



CONNECTING TO NATURE

Activities and resources for making bird feeders,
minibeast hotels and helping garden wildlife.



MAKING BIRD FEEDERS

Birds love the extra food on offer over the year! There are lots of different ways you can make a bird feeder to put up in your garden or outside your house.

There are different types of food you can offer garden birds. These may include different types of seeds, fat balls or mealworms, but you may also put left over bread or bits of cheese out –which can be okay in small amounts. Please avoid putting out milk or any sugary foods and if in doubt check out the RSPB website.



A bottle bird feeder

Resources and materials that could be used (but you may be more creative and think of other things):

- Small clean plastic bottle (ideally about 500 ml or smaller)
- Sharp scissors, and small scissors
- Drawing pin
- Jug with bird seed in
- Straight sticks, dowel or old pencils
- String
- Pokey stick or pen might also help

How to:

- Using a drawing pin, put some drainage holes in the bottom, so any water can escape.
- Decide where you are putting the perching sticks through, maybe 3-5 cm up from bottom. Use drawing pin to make a hole, then use pointy stick, little scissors to make the hole big enough to poke the stick through, do this on opposite side too.
- Create a hole about 5 cm above from the perching stick, to allow the birds to gain access to the seed. Use the drawing pin, scissors and maybe pokey stick.
- You could then repeat this and make another set of perches with hole access further up the bottle.
- Put 2 holes in the bottle near the top, thread your string through and tie.
- Pour in bird seed (best to do this outside as it is messy.) Put lid on top and hang up for the birds. Maybe hide quietly and take note of what birds come to your feeder.



Seed Roulade

**A great way to upcycle toilet rolls, or other containers.
Make outside and hang in garden.**

Resources and materials

- Empty toilet roll tubes
- Lard
- String and scissors
- Bird seed, ideally in a container



How to:

- Pierce 2 small holes at either side of a toilet tube, you might need adult help.
- Thread string through and tie holes at each end so that the string stays in place.
- Now spread your lard on the roll, so it is fully covered.
- Then roll the toilet roll in bird seed, you can put it in the fridge if you wanted it to set for longer, or hang it straight up in your garden or on a tree.
- Once all the seed has been eaten, it might be a good idea to take down the toilet roll, as an empty toilet roll in a tree... looks a bit odd! Why not fill it up with natural materials to make a minibeast hotel!?



