

Birdseed Ornaments Activity



At a Glance

Create your own wildlife tree outside by making birdseed ornaments. How many different types of birds will your ornaments attract?

Did You Know?

As winter approaches, birds will begin to search for reliable sources of food. In the winter, birds rely on feeders full of birdseed or suet when their food is scarce. Over 100 bird species supplement their natural diet (berries and insects) with foods offered at birdfeeders. Birds turn their food into the fuel they need to keep up their high metabolic rate which in turn helps them to maintain their body temperature. Birds are warm-blooded, which is why you see them fluff up their feathers to help keep warm.

In addition to your birdseed ornaments, it is helpful to provide seed in ground feeders, seed in hanging feeders, oil sunflower seeds, suet, and peanuts for the birds during winter. This variety of food ensures that different species of birds have the food options they need to sustain themselves through the winter. Feeders and your birdseed ornaments should be located out of the wind and have a perching spot.

Birds are the focus of our 2021 Community Read! To see different bird activities and learn more visit: <https://longwoodgardens.org/education/library-archives/community-read/community-read-toolkit>

Interested in making different kinds of ornaments for your wildlife tree? Learn how by visiting: https://longwoodgardens.org/sites/default/files/wysiwyg/wildlife_tree.pdf

Did you enjoy feeding the birds? Check out this cool career opportunity: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cb_ljQKOtsY&feature=emb_logo

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Materials

- ½ cup water
- ¾ cup flour
- 1 envelope (2 ½ tsp) unflavored gelatin
- 3 Tbsp corn syrup
- 4 cups birdseed
- Straws
- Wooden or metal skewer
- Nonstick spray
- Cookie cutters or jar rings
- Parchment paper or wax paper
- String, ribbon or twine
- Mixing bowl, measuring cups and measuring spoons
- Spatula
- Scissors
- Optional: Ziploc bags, Baking sheet

Directions

1. Add water, flour, gelatin and corn syrup in a large bowl. Mix ingredients until they are evenly combined.



2. Add in bird seed and stir until the mixture is evenly coated.



3. Line baking sheet or flat surface with parchment paper. Please note, the ornaments take 24 hours to dry!

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4. Spray your cookie cutters or jar lids with nonstick cooking spray. Place them on the parchment paper.



5. A tip before beginning the next step: Put a sandwich bag on your hands before starting. Spray the bag with nonstick spray. This will prevent the birdseed from sticking to your hands.

6. Scoop seed mixture into the molds and press in firmly. Repeat until all molds are filled or you run out of mixture.



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7. Cut your straws into 2" pieces.
8. Using a wooden or metal skewer, create a hole towards the top of the mold. Make sure the hole is far enough from the top so that the ornament won't break when you hang it.
9. Place the cut straw pieces into the holes you've created in each ornament. Make sure that the hole and straw are pushed all the way through the ornament.



10. Allow ornaments to dry for 24 hours. Flip the ornaments after about 12 hours will ensure they dry on the bottom.



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11. Once the ornaments are dry, remove the molds and straws. Use string, ribbon or twine to tie a loop onto the ornaments



12. Hang your ornaments outside on a tree branch and watch to see what kind of wildlife visitors you get! You can also place your ornaments in Ziploc bags and give them as gifts!

