

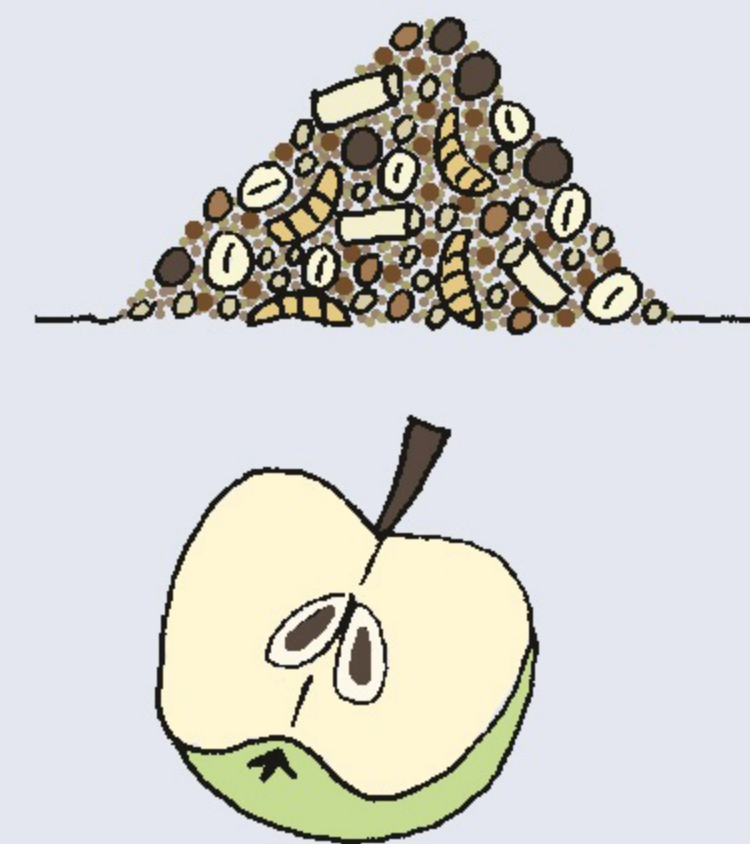
feeding ground-feeding birds

Some birds prefer to look for their food on the ground.

If a bird is called "soft-billed" it means their beaks are soft, so they prefer soft food, and can't crack open seeds and nuts. Birds like the song thrush look for snails, slugs and worms; and the dunnock, a secretive little brown bird, picks its way through the undergrowth looking for tiny insects and other minibeasts.

How you can help...

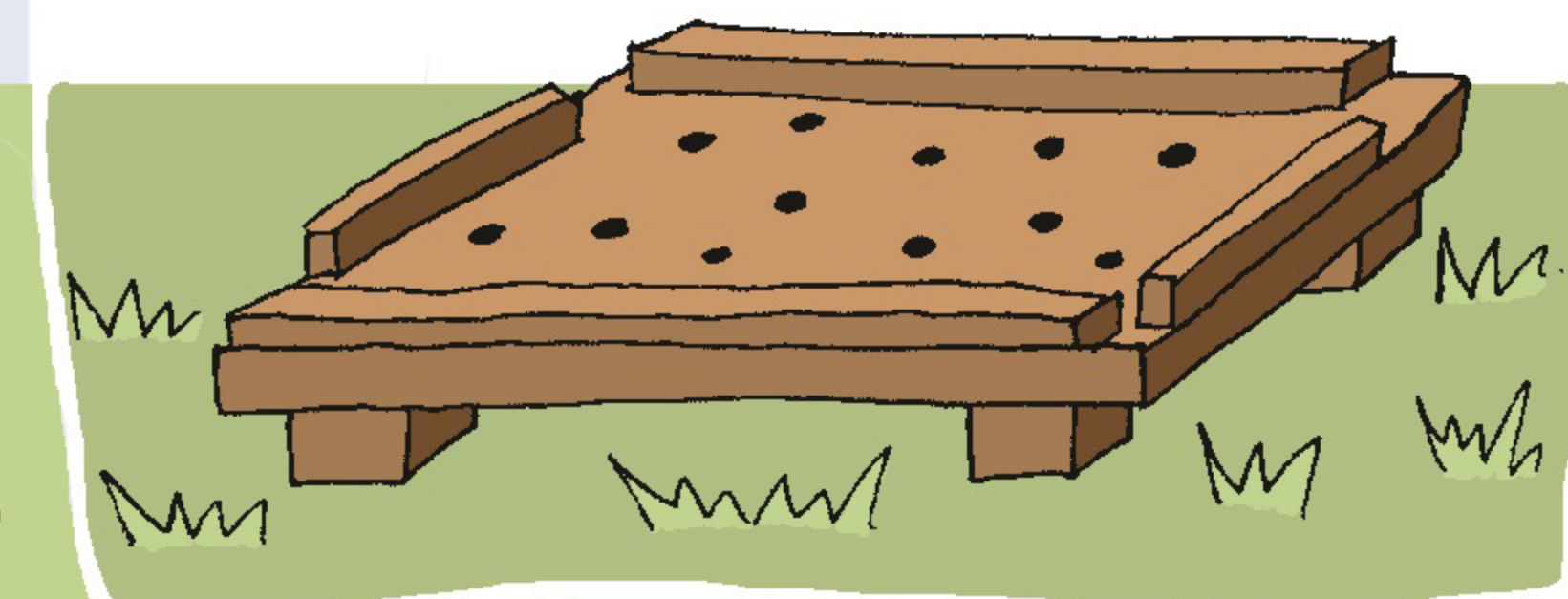
- You can buy special "soft-billed" food, which often contains dried egg, small insects, including dried mealworms, fruit and seeds.
- Scatter the food on your lawn, or use a ground feeding tray (see box).
- Cut apples in half and place them on the ground. Spread them out in your garden because blackbirds and robins are very territorial.



A ground feeding tray

Instead of scattering food on grass, you can make a special tray...

- It must be made of sturdy material, like wood, otherwise it will move or blow away.
- You need to add edges to stop the seed spreading.
- Add draining holes to prevent the food going mouldy, and remember to keep the tray clean and dry.
- If you fix it to little legs, no more than 10cm off the ground, it will be easier to move around.



Only put a little down at a time, otherwise you might find you are feeding rats!

Watch out for predators like sparrowhawks and cats – never feed in an open space or too close to shrubs. Some cover nearby is good though so birds can retreat if in danger.

Move the area where you put food down each day to prevent diseases building up.

