

Make a Bird Bath

Encourage your kids to get to know and love nature by making a simple clay bird bath. Set it up in your yard and watch animals large and small venture in for a sip of water or a bite of food. Combining creativity, art, and science, this fun activity makes a fantastic weekend project that you and your kids can enjoy all year long. Best of all, the whole thing will only cost you about \$20!

What You Need:

- 3 clay pots, sized 8", 10", and 12"
- 14" clay saucer
- Tempera paints
- Clear acrylic sealer spray
- Silicone adhesive
- Paint brushes and/or sponges
- Damp rag
- Bird seed
- Water
- Notepad
- Pen or pencil
- Newspaper
- Children's binoculars (optional)



What You Do:

1. Wipe the clay pots and saucer down with a damp rag to remove any debris and let them dry completely.
2. Ask your child to think about what he will paint on the pots. Cover your work area with newspaper, then encourage him to paint his design with the paint brushes, sponges and tempera paints. Let his creativity shine.
3. While the paint dries, select a location in your yard for the birdbath.
4. Grab a notepad and pen, kid friendly binoculars, and embark on a backyard safari. Ask your child to observe what birds or other animals are currently visiting your yard, and predict what might happen after the birdbath is put up.
5. Write his observations and predictions on the notepad.
6. Once the paint is dry, apply several coats of clear acrylic sealer spray to waterproof the birdbath. Send kids inside for this step!
7. Once the pots are completely dry, turn them upside down. Stack the 10" pot upside-down on top of the 12" pot, and place the 8" pot on the very top.
8. Use a silicone adhesive to secure the bottom of the clay saucer to the bottom of the 8" pot and let dry.
9. Now the experiment begins! Fill the bird bath with water and observe. What animals does your child think will visit the birdbath? Encourage him to get descriptive by asking, "What color is that bird?" or "How do you think the squirrel's fur feels?" etc.
10. In a few days, empty the water and fill with bird seed, and observe what happens this time. Encourage your child to make a prediction about the animals that will visit the bird feeder now.
11. After observing the animals that come, have him compare and contrast the animals that visited the first time, when there was water in the bird bath, with those that visited the second time when there was bird feed inside. Document his findings on the notepad.

12. Keep the bird bath outside and watch the animals come and go as the seasons change.

If you live in a climate where winter brings freezing temperatures, store your birdbath in a temperature controlled environment to avoid cracking.

Stacking the clay pots gives the birdbath its height. If you want a taller birdbath, use 12", 14", and 16" pots in place of the 8", 10", and 12" ones. Although it's not necessary, you may choose to use the silicone adhesive to secure the pots to one another as you stack them. Just a small amount of adhesive will offer added security.

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