

# The Ultimate Blue Jay Station Setup & Maintenance Checklist

## Hardware and Setup Essentials

- Cedar platform feeder (Minimum 8-10 inches wide landing zone)
- Sturdy 4x4 wooden mounting post (or heavy-duty metal pole)
- Wide metal squirrel baffle (mounted 4.5 – 5.5 feet high)
- Clear acrylic weather dome (placed 6-8 inches above the tray)
- Galvanized steel trash can with tight lid (for rodent-proof seed storage)
- Heated winter birdbath (Minimum 2.5 – 4 inches deep)
- UV window decals (to prevent fatal window strikes)

## Premium Food Supply

- Whole, in-shell roasted peanuts (Must be unsalted)
- Black oil sunflower seeds (Check for 28-30% fat content)
- Cracked corn (Purchase 50lb bulk bags for cost-efficiency)
- No-melt suet dough blocks (Select berry or nutty flavors)
- Live or dried mealworms (For high-protein feeding spikes)

## Installation and Placement Guidelines

- **Location:** The station is placed near woodland edges or dense bushes.
- **Safety Zone:** The feeder is at least 10 feet away from jumping branches to stop squirrels.
- **Height:** The platform is mounted exactly 5 to 7 feet off the ground.
- **Strategic Spacing:** The blue jay feeder is placed at least 15 feet away from small bird tube feeders to prevent aggressive bullying.

## Recurring Maintenance Routine

- Discard any wet, clumpy, or uneaten seed older than 48 hours.
- Vigorously scrub the metal mesh bottom with a stiff wire brush to clear drainage.
- Wash the entire platform structure with a 10% bleach-to-water solution.
- Rinse the feeder thoroughly with a high-pressure hose.
- Allow the wood and mesh to dry completely in the sun before refilling.

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*Pro Tip: Blue jays cache thousands of seeds. Don't panic if your feeder empties fast—they are burying food for the winter! Keep feeding consistent.*