

Build a Bird and Bee Bath



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Students will build a bath to attract birds and beneficial bees to their yards.

 A wide flat container, such as a potted plant plate, serving platter or pie plate (not metal). Stacking materials such as plant pots, a post, rocks, or upside down tomato cage. Stones, rocks, shells, marbles of various sizes. Glue or nails to attach everything together. Paint and sealant (optional)

 Grades: 4-7  15-60 minutes



Some materials you could use to build your bird bath.

Introduction

Just like you and I, birds and bees get thirsty. Offering a safe watering hole in your yard will attract birds, help them stay healthy and make it easier for you to identify them. Birds need water for drinking, washing and staying cool. Similarly, bees drink water, even feeding it to their babies.

Bees are under a lot of stress from habitat loss and pesticides, and can use all they help they can get to stay healthy and keep pollinating useful plants.

Directions

1. Choose a location for the bath. A good spot is near trees or bushes where birds visit your yard so they can find it easily. Also, the bath should be elevated above the ground to help keep away predators, like neighbourhood cats.



Your bird bath can be as simple or as complex as you would like it to be.

2. Build the stack: stack your items as tall as needed for your location, then secure it together. Depending on what materials you've chosen, glue may be strong enough, or you may want to screw or nail everything together.

3. Decorate the plate. A wide and low plate is important to hold only about 2-3 cm deep of water so the birds don't drown. Also, avoid metal so the water doesn't get too hot in the sun. Finish with sealant or varnish



Adding rocks to your bird bath gives bees a safe place to rest and have a drink.

if you've used paint. This is so the chemicals in the paint don't seep into the water and poison the birds.

4. Attach the plate to the stack and put it where you want it. Make sure it's sturdy.
5. Add the stones, marbles or whatever other "stepping stone" materials you have. This is how you turn a bird-only bath into a bird-and-bee bath. Being much smaller than birds, bees need extra help to reach the water safely. Think of this step like adding little docks.
6. Add water. Remember, only 2-3cm deep, making sure at least some of your bee stepping stones are not submerged.
7. Be patient! It may take time for birds to discover the new bath.

Tips for healthy bird baths

- Clean it regularly. Birds don't want to drink or bathe in dirty water any more than you do. Empty the water, give it a scrub, and let dry completely before refilling.
- Don't let water sit too long. Stagnant (still) water attracts insects that like stagnant water, such as mosquitoes. Cleaning regularly can help with this.
- Keep chemicals away. Birds are small, sensitive animals. Make certain the materials you use for your bath aren't full of chemicals that can seep out. If you're using a painted bath, make sure to seal or varnish it.
- Keep it shallow. Songbirds are meant for flying, not swimming!
- Make it visible. Put your bath where birds can find it. For example, near where the trees or bushes they sit in is a good place, across the yard on a hidden patio is not.



Get creative with the items you already have. As long as there is a place to perch and clean water to drink, birds will find their way to your bird bath!



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