

NATURE ACTIVITIES

RECYCLABLE BIRD FEEDERS

Have a lot of recycled material and need an activity to do with your children in hopes to connect to nature? This project involves multiple ways of creating bird feeders from recyclables and natural objects from home. This design is simple and easy for the birds to access.

PART ONE - CONTAINER PREPARATION

Creative Reuse is a great skill to learn. Look around your house for recyclable bottles and cartons and visualize what they can become.

Resources/materials needed: Milk Jugs, Plastic 1 liter or 2 liter bottles, or Waxed Juice/Milk Cartons
Soap, Water, X-Acto Knife, Scissors, Awl, Nail, Permanent Marker

Skills: Cognitive, Motor Skills, Responsibility, Respect for Others, Hand-Eye Coordination, Technical Skills, Creative Reuse

DIRECTIONS:

Step 1: Wash the bottle with soap and water and let dry. When the bottle is dry, have your kids draw on "windows" on the bottle with a minimum of 3 inch space from the bottom (where the bird seed will be stored.) Make sure the hole is big enough for a bird to get its head into. Having 2-4 windows opposite each other would be ideal.

Step 2: After the windows are drawn onto the bottle, it is time for the adult to cut out the shapes with an X-acto knife and scissors after you made the puncture if you are more comfortable that way. You can let your kids observe your cutting so they can understand safe practices for later when they are older. You can choose to actual leave window flaps if you are using a carton.



Photo Credit: Fancy Mamma



Photo Credit: Great Stems



Photo Credit: Inhabitat

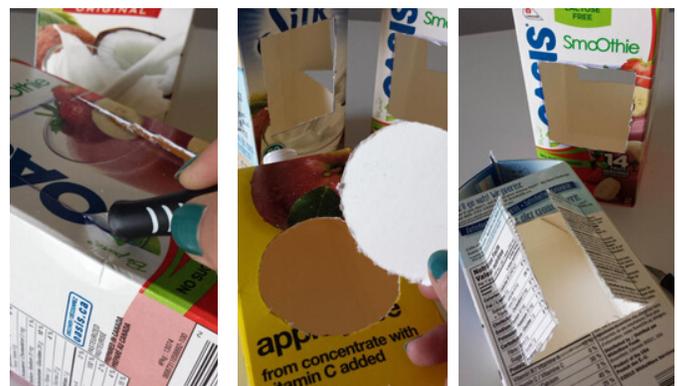


Photo Credit: Fancy Mamma

Step 3: Puncture two holes right below the cap on the neck of the bottle with an awl. If you do not have an awl, you can puncture the holes with the X-acto or regular knife and push a nail through to increase the size of the hole.

Step 4: If you choose, you can put sticks on the bottom of the windows flush to the container by applying hot glue, or by cutting two slits at the bottom of the window, one on each bottom corner. This slit will be slightly larger than the the stick diameter. Apply glue to the stick ends and push the stick into this hole and into the next one. It should fit firmly. You can also make holes for sticks to fit in perpendicularly underneath the windows so the birds can stand on them. Make a hole big enough for the stick to fit through on both sides of the container and then push the stick through the holes.

Kid's Reflection: What other ideas do you have for recycled bottles to be reused creatively? What did you learn about the safety of cutting from observing an adult? Did you enjoy drawing the windows?

PART TWO - DECORATING

Add a little flair to these bird feeders! Get colorful!

Resources/materials needed: Plastic Bottles, markers (permanent works best on plastic), stickers, paint, crayons, oil pastels, etc.

Skills: Hand-Eye Coordination, Technical Skills, Individual Craftsmanship, Creative Problem Solving, Self-Expression, Whole Brain Development

DIRECTIONS:

Step 1: Invite your children to decorate the bottle in any creative way they would like and you see fit! These will be out in the weather, so if you put on stickers, you may want to cover with a layer of school glue. Washable markers do not bond well to plastic, so if you are using markers, permanent is the best bet. Crayons do well with textured plastic. If you used a carton, you can prime it with white paint first to allow for an easier to read image. You can also glue sticks to the top to resemble a roof. After you are done, let the bottle dry completely before moving onto the next step.

Kid's Reflection: What art medium worked best with plastic? Any challenges? Anything you want to share?



Photo Credit: Great Stems



Photo Credit: Great Stems

Photo Credit: Fancy Mamma



Photo Credit: Mess For Less

PART THREE - FILLING

Gather your bird seed and get ready to fill the feeders!

Resources/materials needed: Cut Containers & birdseed

Skills: Cognitive, Motor, Hand-Eye Coordination

DIRECTIONS:

Step 1: Start scooping bird seed into the bird feeder. Fill it up to where the lowest window starts. This can be a fun sensory activity for the kids.

Kid's Reflection: Did you find this part of the activity fun? What did you textures and sensations did you feel and sounds did you hear while filling the container with birdseed? Do you think the birds are going to be able to feed well at the bird feeder you made? Do you think they will like the food?



Photo Credit: The Spruce

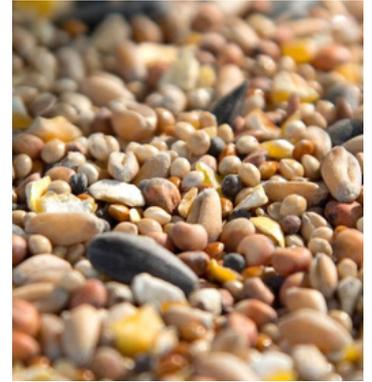


Photo Credit: The Spruce

PART FOUR - HANGING

It's time to hang the bottle for the birds to use!

Resources/materials: Stuffed bottle, string or jute twine, tree branch/outdoor hanger/Shepherd's Hook

Skills: Cognitive, Motor Skills, Creative Problem Solving, Environmental Appreciation

DIRECTIONS:

Step 1: Find a reachable branch or somewhere on your porch to hang the bottle to be accessible to birds. If you have a Shepherd's Hook, you can stick that into the ground and hang it off of that as well.

Step 2: Cut the string or twine as close to the appropriate length depending on what you are hanging on and string it through the two opposite holes. Tie this in a loop around the branch or the rod you chose.

Step 3: Watch and observe the birds feeding. Encourage your children to draw the birds and their movements. When you run low on birdseed, you can replenish the bird feeder repeatedly.

Kid's Reflection: Talk about your experience. Hope you had a great time and get to see some birds!

Resources:

greatstems.com/2013/05/wildlife-projects-for-kids-milk-jug-bird-feeders
handimania.com/diy/plastic-bottle-bird-feeder.html
<https://inhabitat.com/how-to-make-a-bird-feeder-from-recycled-materials/>



Photo Credit: Great Stems



Photo Credit: Lushome



Photo Credit: Eastwood



Photo Credit: Great Stems



Photo Credit: Great Stems

favecrafts.com/Green-Crafting/Plastic-Bottle-Birdhouse
eastwoodhomes.com/blog/kid-friendly-diy-projects-for-the-home
lushome.com/how-recycle-plastic-bottles-bird-feeders-creative-ideas-recycled-crafts/159529
fancymomma.com/milk-carton-juice-carton-bird-feeder/
thespruce.com/types-of-birdseed-4122052