Pinecone feast

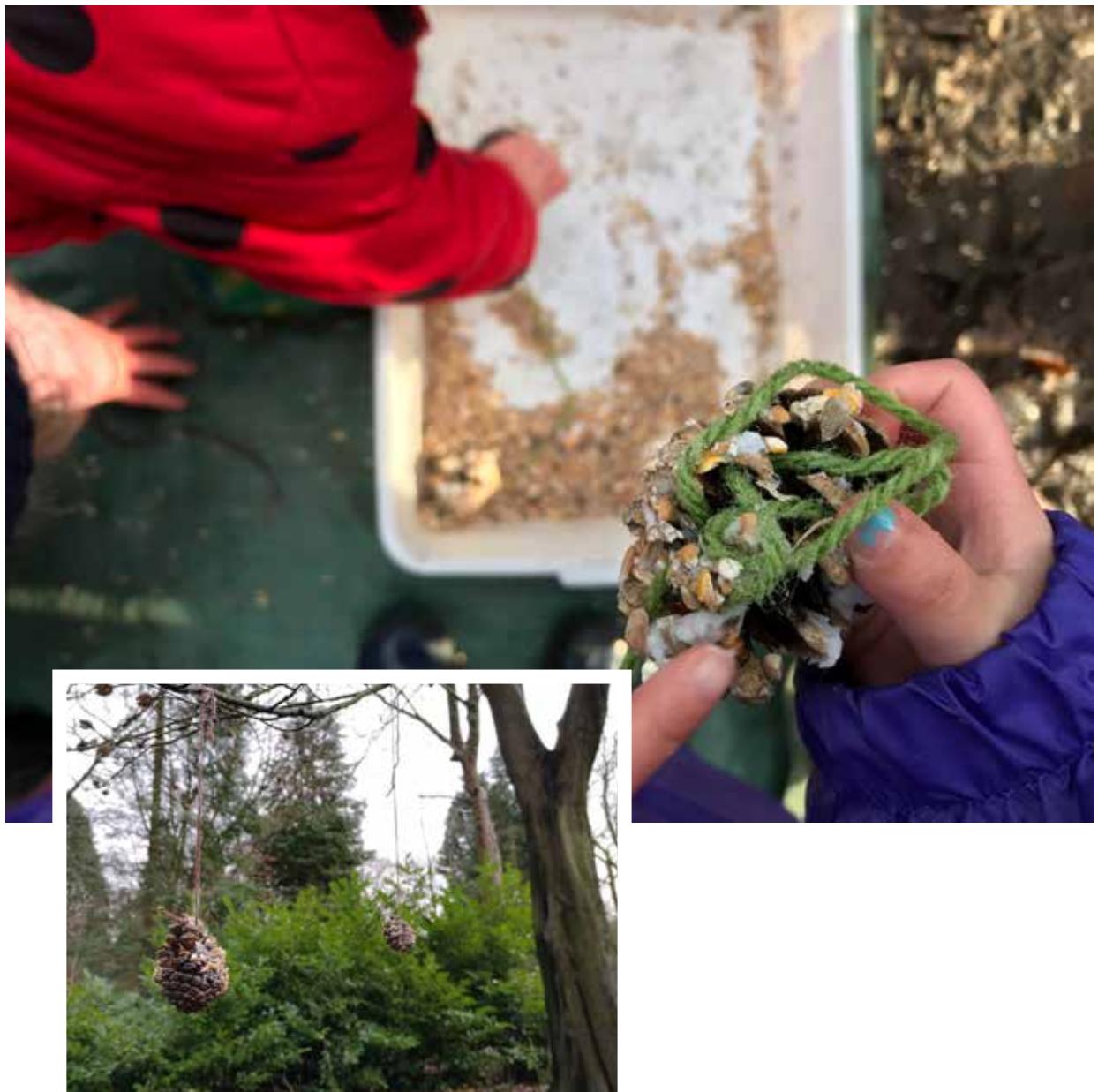
You can make this anywhere, but outside is best with the mess you might make. Hang it up somewhere you have permission to.

Resources and materials

- Pine cone
- Lard
- String and scissors
- Bird seed, ideally in a jug or container

How to:

- Tie string onto your pine cone first. Then roll it in your lard.
- Once your pine cone is sticky, roll it and sprinkle over bird seed. Hang your pinecone up somewhere you can spot the birds feeding off it. Take note who eats the most.





CLEANING BIRD FEEDERS

And a reminder of other things we can do to keep local birds healthy!

We may remember to feed the birds, but there are other ways we can help them out as well—including offering water to drink, to bathe in and cleaning bird feeders to prevent disease.

Please only put a bird bath out and carry out these other tasks on your own private land, or where you have permission from the landowner. When collecting materials and resources, please do this responsibly and sensibly. Please don't damage living things.

Cleaning your bird feeder and bird table!

There is a risk that, if lots of birds feed from one place (e.g. your garden), disease can spread quickly amongst them. But there are things we can do to try and prevent that!

Bird diseases tend to spread via bird droppings, so if possible, keep your bird tables and the surrounding areas relatively clean and free from droppings. By moving your table or feeders around your outdoor space, you can prevent large amounts of droppings in one area.

Try to wash bird tables and feeders regularly. You can use a 5% disinfectant solution when doing this.

Monitor the food supply, remove any food that is mouldy and if it isn't being eaten very quickly reduce the amount of food you are putting out.

Whenever cleaning a bird table or feeder, always do this outside with separate tools or utensils from anything that you use inside. Whenever cleaning for the birds please always wear gloves and ensure you wash your hands thoroughly afterwards—personal hygiene is super important to!

