

Keep Roosting Birds From Dirtying Cars, Driveways This Fall



Photos by Vicki Jellison, UNL Extension in Lancaster County

In the Fall, birds such as grackles and other blackbirds, European starlings and house sparrows form flocks to feed and roost says Ron Johnson, Ph.D., UNL wildlife specialist. When the birds roost in populated areas, the flocks often are a nuisance because they can cause odor, noise, filth and damage to trees, walkways and buildings.

If bird flocks appear to be preparing to roost in a tree during the evening hours, make noise to disturb them and scare them away. The earlier this is done, the more effective it will be. When a flock has roosted in a tree for a long time, it may take three or more consecutive evenings of scaring the birds to get them to leave. Start harassing them when they begin to arrive and continue doing so periodically until dark.

For long-term solutions to these problems, eliminate attractive roosting places where bird roosts are occurring. Dense groves of overcrowded young trees provide great roosts, so thin about one-third of the trees to disperse roosting flocks and make the area less appealing as a roost. Thinning the overcrowded trees will improve the remaining tree stand.

Large trees with thick side branches give birds a nice place to settle. To remove a roosting flock and discourage it from returning, thin the side branches or have a professional do so. However, be sure to leave the top of the tree intact, both to preserve the quality of the tree and because the side branches will grow back even thicker if the top is thinned.

Wood Heat—A Viable Home Heating Alternative

No matter how advanced heating systems have become, burning wood is still an efficient method for combating the winter cold. Although different considerations must be taken into account, heating with wood can prove advantageous over other heating methods.

According to Scott Josiah, forestry specialist, wood heat is the most reliable source of energy when severe winter weather strikes. Unlike electric heat, wood heat is not lost due to power outages.

Wood is a renewable and environmentally-friendly source of heat. Burning wood produces little pollution, and ashes can be recycled into garden soil to ward off pests and add nutrients.

However, not all trees are created equal. High-density hardwoods produce more heat per unit and burn slowly and cleanly. Hardwoods such as hickory, oak, ash, red elm and walnut are most desirable. Softwoods, such as spruces, pines, junipers and low-density hardwoods, such as cottonwood and willow, are less desirable because of fast-burning rates and low output of heat. Softwoods can also contain hazardous resins and produce creosote.

Firewood is measured in cords. A full cord is a stack of wood that measures 4 feet tall, 8 feet wide and 4 feet deep. A face cord stands 4 feet high, 8 feet long and 12 to 18 inches deep.



On average, a full-size pick-up with an 8-foot bed can hold approximately one-third to one-half cord of wood depending on how the wood is stacked.

The amount of wood needed to heat an area depends on several factors—type and quality of wood stove, type of wood to be burned, size and insulation of area to be heated, desired interior temperature and outside temperature. As many as four and one-half to seven cords per year may be needed to heat a home. However, for occasional use in a fireplace, one-half cord is sufficient.

There are many readily-available sources and means of gathering firewood besides harvesting timber from a wooded area. Logs and limbs from trees toppled by storms can be reclaimed from landfills. Industrial wood waste from lumber processors and limbs removed for powerline maintenance can be used as well. However, obtain permission before taking wood from such places for personal use.



University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension presents a series of programs, entitled Acreage Insights-Rural Living Clinics, targeting acreage owners and specifically designed to provide knowledge and skills to better manage a rural living environment. The following clinics will be held in Lincoln at the Lancaster Extension Education Center, 444 Cherrycreek Road from 7–9 p.m. For more information, contact Sarah Browning at (402) 727-2775.

CLINICS ARE \$10/PERSON ADVANCED REGISTRATION; \$15/PERSON AT THE DOOR
Preregistration deadline is 3 working days before clinic.

REGISTRATION FORM

PLEASE CHECK WHICH CLINIC(S) YOU ARE REGISTERING FOR

- Tree Selection for Acreages** Lincoln—Sept. 5
- Fire on the Acreage** Lincoln—Oct. 9
- Organic Production** Lincoln—Nov. 8

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____

\$10/person advanced registration

Preregistration deadline:
3 working days before clinic.

Number attending _____

Amount enclosed \$ _____

Mail completed registration form and check (payable to UNL Extension) to:
UNL Extension in Dodge County
Acreage Insights
1206 W. 23rd St.
Fremont, NE 68025

We assure reasonable accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act. For assistance, or if you require language interpretation, contact Extension in Dodge County at (402) 727-2775 three weeks prior to date of clinic.



Lynn Betts, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

Wednesday, Sept. 5

Tree Selection for Acreages

The selection and placement of trees well adapted to Nebraska's challenging growing conditions are crucial to the creation of a pleasant acreage environment. Trees must be chosen to fit the existing site conditions, so they thrive with few, if any, pest problems. Trees must also perform their desired function, whether is to provide shade, screen out unpleasant views, provide habitat for wildlife or increase the home's energy efficiency. Presented by Justin Evertson, Assistant Director of the Nebraska Statewide Arboretum, this workshop will help you to learn how to choose the best tree species for shade, wind protection, wildlife and fun.

Tuesday, Oct. 9

Fire on the Acreage

Fire has always been part of the rural landscape. If you choose to live within that rural landscape, it pays to know how to make your acreage as fire resistant as possible. Using prescribed fire as a tool is often another important part of rural living. Both of these "burning issues" will be discussed in "Fire on the Acreage."

Thursday, Nov. 8

Organic Production

Small scale production of organic vegetables, livestock and other crops is becoming more popular each year with acreage owners as well as farmers market producers. This program will be an overview of organic production. We'll be discussing vegetables, livestock and other crops, along with basic production, marketing opportunities and how to become certified as an organic producer.