

Recycled Bird Feeders

Time: 1 hour Any Season Indoor/Outdoor

Birds bring so many gifts to gardeners! Some sing songs for us to enjoy, some astound us with aerial acrobatics, and still others protect our crops by feasting on insects. A bird feeder filled with seeds can attract many birds to our garden and allow us to get a closer look at them.



Let's Gather:

for an adult helper: sharp scissors or an X-acto knife

a cardboard or plastic milk carton with a lid (at least 1-quart size)

a stick about 12 inches (30 cm) long

duct tape

art supplies such as glue, paper scraps, yarn, or paint

a hole punch

string

contact paper or decoupage (optional)

birdseed

a field guide to birds

ALWAYS ASK A GROWN-UP BEFORE YOU START

Let's Get Started:

1. Ask an adult to help you cut a door flap in the milk carton. The door should be about 2 inches (5 cm) above the floor of the carton. Cut the door 3 inches (8 cm) wide by 4 inches (10 cm) tall, and leave it connected at the top of the flap. Ask an adult to poke a hole in the front and back of the milk carton and push a stick through the inside of the carton, just below the level of the door. Tape the ends of the stick to the milk carton so that it is stable.
2. Use your art supplies to decorate the milk carton on all sides. Use colors and designs that you think will attract the birds. You can also glue on natural materials, such as dried leaves and flowers.
3. Use the hole punch to make a hole in the top of the bird feeder. Pull the string through the hole, create a loop, and tie it.
4. Optional: Cover your bird feeder with contact paper or decoupage to make it last longer in the rain.
5. Take your bird feeder into the garden and hang it somewhere where birds will be safe from cats and other dangers when they visit. (Note: If you put a bird feeder out during a harsh winter, it is important to keep it fully stocked for the birds that have come to rely on it.)



Tip

Fill your bird feeder with birdseed, and keep a close eye on it to see who visits! Keep your bird field guide nearby to identify visitors. Watch as the visitors change throughout the seasons.

