

THE MONTCLAIR BIRD CLUB

YOUR WEEKLY BIRD 55

September 22, 2024

by Sandy Sorkin

Goldfinches



The goldfinch, specifically the American goldfinch (*Spinus tristis*), is one of the very few birds that my wife and I have mixed feelings about. “Mixed” may not be the most descriptive word. I think they add a beautiful touch to any flower garden. But Kathy loves her zinnias and is disturbed by the goldfinches’ insistence on eating them.

There has never been a concern about the birds eating the seeds from the center of the bloom. And they are welcome to eat what they want at the end of season, and in the process of enjoying the meal spread a few seeds on the ground for next year. But these birds have an appetite that extends beyond seeds. They rip off the petals and eat them, leaving naked stubs atop the stalks when we should still have a chance to enjoy the colorful blooms.



Twice a year I bird in the UK, where the European goldfinch (*Carduelis carduelis*) sports a much different look. It is also found in gardens and country fields, and its habits are very similar to our home-grown variety's.

I'm told their eating habits are similar to the American goldfinch, but in all my trips to England, I have yet to witness them ravaging flowers. They seem to be more patient birds, who are willing to wait for the petals to fall before indulging in the seeds.

If you would like to see your photographs highlighted here, send one or two pictures with a short paragraph to Sandy Sorkin & Rick Wright at MontclairBirdClub100@gmail.com.



Southwest Wings

