

A Word to the Wise: About Birdseed

Birdseed can become a real problem if not stored properly...as Ruth and I found out this week. I volunteered to take Ruth's car into the dealers for an oil change while she was wrapping Christmas gifts. While sitting in the owners' lounge, the service manager walked to me and said, " We have a problem with your wife's car." That is a report that one usually doesn't want to hear and so I reluctantly said, "What's the matter Jody?" She produced Ruth's air cleaner and pointed at the intake opening. As I looked into the cleaner I could see about a quart of what appeared to be, and was, birdseed. It seems that a mouse or a chipmunk had been storing birdseed to use later this winter. Jody said that they would need to put in new filters and blow out the seeds from the air lines/vents in Ruth's car. Cost: \$130 for parts and labor!!! Ouch!! She said that I should bring my car in right away as it might have the same problem.

I took Ruth's car home and returned to the dealers with my car...and yes; my air cleaner was filled with birdseed too...They fixed it for another \$130! Jody said that we were lucky as another owner with a car like mine had had his electrical system ruined at a cost of \$5,000!! And, a week later had the same thing happen again!!! \$10,000!

Ruth and I store our birdseed in the garage in a plastic container with a sealed top...because a few years ago we had to replace a slider on our porch that was destroyed by squirrels trying to get into our Ravine room where we had stored, you guessed it, our birdseed. We thought that moving the seed to the garage would solve the problem. Ruth remembered that she had purchased a new bag of seed a few weeks ago and it was too large to fit into the plastic container ... so she left it unprotected for several days until it would fit into the container. The critters filled our air cleaners during that several day period.

This warning, this word to the wise, might help those of you who feed birds avoid spending \$260 to get your cars repaired...or maybe even \$10,000, in which case, don't say that we didn't warn you.

Those little birds on our decks are really pretty...and can be pretty expensive too.

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