






The Hide Inside

Birds can be shy of approaching a bird table or window ledge until the disturbance and movement at an over-looking window has gone. A solution is to initially cover the window with a one-way viewing film (obtained from glass suppliers) or to cover with black paper or cloth. A small slit or hole cut in the paper at the right height allows each child to look through without disturbing the birds.



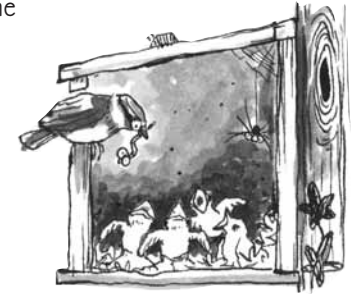
Hide Activities

-  Put up the 'garden for birds' poster, provided in the activity pack, beside your indoor hide and see if you can spot the ones illustrated.
-  You could make a chart to note the different types of birds which visit your bird table or window ledge.
-  Counting time: choose easy birds to identify, like chaffinches or blue tits, and count the number which come to the table.
-  Different birds take different foods, see which the different species like best! Tits like peanuts. Black birds like bits of fruit and berries.
-  Different birds feed in different places. Blue tits and great tits are most likely to hang from nut feeders and are happy upside down. Sparrows, robins, greenfinches and chaffinches are most likely to perch on the table and blackbirds, song thrushes and starlings are most likely to feed off the ground.

Feathered Friends

Young children love birds. The problem is that they usually fly away before the under fives can get a good look at them. However, garden birds can become quite tame, especially when they get used to the idea that your garden is the local café.

Birds are on the look out for safe nest sites each spring and with a carefully chosen and sited nest box you can have a lot of fun watching a pair bringing up their young ones.



Birds are a lovely addition to a garden. They can be heard singing beautiful songs, and watched as they search for food, have a bath or ferry caterpillars back to the nests for the chicks. You can even put out a selection of nesting materials and see if they will collect them for nest building.



Try not to use pesticides and insecticides as these will poison birds too, and reduce natural sources of food.



Feeding Birds

Different feeding methods attract a variety of different birds. Scraps and old fruit can be scattered on the ground. Nut and seed feeders can be hung from trees or a bird table or stuck onto windows. Bird cake can be set into hanging containers or cones and also smeared onto tree bark or window ledges.

Food for the Breeding Season

(late March – June)

Black sunflower seeds

Pinhead oatmeal

Sultanas, raisins, currants

Mild grated cheese

Fruit like pears, bananas, apples etc.

Summer bird food mixes

Food for Autumn & Winter

As breeding season plus:

Peanuts – only unsalted ones

Suet

Kitchen scraps (bread, pastry, cooked rice and potatoes)

Winter bird food mix

Coconuts (halved and hung up)

Bird Cake

Make by pouring melted fat (lard, suet or unsalted peanut butter) onto some or all of the following:




Broken wholemeal biscuits / breadcrumbs, cake

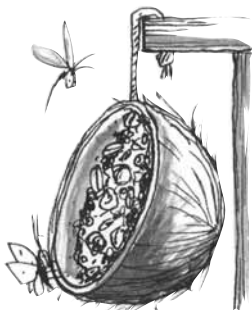
Peanuts (not salted) or chopped nuts

Millet seed, maize seed, sunflower seed

Bits of cheese, sultanas

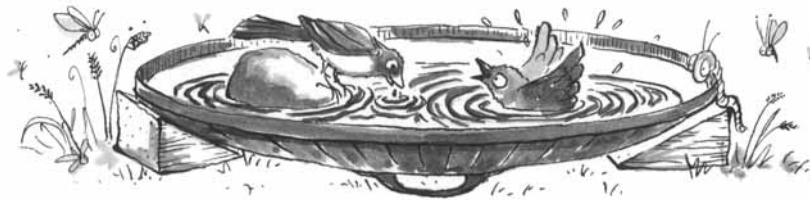
Use one third fat to two thirds dried ingredients. Then:

-  Leave to cool and scatter onto bird table or under bushes when solid;
-  Press into yogurt pots with hanging string through the middle. Cool, remove carton and hang from bird table or branch or
-  Smear mixture onto tree bark.



Anything New Under The Bird Table

With all this bird seed about you may find some interesting new plants in your garden, particularly under the bird table.



A bird bath makes your garden a particularly attractive spot for birds, especially in hard frosts and warm weather. Keep the water clean and free of any chemicals.

Planting Bird Food

Some examples -

Juniper, golden rod and wallflowers for the insect eaters like wrens and pied wagtails.

Lemon balm, teasel, grasses and chickweed provide seed heads for the seed-eaters like goldfinches.

Dog rose, spindle, hawthorn, apples and elder provide berries and fruits for the fruit eaters like greenfinches, robins and blackbirds.

Collect free leaflets from the RSPB for more information.

