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The Old New Way to Feed the Birds

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With several friends being bigtime birders and with a cacophony of birds wailing to wake me each morning, the unknown disease afflicting birds along the Southeastern and Mid-Atlantic U.S. has been on my mind. I've seen and read various reports advising homeowners to take down birdfeeders, as those may be places the avian disease spreads. It's a disastrous disease if you've seen photos of those afflicted and to think that folks may be aiding its spread by doing kindnesses to their feathered friends is heartbreaking.

Just recently I received an enewsletter from the National Initiative for Consumer Horticulture with the subject line, "The NEW Bird Feeder." Native plants, the email explains, are at the base of the wild food chain. If birds aren't eating the seeds from native plants, then they're eating the insects that feed off of those native plants. The point: Native (and appropriate perennials) are the original bird feeders. Insect- and bird-feeding plants could be a helpful measure in preventing the spread of this avian disease.

If your customers (or even you) are concerned about the wild bird populations and preventing the spread of diseases, point them in the direction of your perennials department and show them that the "old school" bird feeder is back in style. **GP**