



# USDA/APHIS/Wildlife Services

## Recommendations for Reducing Blackbird Damage to Sunflowers



Cannon "plate" on T-post

Get propane cannons off the ground by securing them on top of chemical totes, metal or plastic drums, or cannon plate on T-posts. Make sure to secure cannon and tank.

- Sound resonates better if the cannon is off the ground.
- Cannons off the ground are less susceptible to mice infestation and will remain functional longer.
- **Cannons on the ground can be a fire hazard near dry vegetation** and are magnets for mice. Ground moisture can also damage the cannons.
- Check propane cannons and tanks frequently for proper function and gas levels.
- Adding timers to cannons helps prevent "learned behavior" and saves on propane
- **Pyrotechnics can be a fire hazard near dry vegetation. Please use caution when using in dry conditions. Please check your county burn ban restrictions prior to use via website: [ndresponse.gov](http://ndresponse.gov)**

- Start harassment early, don't wait for the buildup of large flocks.
- Cannons are expensive. Treat them with care. You may be liable for replacement cost if damaged.
- An integrated approach of harassment utilizing propane cannons, pyrotechnics and shotguns is the most effective.
- Move cannons to different locations frequently to avoid habituation.

Propane cannons, pyrotechnics, and other bird control equipment are available online from various pest control supply vendors.



Some examples include:

[www.reedjoseph.com](http://www.reedjoseph.com)

[www.marosupplies.com](http://www.marosupplies.com)

[www.suttonag.com](http://www.suttonag.com)



- Avoid planting sunflowers in close proximity to large cattail sloughs (blackbird roosts), if at all possible. Plant as early as possible so harvest can be completed before blackbird migration.
- If you do plant close to cattails, consider spraying cattails with glyphosphate (Rodeo®) in accordance with the label, or mowing cattails if possible.
- Develop **roads or trails** in larger fields (quarter or more) to allow access to middle of fields for placement of propane cannons and pyrotechnic harassment.
- **Trails or roads** allow you many more locations for propane cannons and better accessibility for harassment with pyrotechnics and shotguns.
- Consider spraying a desiccant to defoliate at maturity and accelerate harvest before bird migration.