

Baby Birds In My Garden

Elizabeth Barker, Regina

First the robins. The nestlings fed on my strawberries - poor ones from the edges of my patch which otherwise may have been tramped on. I could not begrudge these robins a few berries after they had so thoroughly spudded out all the cutworms from the freshly seeded garden. For a few days it was a mystery to me just what punched such holes in the ground. It would take a lot of strawberries to replace the returns from even one tomato plant cut off by a worm.

Then one baby Meadowlark which was being raised in the grass. It flew into the garden early one morning and landed in the strawberry bed with the robins. It took hold of a small berry plant on a long runner and held a real tug-of-war.

Next Ma Vesper Sparrow and her two almost full-grown paid a short visit, hunting insects under the leaves.

From July 22nd to August 2nd, a Barn Sparrow, raising one Cowbird chick was in residence around the yard. This was quite an interesting thing to see at first hand, as she struggled to raise her "problem child". I could not tell if they moved on together or if the Cowbird moved on alone, although it was just growing its tail and did not seem to hunt at all for itself. It may have been ready to return to its own parents.

The Arkansas and the common Kingbirds did not seem to have such good luck this year - one chick each, instead of three -- and then, not such regular visitors to my yard.

And last, but not least, English Sparrows, in tens and dozens, as usual.

Dunking The Tid-Bits

Mrs. G. W. Dowson, Mossbank

One very hot July some years ago, I noticed the Grackles, nesting in trees across the street, being very active around the bird bath and apparently taking something out of it. Investigation showed nothing there, but later I saw that these birds were bringing moths, or what tid-bits they could find, dipping them several times in the water, and carrying them dropping to their nestlings.

The heat was so extreme during that period that the leaves turned brown around the edges, and almost dries up on the trees. Many baby birds must have died. I thought it very clever of the Grackles to try to supply the moisture needed by the tiny birds, but never before not since, have I observed such a thing.

(This practice may be more common than you think. During the nesting season this summer, Grackles came again and again to my bird bath carrying crusts of bread that they had picked up in a neighbour's yard. They would throw the bread in the water, turn it over with their bills until it became well soaked, bring it out on to the lawn and then carry away all that they could to their young. By the time that they returned to get the rest of the prepared lunch the sparrows always had cleaned up the "works". They would then have to search for another dry crust and perform the whole operation all over again. - - Editor.)

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like this is undertaken, teacher and student alike will find themselves richer in experience, in interests and in real happiness.

We, who have been faithful followers of the "Blue Jay" through the past ten years, should do everything we can to spread an interest in

nature. Encourage our town and country teachers to expand their interests; give our young people the rein and let them go from there. Saskatchewan is indeed rich, and bounteous are her crops. Our young people must come to appreciate the natural heritage which is theirs, and which beckons to them even through the windows of a French classroom.