

Attracting wildlife into school grounds is something all schools can do, however large or small, whether urban or rural. It is an excellent way to encourage pupils to investigate their environment and learn to respect and care for animals, and it also provides great enjoyment. The most common and varied wildlife visiting school grounds will undoubtedly be birds. Providing the right food will attract more into the school grounds, particularly in late winter when natural food supplies are low.

CURRICULUM LINKS

Foundation Stage 1,2,4

Design & Technology

KS1 – 1abcde, 2abcde, 3ab, 4ab, 5abc

KS2 – 1abcd, 2abcde, 3abc, 4ab, 5abc

KS3 – 1abcde, 2abcde, 3abc, 4bcd, 7bc

Science

KS1 – SC2

KS2 – SC2

KS3 – SC1, SC2

HOW TO MAKE Hanging Bird Feeders

In the Growing Schools Garden, a number of schools loaned bird boxes from their own school grounds. There was also a bird table, and Collingham Gardens Nursery School in London made a number of different bird feeders. These come in all shapes and sizes and can be made from many different materials.

To make a hanging bell feeder, popular with blue tits and great tits, take a small plastic plant pot and thread a length of wire or string through the hole in the bottom, securing the pot so it hangs upside down. This will enable you to hang the feeder from the tree. If you are using coconut shells, cut the coconut in half and either remove the flesh to use yourself, or hang it up for the birds to peck at.

Mix a selection of bird seed, nuts and berries together with breadcrumbs and suet in a bowl. Warm some lard carefully in a pan until melted, then add to the mixing bowl. Stir the lard in, and allow to cool a little. Carefully spoon the mixture into the pot or coconut shell, packing it in tightly. When the lard has completely cooled it will set hard and hold the mixture in place.

To make a hanging feeder log, take sections of branch 7cm - 8cm in diameter and 25cm - 30cm long, eg from coppicing or heavy pruning. Drill a series of holes along the length of a wooden log, approximately 2cm in diameter, using a wide-ended drill bit. Attach a galvanised metal eyelet to one end, ensuring it is securely fastened and strong enough to take the weight of the log. Thread a piece of string or wire through the eyelet, to tie it to the tree. Prepare the mixture in the same way as above, packing it into the holes along the length of the log and waiting for it to set before hanging it out for the birds.

To make a live food container to keep mealworms for insectivorous birds like blackbirds, robins and thrushes, thread a piece of string or wire through the holes in the bottom of a plastic plant pot, securing so the pot hangs the right way up. This will be filled with the mealworms, so to prevent them from wriggling out, tape over the holes

with waterproof tape, eg freezer tape. To protect the mealworms from the weather, cut the top off an old plastic bottle (leaving the top screwed on) and attach it to the string higher up to act as a roof. Remember to leave sufficient space between the two for the birds to get in and out easily.

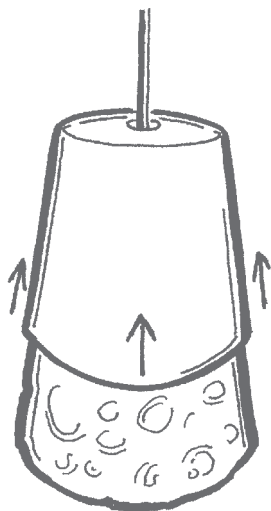
When feeding birds, it is important to remember that different species of birds have adapted to eat different things. Some prefer live food, others are fruit- or seed-eaters, while others are omnivores, happy to eat general kitchen scraps. Collingham Gardens Nursery made a number of mixtures of feed to cater for different tastes. They then attached them all to a wicker wreath, which in turn was hung from a tree, providing a twiggy resting place for feeding birds.

Many small birds need to eat around a quarter of their own body weight every day in winter to survive the cold weather; so suet, mealworms, peanuts and other high energy foods are particularly valuable.

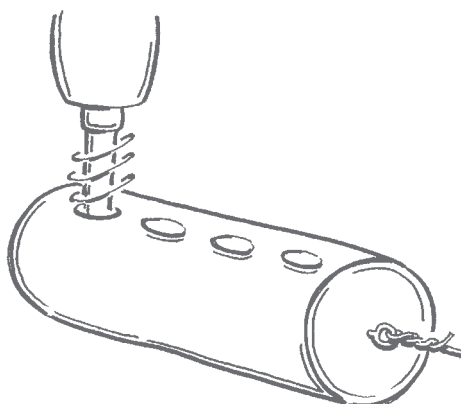
Always make sure birds also have safe access to fresh water, not only for them to drink but also to bathe in - an important part of their grooming routine. Put some food on the ground in a safe place for birds that do not like feeders. Putting food out at a set time every day, such as first thing in the morning, will keep a regular number of birds visiting your feeding station.

