

How to Build a Bird Feeder

by James D. Wilson

Construction: The Plexiglas sides show the level of the feed. However, Masonite can be used instead. Either material can be attached with screws or nails directly to the edges of the ends, or you can saw a kerf 1/4 inch from the front edge of the ends, and slide Plexiglas, Masonite or glass panels into this groove. A removable panel of this type permits easier cleaning. The 6 1/2-inch-wide Plexiglas should be installed so that its top edge meets the roof, thus providing the critical 1-inch clearance at the bottom for proper seed flow.

Installation: The feeder can be mounted on a post as diagrammed or hung, using wire from a coat hanger. Place it in a site where you can enjoy watching your customers from the comfort of your home. Preferably, the feeder should be near bushes or trees to provide the birds with avenues of approach and retreat. You can attempt to discourage competing squirrels by installing the feeder on a 6-foot-high post or pipe, at least 20 feet away from points from which they can jump. Then fasten an inverted cone of sheet metal at least 18 inches in diameter around the post just beneath the feeder.

Maintenance: Flour will accumulate on the floor of the feeder and, when combined with moisture, forms a hard paste. This must be scraped off so that the seed feeds through properly and the drain holes remain functional.

Comment: If you wish to restrict your feeding to only the winter season, you should begin in late fall or with the first snowfall. Once started, the birds will become dependent on you, and you should continue feeding through the winter until gradually tapering off and discontinuing by March or April. Sunflower seeds (especially the small oil-type) flow well in this feeder, and they are attractive to an array of bird species-cardinals, chickadees, titmice, blue-jays and finches. Wild bird seed mix, finely cracked corn or chicken scratch can also be used.

Other species, such as juncos and sparrows, will benefit if you simply scatter some seed on the ground. Others select entirely different foods. Suet (fat trimmings) obtained from a meat market can be hung in a mesh fruit or onion bag for woodpeckers and nuthatches. Fried meat grease smeared on the bark of a tree or log may attract chickadees and creepers. Mockingbirds and bluebirds will sometimes accept cut-up fruit or berries.

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Drawings
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Missouri Department of Conservation



ALL PARTS FROM A SINGLE 1" x 6" BOARD 7' LONG

