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Pine Cone Bird Feeders

Encourage wildlife by making these pine cone bird feeders. Easy to make and great Christmas gift ideas for grandparents. They can also be nicely packaged and sold for fundraising.

Equipment:

- Lots of large, open pine cones
- String and scissors
- Lard, or solid vegetable fat (eg Trex)
- Bird seed
- Cheapest porridge oats (optional)
- Mixing bowl, plate, spoons
- (Optional) Greaseproof paper, ribbon, cellophane bags

Method:

- Tie a good length of string around the top of each pine cone.
- Tip the fat into a bowl, and soften it by chopping it into small pieces. You can give it a brief zap in the microwave if needed.
- Add birdseed (and oats if using) to the bowl and mix in. We used one part fat to three parts seed to two parts oats, but you can just use five parts bird seed if you prefer.
- Mix to a dough-like consistency.
- Using a spoon, coat the outside of the pine cone with the fat/seed mixture, pushing it down into the gaps.
- Smooth off the coating with the back of a spoon or with your hands (this is messy!)
- Cover the pine cone with bird seed by rolling it in a plate of seeds.
- The bird feeder is now done. You can package it nicely (and prevent it from shedding seeds) by wrapping in a square of greaseproof paper, or dropping it in a small cellophane bag, and tying with ribbon.

This gets messy so you might want to do it outside! Also, have kitchen towel handy for greasy fingers.

We found that one 250g block of fat generously covered about ten pine cones.

If you can't get hold of pine cones, you can fill small yoghurt pots with the mixture instead.

Areas of learning and development:

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| KUW | Knowledge and understanding of the world |
| CD | Creative development |
| PSED | Personal, social and emotional development |
| PSRN | Problem-solving, reasoning and numeracy |