Although food is particularly welcome in winter, most authorities now agree it does no harm to feed all year round. However, if you do feed birds in winter it is important not to stop suddenly. For example, if you cannot feed at weekends or during holidays, you could consider feeding only every other day during the week, so that birds do not become too dependent on your food source and suffer during your absence.

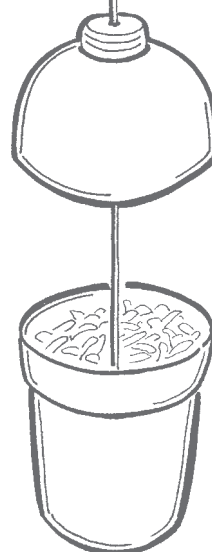
Hanging bell feeder



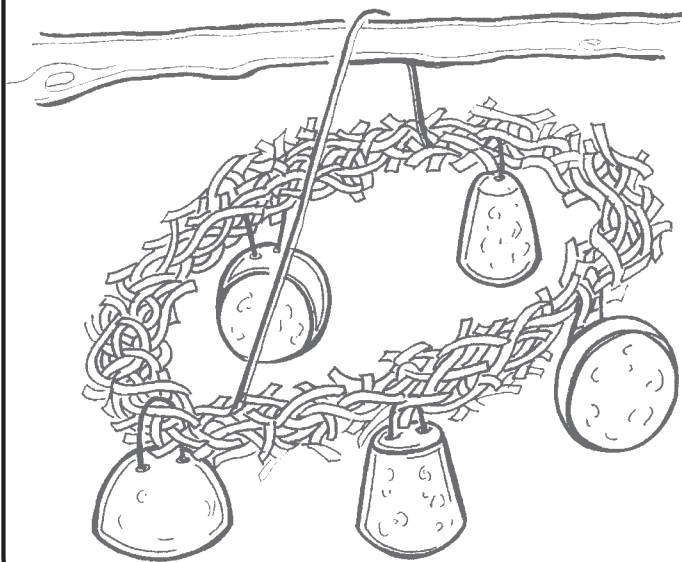
Drill holes to make a hanging log feeder



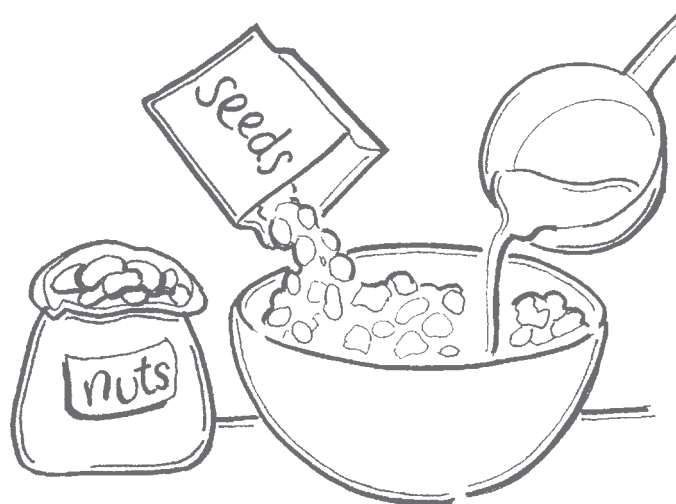
Mealworm feeder



Wreath with a selection of food diets



Use melted lard to hold ingredients together



ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

For more about wildlife gardening: **ATTRACTING BIRDS TO YOUR GARDEN** by Stephen Moss and David Cottridge published by New Holland Publishers Ltd ISBN 1-853-68569-0 **CREATING A WILDLIFE GARDEN** by Bob and Liz Gibbons published by Hamlyn ISBN 0-600-56941-1 **HOW TO MAKE A WILDLIFE GARDEN** by Chris Baines published by Frances Lincoln ISBN 0-7122-1711-4

For bird-related products: **BOX WATCH LTD** ☎ 01342 850259 (Birdbox with CCTV) **CJ WILDBIRD FOODS** ☎ 0800 731 2820 www.birdfood.co.uk **ERNEST CHARLES** ☎ 0800731 6770 www.ernest-charles.com **GARDEN BIRD SUPPLIES** ☎ 01939 232233 www.gardenbird.com **JACOBI JAYNE & CO** ☎ 01227 714314 www.jacobijayne.com **WILDLIFE WORLD** ☎ 0870 757 2233 www.wildlifeworld.co.uk For information on birds: **THE HAWK & OWL TRUST** ☎ 01582 832182 www.hawkandowl.org **ROYAL SOCIETY FOR THE PROTECTION OF BIRDS** ☎ 01767 680551 www.rspb.org.uk (Also sell bird food, bird boxes etc)