

Pinecone Bird Feeders

Age recommendation: 2 years up

This is an easy project to put together at home, and it is great fun for everyone.

It teaches your children about birdlife in Aotearoa New Zealand, and encourages them to enjoy watching the natural world around them. At the end of the project have your camera ready - not just to snap the birds that will feed on the delicious seed, but also to capture the wide eyes and smiles from your children as the birds fly in and choose to eat from the feeder they made!

What you need

- A few large pinecones
- Mixing bowl
- Natural string
- A handful of ice-cream sticks
- Birdseed
- Scissors
- Cremelta/lard/stale bread
- Thumb tacks

How to

1. Place the pinecones in a 180°C oven for about 10 minutes. Once the cones have opened out, remove them from the oven and let them cool.
2. Using an ice-cream stick spread a layer of cremelta all over the inner “petals” of the pinecone.
3. Fill a mixing bowl with birdseed mix and/or stale bread crumbs.
4. Roll the pinecones in the seed mixture.
5. Attach string to the top of the pinecone for hanging.
6. To create a hanging with multiple pinecones push a thumbtack into the bottom of the cone, and tie another length of string to the tack, then tie to the top of another cone.
7. Repeat this process with 4 or 5 cones.
8. Hang bird feeder in a nearby tree. As birds deplete the seed, you can easily top it up by pouring on more seed.

Teaching tip

In winter when food is more scarce the birds get braver and will venture much closer to the house.

