

• The Bird of the Month

December

The Iconic Cardinal

One of our most identifiable and beloved birds in Lower Makefield is the Northern Cardinal. The Northern Cardinal {"Northern" being added in 1983 to distinguish it from other species, such as the Yellow Cardinal} tops the list of North America's most identifiable birds, with 19 subspecies, all sporting vivid feathers and short powerful beaks perfect for seed eating.

The Northern Cardinal is a song bird and both the male and the female sing, unlike most other species, where only the male sings. Females are known to sing from the nest to communicate with males about food and safety. Males can sing up to 100 songs an hour!

Northern Cardinals thrive in a variety of habitats, from forests to city parks and have an affinity for dense tangles. They are year-round residents and do not migrate.

Cardinals prefer plant-based foods, such as seeds (sunflower and safflower) and fruits.

Interestingly, their diet is what gives them their beautiful red feathers!

The Northern Cardinal is recognized as the State bird for seven states and as the mascot for countless professional sports teams.

Northern Cardinals are generally socially monogamous. Male and female bond and work together to defend a territory, build a nest, raise young, provide food for one another and will stay together until one mate dies.

Interesting facts :

- Victorians believed that having a Cardinal visit their garden or home during Christmas season brought good luck and blessings for the coming year.
- The name of the Cardinal came from the color of Catholic Church Cardinals red robes.

- The vibrant red color of the Cardinal is often associated with love and passion.

This blend of biological, historical and cultural insights underscores why the Northern Cardinal is so celebrated in North America, and specifically in Lower Makefield, PA!