

AUTUMN

Feed The Birds

Discover practical activities you and your pupils can enjoy during your visit.

For this activity, it is a good idea to collect pine cones at least 1 month prior to class making the feeders. Store them in a warm location so they will open up, making them easier to work with!



Pine Cones, open and closed

Instructions

Show the group the different types of bird feed. Have a wide selection to handle on the day, for example, small seeds, including niger seeds for goldfinches and nuts (so long as no pupil has a nut allergy).

What and Where to Eat?

Tit Family – The tit family like to hang around on seeds feeders, but will also feed from a bird table or off the ground.

Finch Family – The finches have thick bills to crack big seeds and nuts; they like peanuts and sunflower seeds. They will also eat smaller seed from a feeder or bird table.

Goldfinches love niger seeds which are little black seeds

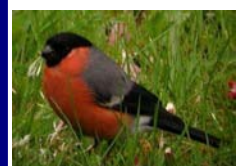
Other Ground feeders – e.g. blackbirds. These types of birds prefer to feed from a bird table or off the ground. They like seeds, chopped up fruit, and will eat worms, berries and insects from the garden.



Blue tit



Goldfinch



Bullfinch

AUTUMN

Ingredients:

- Lard / Butter
- Bird seed
- String
- Tubs
- Pine cones



Equipment needed



Bird Food

Method

If using lard, melt it down so that it is easier to use. If using butter, simply add it straight into the mixing bowl.

Put a small amount into each container and ask the children to mix seeds into it – as they would a cake mixture. Explain to them the importance of feeding birds regularly throughout the cold winter months.



Add the butter to the seed



Mixing it up



All the seeds should stick to the butter!

Once this has been done, tie a piece of string around the pine cone and ask them to cover it with the mixture.



An open pine cone with string attached



Adding the mixture to the pine cone

Take them outside and find a suitable area to hang it – a tall branch on a tree is best. Ensure they understand the importance of not tying it to a low branch, where the birds would be at risk from predators.



A finished bird feeder

Once this activity has ended, remember to wash hands. They will be very sticky and bits of bird seed will be stuck on them.

N.B – follow up activities

Record the number of birds and different species that visit the feeders. These records are very important as so many species are in decline. The more we help the birds, the greater chance of survival they have. They can be sent into the Ulster Wildlife Trust on education@ulsterwildlifetrust.org

Idea – create bird recording activity sheet

Every month wash and disinfectant your feeders and feeding area. Use a small brush (an old tooth brush is ideal) to make sure the inside is properly clean.