Making a bird bath

We always remember to help birds by providing them with more food, but we sometimes forget we could also offer them a quick drink or a washing opportunity—particularly in warmer weather.

Find more info and photos from: <https://www.rspb.org.uk/get-involved/activities/give-nature-a-home-in-your-garden/garden-activities/maketheperfectbirdbath/>

Resources and materials that could be used (but you may be more creative and think of other things):

- Something relatively shallow, and watertight that can be used as the bath—like an upturned dustbin lid. Recommended to have shallow sloping sides, and a max depth of around 10cm, with a width of at least 30cm across. Don't worry if your vessel isn't quite like this however, the most important point is that it is not too deep!
- Stones or gravel
- Something to hold the bath steady if it doesn't have a flat base
- Water from indoor or outdoor tap





MAKING A HOME FOR MINIBEASTS

Minibeasts, creepy crawlies, insects—they are all super important for nature and they need our help! A simple way we can help is by building homes for them in our gardens or local parks.

A Natural Minibeast home

If you are have a garden or yard, no matter how big or small, there may be an opportunity to develop a natural minibeast home..

Resources and materials that could be used (but you may be more creative and think of other things):

- Wooden logs and sticks
- Moss, dry leaves
- Pine cones, woodchips

How to:

- You can use lots of natural materials such as sticks, leaves, moss and make a them into a pile, with lots of gaps and holes for these to crawl inside.
- Or if you have an empty plant pot or outdoor container, you could put all these natural things inside, arranged messy or neat. It helps if there are holes at the bottom to allow the minibeasts to move in and out. Feel free to add a welcome sign.



A Minibeast Hotel fit for Royalty

Please only do this activity on your own private land, or where you have permission from the landowner. When collecting materials and resources, please do this responsibly and sensibly. Please don't damage living things. Only collect materials that are already on the ground.

Resources and materials that could be used (but you may be more creative and think of other things):

- Old wooden pallets
- Bricks
- Wooden logs and sticks
- Moss
- Dry leaves
- Old roofing tiles
- Pine cones
- Bark
- Woodchips
- Roofing felt

How to:

- Choose a suitable place for your hotel. This should be on relatively level, flat and solid ground. Dependent on where you can put your hotel, may lead to different types of guests. For example some minibeasts will prefer shady, damp conditions whereas others will like the sun.
- The important thing to note is that the hotel needs a really solid base and structure! It can be as big or as small as you want, but it needs to stay in one piece. We would recommend not building your hotel more than a meter high, and to use old wooden pallets for the main frame. You can either use a pallet as your base, or you can use old bricks and then put your first pallet on top.
- You can then use more bricks and continue adding pallets, until you have a few 'levels'
- It is then time to fill the gaps! Using your other materials fill in your framework to provide lots of different types of 'rooms'. So make sure you leave gaps, and have different sized holes throughout the hotel. Using different sorts of natural materials (dry leaves, sticks, moss etc.) will provide lots of different minibeasts the opportunity to find a home.





- If you have roofing felt, don't forget to add a roof to your hotel after it has been built! Put a large sheet of felt on across the top, and use more bricks to hold it in place, or put some tacks/nails through the roof felt into the wood below (mind your fingers). You could use bricks, thick logs, soil or rubble, if you don't have any felt.



Mini-beast Mini-hotel

A great way to make a home for minibeasts if you don't have a lot of private outdoor space.

Resources and materials that could be used (but you may be more creative and think of other things):

- Empty toilet roll tubes
- Dead leaves
- Twine or string
- Bamboo canes
- Sticks

How to:

- Pierce 2 small holes at either side of a toilet tube. Thread a piece of twine through and tie holes at each end so that the string stays in place. Only do this if you want to hang your minibeast hotel.
- Now fill the toilet roll tubes with bamboo canes, small stick and dead leaves. Make sure where possible there are small holes at either end of the toilet roll tube.
- Hang the tube from different locations in your garden. Take a peek look after a week to see what minibeasts have moved in, but try not to wake them up!



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