People often say that robins are the first sign of spring. Actually, you can see robins in almost any season, almost anywhere in the United States. But they do show up more often in backyards as winter begins to melt away. That’s when earthworms—a favorite food—tunnel toward the thawing surface.

ROBIN ROUNDUP

**Familiar Friend.** Male and female robins look a lot alike, though the females are paler. It’s easy to recognize a robin’s cheery, whistling song, too.

**Robin Redbreast.** There are birds called robins in Europe and in Australia. They’re not related to “our” robin, but they all do have one thing in common: red breasts.

**State Bird.** The robin is the official state bird for Connecticut, Michigan, and Wisconsin.

Early Bird Catches Worm. A robin-and-worm tug of war like the one below is a common sight on American lawns. Robins eat insects and fruit as well as worms. Berries are their main fare in the fall and winter.

BY ELLIE LAMBETH

Get to know one of the country’s most familiar backyard birds.

**American Robin**
**FAMILY MATTERS**

**The More, the Merrier.** A mother robin chooses a safe, dry place to build her nest. She makes it mostly out of dried grasses and tiny twigs. She forms it into a cup shape and holds it all together with mud. Finally, she lays three or four eggs and keeps them warm for a couple of weeks.

**Movin’ On.** Robins might raise two or three batches of babies (called broods) each year. By summer’s end, the birds join other birds in larger groups. These flocks spend the fall and winter on the move, in search of the best bunches of berries and snuggest places to snooze. Before long, it will be time for them to announce the arrival of spring once again!

**Robin’s-Egg Blue.** Robin eggs have a color named after them.

**NESTS YOU CAN EAT**

A robin works hard to build a sturdy nest for her babies. And you can build robin nests that are good enough to eat!

**WHAT YOU NEED**
- 12-oz. package butter-scotch or peanut butter baking chips
- 5-oz. can chow mein noodles
- blue jelly beans or Jordan almonds
- 2 cookie sheets
- wax paper
- saucepan and spoon

**WHAT YOU DO**

1. Stir baking chips in a pan over low heat till melted and smooth.
2. Stir in noodles till completely covered.
3. Plop 8 to 10 spoonfuls of mixture onto cookie sheets covered with wax paper.
4. Shape each spoonful into a cup-shaped nest.
5. Put in the refrigerator to chill.
6. Add several candy “eggs” to each edible nest.