

How to Make a Recycled Bird Feeder

All Grades

Objective:

To teach students about recycling and about local bird species.

Method:

Students use common recyclables to make their own bird feeder. They can take the feeder home or put it in their schoolyard.

Materials:

Recyclables, such as: paper cups, milk cartons, milk boxes, toilet paper rolls, etc.

Yarn

Peanut butter: *number of jars vary with class size*

Spoons: *at least 2 per jar*

Scissors

Tablecloth

Birdseed

Baking pan with 1" edges

Hole punchers

Procedure:

A. Collect recyclables:

1. A few days before the project, tell the students to bring at least one recyclable item to class. They can get the item from their lunch leftovers or from home.
2. You may also save recyclable school waste, such as pieces of cardboard or old crayon boxes.

B. Set up:

1. Lay all materials on a large table.
2. Put tablecloth on table to avoid a big mess.
3. Open peanut butter jars, and lay the spoons next to them.
4. Cut 1 foot sections of yarn, 1 per student, and pile them on the table.

C. Teaching the students:

1. About recycling:
 - a. Recycling means using things again rather than throwing them in the garbage.
 - b. Common recyclables: cardboard, plastic, glass, aluminum, paper.
 - c. It is good to recycle our trash.

- i. Otherwise, the trash has to get piled into a landfill, where trash juice seeps down and contaminates our aquifers, which is our drinking water.
- ii. Sometimes trash is thrown or blown into the ocean, where it hurts fish and birds.
- iii. If we re-use things, then we don't have to buy as many new things. This helps us save money. It also keeps us from using up the earth's resources as quickly, such as trees and oil.

2. About birds:

a. What birds eat:

- i. Many birds eat seeds.
- ii. Lots eat insects.
- iii. Some of them, which we call raptors, eat other animals.

b. What sets birds apart from other animals:

- i. They have feathers.
- ii. Some can fly; others cannot.
- iii. They reproduce by laying eggs.
- iv. They have hollow bones that make them light enough to fly.

c. Where they live:

- i. Different birds prefer different habitats.
- ii. Some birds like fields. Others like forests. Some like to live on cliffs. Others live in the water. You can find birds nearly everywhere.

D. Assembling the bird feeders.

- a. Punch holes in the top of the recycled object so that you can hang it from a tree branch with a piece of yarn.
- b. Thread the yarn through the hole, and tie it in a loop so that the feeder can hang like a Christmas tree ornament.
- c. Smear peanut butter on the sides of the feeder.
- d. Roll the feeder in bird seed so that the peanut butter is completely covered in seeds.
- e. Hang the feeder on a tree or shrub.
- f. *Special tips for milk boxes:*
 - i. Cut big, square openings on opposite sides of the milk box.
 - ii. Poke or punch a small hole underneath the openings, and insert something that the bird can perch on, such as a pencil or straw. Glue the perch in place so that it is stable.
 - iii. Fill the inside of the box with bird seed.
 - iv. Punch a hole in the top of the box. String yarn through it, and hang it from a tree or shrub.

- E. Wait for the birds to discover the feeders.
 - a. It may take a few days for the birds to notice the feeders. It helps to sprinkle bird seed on the ground around the feeders. If the birds still do not visit them, move them to a different location.