



*Silvereyes are easy to attract in the garden. Breadcrumbs aren't the best food and bird tables need to be kept clean. An apple on a nail, or a suspended pottle or bag of lard, can be a very effective way of attracting silvereyes.*

but the birds can be found anywhere in sheltering vegetation, from sea level to the natural treeline.

They are most noticeable, however, in the garden. Little flocks follow a regular route from garden to garden, favouring the cover of shrubs such as coprosma, particularly in berry, and Australian nectar-bearing shrubs such as bottle-brush and banksias. In winter, they make an interesting study at the feeder or bird table.

The omnivorous nature of the silvereye is reflected in what attracts them. Besides their natural food, they will eat soaked

bread, old fruit, lard and scraps of cooked meat. They can be a delight to watch as the birds in a flock have a detectable 'pecking' order. Birds waiting to feed will flutter their wings and threaten their companions, calling continuously. The boldest male eats first, sometimes defending his position against other contenders.

Probably the best way to enjoy watching this behaviour is to establish a feeding point in view of the house. The problem with bird tables is that they need to be scrubbed regularly or they become a place where birds pick up infections from each

other. Instead, stick a piece of apple on a nail in a fence or tree trunk. Another feeding method is to put a little lard in a plastic-netting bag or a pottle suspended from a branch.

Silvereyes will battle for their turn on adjacent branches. Then they demonstrate their agility as they swing from the food, often hanging upside down to reach their meal. Another advantage of this suspended 'feeder' is that more aggressive birds, particularly sparrows and starlings, won't take the food as they usually don't like the way it swings.



*Nature photographer Geoff Moon captured this spectacular sequence of a silvereye in flight as it approached a bird table. Pictures were taken at 1/250th of a second assisted by an electronic flashlight at 1/10,000 of a second. The camera was triggered as the bird left its perch three metres away. It took many shots to capture the bird mid-frame.*