



DALLAS ARBORETUM
Education

Garden STEM at Home
Bird Nest Bobble



WE GROW MINDS, TOO.



OBJECTIVE:

STUDENTS WILL CREATE THEIR OWN BIRD NESTING MATERIAL BOBBLE TO PLACE IN THE GARDEN OR GIVE AS A GIFT.

BACKGROUND

When it comes to nest making, some birds, like the killdeer, do little more than make a depression in the ground, but many of our native songbirds are truly expert craftsmen, weaving together an intricate mix of materials into a cup-shaped nest sturdy enough to withstand a Texas spring storm or two.

The outside construction of many nests is typically coarse material, like twigs or leaves, held together with mud, with the inside layers composed of softer materials.

So, how can you attract birds to nest in your backyard? Surprisingly, you don't have to regularly feed them. If you have nice nooks in your trees – or even rafters above human reach – birds are likely to find your backyard a suitable habitat.

If you can provide an area of loose leaf litter and twigs in the garden, birds will readily use up these materials. But, if you prefer a more pristine look or have animals in the yard, a hanging nesting material bobble may be the perfect addition to your backyard.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Find an old whisk, empty suet feeder or even wrap wire into a whimsical design for your yard.

There are an unlimited number of designs readily available online, but any old metal whisk, empty suet feeder or even [wrapped wire](#) can do the trick.

2. Next collect assorted materials that birds will love:

Any combination of the following are excellent resources for our local birds:

- Dead twigs or leaves
- Dry grass (no pesticides or recent fertilizing)
- Natural Feathers
- Plant fluff or down (e.g. cattail fluff, cottonwood down)
- Moss
- Bark strips (e.g. crepe myrtle)
- Pine needles

3. What shouldn't you provide? Essentially, anything that isn't natural – tinsel, foil, cellophane, or even dryer lint or vacuum waste. Birds may incorporate some of these items on their own, but all of these can be harmful for a variety of reasons, and there is usually enough natural material available year-round!

4. Loosely stuff nest building materials into the device of your choosing, and hang in a tree branch safe from neighborhood pets. That's all there is to it!

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Hobby Farms Holder Design

<https://www.hobbyfarms.com/build-a-holder-for-bird-nesting-materials/>

National Wildlife Federation Bird Nesting Materials Article:

<https://blog.nwf.org/2014/04/how-to-offer-bird-nesting-materials-in-your-garden/>

Cornell Ornithology Lab Dos & Don'ts:

<https://www.allaboutbirds.org/news/providing-nest-material-for-birds-dos-donts>