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**OUR FINE FEATHERED FRIENDS**

By Arleen M. Kaptur

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Do you remember the fun of running under a sprinkler as a child? It was a hot, sunny day and the cold water made the summer's heat tolerable and even enjoyable. Well, now you can offer the same relief from the heat to our fine feathered friends.

Providing a birdbath not only enhances your yard but brings the pleasure of watching and enjoying the myriad of birds that will thank you with their songs and their antics.

A bird bath does not have to be an expensive item. It can be as simple as a shallow pan perched on a tree stump for stability.

There are a few items to consider when you place a bird bath in your garden. Birds prefer shallow water, approximately 1–2 inches. Anything more than that is considered a danger to them and they will avoid it. Also, the bottom should have a rough surface. They appreciate having a solid footing. You should also place your bath in clear view or an open section of the garden. Predators have a tendency to lurk in shrub and low lying plants and birds prefer a clear view so that they can ascertain danger. A few simple precautions and birds will be waiting in the wings to have the privilege of your birdbath.

Once you find the perfect place, then concentrate on attracting these wonderful winged delights. Having food nearby will help. They will notice your birdbath a lot quicker and begin using it. Also the sound of water will attract them. When you are watering your lawn or garden, keep it on a fine mist as the sound of the water will also bring birds in from near and far. Once you have established a population of feathered beauties, remember to keep the bath clean. Algae and mud can be a health hazard to the birds, and who would want to step into dirty water anyway? Also, refill with water as necessary, especially in the hot months. Water evaporates and birds need the water to maintain a healthy life balance. If you can, have your bath near some perching branches or tree limbs. After bathing, birds enjoy preening their feathers and making themselves beautiful!

Your birdbath can be a wonderful addition to your garden setting, in the summer as well as the winter months. While your plants sleep away the cold, birds still need water and many local watering holes may be frozen over and not provide the liquid they need. Also, there are different birds in each season,

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and you will be amazed that you never noticed them before. If your bath is shallow, simply knocking out the ice and providing clean water will keep them happy during the coldest days.

A fun project is to keep a diary of the birds you see in any given season. Compare notes and see which ones are just passing through and which take up housekeeping. The colors are a sight to behold, and their activities will entice both adult and child to watch and enjoy. Birds can be a very welcome addition into your spot in the world. Treat them with a few amenities and they will reward you handsomely. Wherever you live, there are birds that will take delight in the necessities you have provided, and listen very carefully – you will hear them thanking you with their song – a chorus of chirping, singing, and other bird sounds is very entertaining. They have different songs for different occasions. See if you can tell the difference and soon you will know if they are sending out an alarm to the other birds, courting a possible mate, or just enjoying the afternoon. It can become a lifelong

hobby, and a very enjoyable one at that. Your picture perfect garden just got a little prettier, and a lot more musical.

ENJOY

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Arleen Kaptur has written numerous articles, cookbooks, motivational booklets, and the novel:

SEARCHING FOR AUSTIN JAMES Websites: <http://www.arleensite.com>

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### **The Art of Feathering in Photoshop**

**By Nashville**

#### **The Art of Feathering in Photoshop by Nashville**

Some people are startled on how wonderful images look with blurred edges. They certainly don't know how easy it is to do it. It is called a feathered edge in Photoshop (PS). You can put in many feathered images together to get a wonderful collage that melts seamlessly together using the Octagonal and Rectangular tool or the Lasso Tools in PS.

Feathering is one of the most commonly used techniques when creating wallpapers. It is set by a radius measurement in pixels which means that it occurs in both directions or on both sides of the selection boundary. Since it's set by pixels, a feather value will have a very different effect on images of very different resolutions.

The feathering effect to combine two or more images smoothly in PS is easy to be learned. As a start, it's advisable to use two images. Here we go. First, create a new image of any size you want and paste the image. It should be on layer 1. Now, here comes the feathering effect. Choose the Rectangular

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Marquee tool and you will see the thing that says Feather. Once you have found it, change the px to between 15–20. Then, select around one–third of the image on the left side and press delete. Now, you can see some of the second image through the first image.

Using the Selection menu, you can set the amount of feathering you wish. Higher numbers, mean wider the spreads of feathering. You can also set the amount of feathering by using the Options bar text entry field for "Feathering" in PS versions 6, 7 and CS. From here, just click the QuickMask button if you wish to test your feather. Now, you can see the feather in action. If you want an even clearer demo, double–click the QuickMask button in the tool bar; and in the QuickMask dialog, set the mask color to white; and the Opacity to 80 to 90%. Keep selecting some parts of the first image and press delete until the two images are combined smoothly. That's it! You now have a feathered image.

Feathering blurs edges by building a transition boundary between the selection and its surrounding pixels. This blurring can cause some loss of detail at the edge of the selection. Always remember that the amount of feathering or 'blur' you assigned will be centered at the active selection. At present, feathering is a software term for the traditional technique known as vignetting: a soft edged border around an image which blends into the background. You can make this any shape you like.

Folks, try the feathering effect in Photoshop now. With it, you'll be able to experience and learn this interesting and enjoyable technique that is previously enjoyed by web and graphic designers only.

This article was created for the sole purpose of propagating information that may be related to brochures printing and other industries to which it may be of interest. For comments and questions about the article you may contact the Author at their website <http://www.brochuresprintingonline.com>



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