

Making Bird Feeders

Initially your garden birds may be wary of new feeders, but be patient, they will quickly get used to them.

The following are three feeders that are easy to make and are effective: Try each one.

1) Pine Cone Feeder

Collect open pine cones in late autumn or winter. (Closed cones will open if kept warm.) Usually the seeds will already have been removed by small mammals and birds. Ensure cones are clean.

Ingredients- ½lb of lard; wild bird feed- a good mixture of grains and seeds

Materials- Large pine cones; fine-strong- wool or string

Equipment- mixing bowl; glue spreader; scissors.

Method-

- Place lard in mixing bowl and microwave for a minute to soften
- Add 4 to 6 tablespoons of wild bird seed and mix into the lard
- Using the glue spreader, press the mixture between the cone scales
- When full, tie a 6" to 9" length of wool/string to the tip of the cone

When the mixture hardens the feeder can be hung from tree or shrub branches, or under eaves, or from fences. Many different small birds will seek the seeds and fat. This dispenser is aimed at them. For woodpeckers, jam the cones into a tree fork.

2) String Feeder

Blackbirds and thrushes are particularly attracted to fruit. Likewise pigeon, dove and robin.

Ingredients- Apples, carrot, cranberries, grapes, unshelled peanuts, banana, and if available pear, pomegranate, plum, quince, dried fruit

Materials- Fine-strong- wool or string

Equipment- Large needle; scissors

Method-

- Chop apples into thumbnail sized pieces. Slice carrots into rounds.
- Thread needle with wool/string and tie large knot at bottom. Start by threading on a peanut shell to form a base for the other ingredients.
- Pierce a grape to thread on and continue with the other fruit and carrot, in the same way as making barbecue skewers, until the string is filled for three quarters of its length.
- Unthread the needle.

Hang in the same manner as the pine cones for small birds and across tree branches for the larger birds.

3) Paper Cup Feeder

Ingredients- ½lb of lard; wild bird feed- a good mixture of grains and seeds

Materials- Small paper/strong plastic cups or yoghurt pots; fine-strong- wool or string

Equipment- Mixing bowl; glue spreader; scissors; large needle

Method-

- Place lard in mixing bowl and microwave for a minute to soften
- Add 4 to 6 tablespoons of wild bird seed and mix into lard
- Thread needle with 6" to 9" length of wool or string and tie knot at end.
- Invert cup, make a hole in the middle of the base with the needle and pull needle through to form a 'bell'
- Use the glue spreader to fill the cup full of the mixture, ensuring that it is pressed well down

When the mixture hardens, hang in the same manner as for pine cones.

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