HOW TO: BUILD A BIRD FEEDER WITH RECYCLED MATERIALS

SIMPLE PROJECTS FOR CONSERVATION

IZAAK WALTON LEAGUE OF AMERICA

Bird feeders offer a birds-eye view of your neighborhood flock. But many people wonder whether a winter handout hinders a bird's ability to find food in the wild.

Research shows that birds are able to switch back to full-time foraging when feeders are removed without any damage to survival rates. In addition, a recent study shows that birds receiving extra nutrition from feeders lay eggs earlier in the spring — and have a higher chick survival rate.

Bird feeders — and bird watching — are a great way to involve youth in wildlife conservation. Mary Poppins was right: Feed the birds!

This project is perfect for children, whether it's a Scout troop visiting your chapter or your own young Ikes. If you are working with very young children, use safety scissors and poke the string holes for them.

Materials

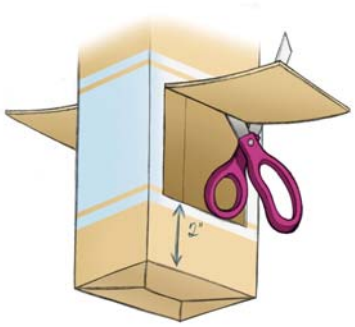
- Empty milk carton
- Scissors
- Pencil
- String
- Straight twig or dowel rod (10-12" long)
- Bird seed

Step 1: Wash out the milk carton and let it dry. If the carton has a plastic spout with a screw-on cap, the top is already secure. If the carton opens the old-fashioned way, staple the opening securely shut.

Step 2: With scissors, cut the sides and bottom of a rectangular shape on one side of the carton, creating a flap that lifts up. Cut a second flap on the opposite side of the carton. Cut both flaps 2" from the bottom of the carton.

Step 3: Poke a small hole near the bottom edge of each flap with a pencil.

Step 4: Poke a small hole through the center of the sealed opening at the top with a pencil.



Cutting the flaps.

Step 5: Tie a piece of string through the hole in one of the flaps, thread it through the hole in the top, and tie the string off through the hole in the other flap. This will hold both flaps open over the feeder entrances, creating awnings to keep rain out of the bird seed.

Step 6: Use the pencil to poke a hole below each flap. Push the twig or dowel rod through the two holes. This will serve as a perch for the birds.

Step 7: Punch several tiny holes in the bottom of the carton for drainage.

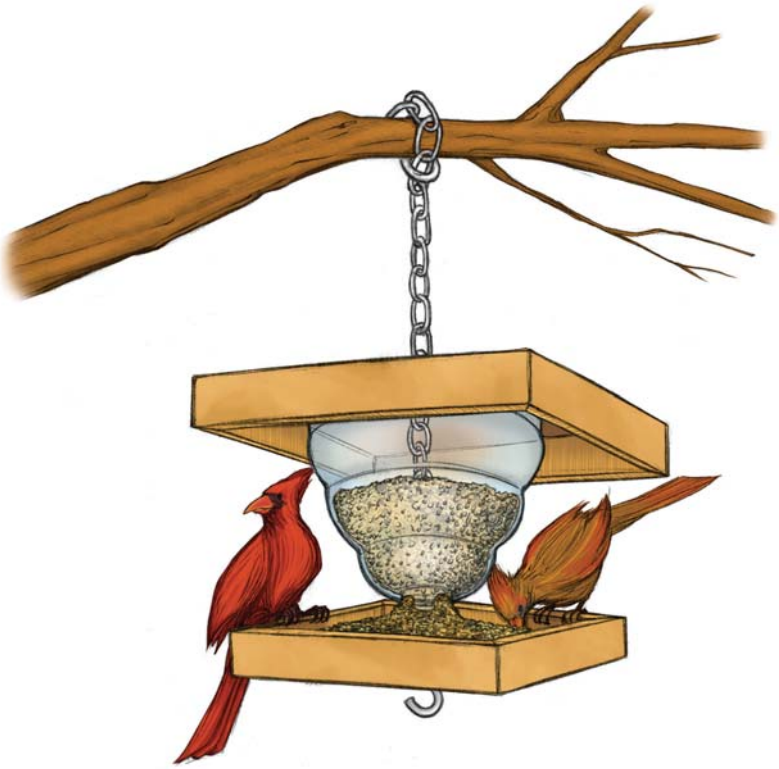
Step 8: Pour bird seed into the carton until it reaches the top of the opening.

Step 9: Tie a long string from the hole in the top of the carton as a hanger.

REQUEST TO READERS

If you build a project based on this or other Outdoor America *articles, or if you have an idea for a good conservation proj-ect, please e-mail us at* info@iwla.org.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY **BOB DRY/WWW.BOBDRY.COM**



Materials

- One-gallon plastic juice bottle with cap
- Plywood scraps, at least 1/2" thick
- Cedar or pine scraps (for edging)
- 1¼" galvanized deck screws
- 1½" wire brads
- Small sheet-metal screws
- 18 inches of light-duty rustproof chain
- Two "S" hooks

This slightly more complex — and durable — bird feeder should be built by an adult or a young adult with adult supervision.

Step 1: Wash and dry the one-gallon plastic juice bottle.

Step 2: Wrap a piece of paper around the bottom of the bottle (at least 3/4" below the point where the bottle straightens out). Trace around the edge of the paper to make a cut line. Cut along the line with a utility knife or scissors.

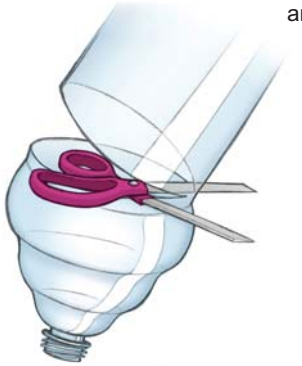
Step 3: Cut or drill three 1/2" holes in the narrowest part of the bottle's neck. Exact sizing is not critical – the holes just need to be large enough for bird seed to funnel through.

Step 4: Cut a 6½" square from scrap plywood for the seed tray.

Step 5: Rip trim pieces that will make a tray 1" inch deep, overlapping at the corners. Attach them to the tray with 1½" wire brads. Drill a 1/4" drainage hole in each corner of the seed tray.

Step 6: Cut a 10" square from scrap plywood for the roof. Trim the roof in the same manner as the seed tray.

Step 7: From another scrap of plywood, cut a disk to fit the diameter of the wide part of the bottle. Trace around the bottle and cut the piece with a saber saw right on the cutting line. This will allow the piece to slip in and out of the bottle easily when you fill the feeder. Center and attach the disk to the underside of the roof with four 1¼" deck screws.



Removing the bottom.

Step 8: Drill a hole through the center of the roof pieces. Make the hole just large enough for the chain you'll use to hang the bird feeder.

Step 9: Remove the cap from the bottle and drill two holes in it. Start with a small drill bit and gradually increase the size to keep the cap from cracking. Attach the cap to the center of the feeding tray with the small screws.

Step 10: Drill a hole through the center of the bottle cap and tray. Again, increase the drill bit size gradually.

Step 11: String the chain through the roof, bottle, and feeder tray. Loop the top of the chain around a branch or use an S hook to hang it. Attach another S hook at the bottom to keep the chain from slipping up through the feeder. Close the bottom hook with pliers.

Step 12: To fill the bird feeder, slide the roof up along the chain until you have room to pour bird seed into the large opening of the plastic bottle.

Instructions for juice bottle bird feeder adapted with permission from Birds and Blooms *magazine. For more great bird and garden projects, visit* www.birdsandblooms.com.