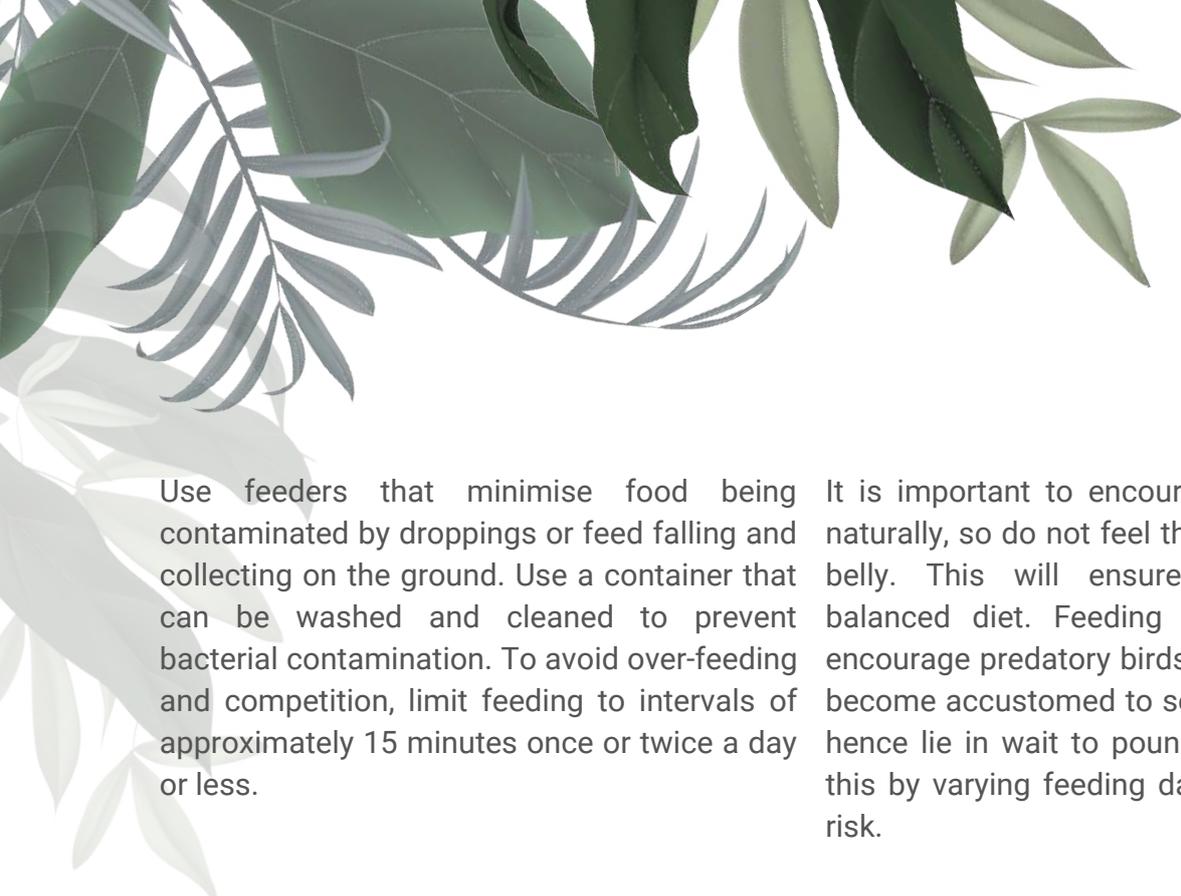
However, studies have shown that bird feeding does not seem to lead to dependency in adult breeding birds at least. Natural foods remain the main part of their diet.

A 'BirdLife Australia' study found that it is people who become dependent on the idea that they are maintaining the survival of species, when in fact they are only providing snacks.

Provide fresh, clean quality feed that is nutritionally balanced for the species you want to attract. For commercial bird feed products, check the nutritional quality, use by date and whether it contains dust (which may indicate contamination).

Store food in a container to keep it dry and fresh. Discard if fungi are present or it appears ‘off’. Select a feed type that is similar to what the species would eat in the wild. Excess feed should be removed after a few hours to avoid contamination by fungal spores or other material.





Use feeders that minimise food being contaminated by droppings or feed falling and collecting on the ground. Use a container that can be washed and cleaned to prevent bacterial contamination. To avoid over-feeding and competition, limit feeding to intervals of approximately 15 minutes once or twice a day or less.

It is important to encourage birds to forage naturally, so do not feel they need to get a full belly. This will ensure they maintain a balanced diet. Feeding birds regularly can encourage predatory birds while cats can also become accustomed to set feeding times and hence lie in wait to pounce. You can prevent this by varying feeding days to minimise this risk.

