

WOODPECKER FEEDER

By Connie Katholi

Introducing the patented, Starling-proof (well, nearly so!) suet dispenser. Inspiration for its invention came one winter from the activities of a Pileated Woodpecker, a new species in the area. The aim was to encourage him by having a banquet always spread - one which the Starlings could not whisk away in a flash. The Pileated at that time found the swinging stick feeder either beyond his abilities or his temperament; the present one, however, performs capably, albeit ungainly. The feeder consists of little more than a wooden box, fastened flat against the tree, with a bottom and inner lining of hardware cloth which is removable for cleaning and refilling. A plunger is added to press down the suet and to discourage predation from the top (see illustration).

Occasionally a frustrated woodpecker will deal the container some wood-splintering whacks; and once in a while an agile Starling will find a knot or bump on the truck on which to cling while enjoying a stolen meal. It is a daily stop-over for all local woodpeckers - Downy, Hairy, Red-bellied, Red-headed, Flicker and (in season) the Sapsucker, as well as the Pileated for whom it was invented. Also it serves adequately Titmice, Nuthatches and Chickadees, all of which are able to eat clinging upside down. I noticed recently in a national nature magazine an ad for a feeder essentially of the same design as mine - is this an infringement of my copyright?

