



Ages: 2-5 yrs.

Time Required: 10-20 min

Discovery Time: Birds!

Make a backyard bird feeder and count birds!

Materials

- Pinecone
- Twine or string
- Bird seed
- Short strip of paper (long edge of paper cut in half)
- Nut butter/sun butter/shortening
- Notebook and pencil to write down observations (optional)
- Binoculars (optional)

Try this!

Step 1: Find a pinecone .

Step 2: Tie twine to the pinecone (adult help required).

Step 3: Cover the pinecone with something the bird seed will stick to (nut butter, sun butter or shortening).

Step 4: Stick bird seed to the pinecone (we've found using a tray and rolling the pinecone in the birdseed works great!).

Step 5: Hang your bird feeder from a tree.



What's going on?

Studies have shown that bird feeders can increase bird survival during particularly harsh weather conditions. Feeders can be kept year-round but the best time to have your bird feeder up is from November-April. When it's very cold, or there is snow covering everything, birds benefit from being able to come to feeders to get some fattening foods like suet or sunflower seeds. Feeders are meant to be a supplement, since birds will continue to fly around and search for food knowing that reliable food sources can be hard to come by. Do be mindful of where you place your feeder, don't place it too close to a window to avoid bird collisions and place your feeder near brush piles, trees and shrubs to give birds safe hiding places from potential

predators that might be watching the feeder too. If you have a cats, make sure to keep them indoors since they will be attracted to your feeder too.

Extension Activity

You can help scientists by counting the birds that come to your feeder! Try identifying the birds that visit your feeder with bird ID field guides or using digital resources like bird id apps and websites, we recommend the “Merlin app”, www.allaboutbirds.org, and the Florida Museum Gallery of Southeastern U.S. Birds <https://www.floridamuseum.ufl.edu/birds/gallery/>.

Once you know how to identify the birds that are coming to your feeder, you can count how many of each species you see visiting it, make sure to also write down the date and time that you saw them. This is important because you will help scientists learn how the birds that show up at your feeders can change depending on the time of day or year. You can enter your observations in a number of projects that collect this type of data. We recommend the following projects:

- Feederwatch.org
- eBird.org
- iNaturalist.org

By submitting your observations to these websites, you will be helping scientists and birds! It will also help you keep track of all the birds that visit your feeder.

Additional Resources

You can visit www.floridamuseum.ufl.edu/educators/resource/discovery-time-birds/ to learn more about birds and see a step-by-step guide on how to make this activity! You can also check out other cool activities and tips on how to explore the outdoors with toddlers.

Supporting Stories:

Have You Heard the Nesting Bird? By Rita Gray

Mama Built A Little Nest by Jennifer Ward

About Birds A Guide for Children by Cathryn Sill