

Gourd Birdhouse

Some of the most common and well know species of birds are “cavity dwellers”, which means they seek out protective, hollowed-out spaces to make their nests. Owls, wrens, woodpeckers, martins and chickadees take advantage of tree hollows, open eaves and other similar shelters. So if you provide housing that mimics these cavities, your gourd birdhouse, they will move in. The hole in your gourd is the perfect size for chickadees and purple martins

Activity Supplies

- Gourd
- zip tie
- string
- paint
- sandpaper

Instructions

1. We've done our best to clean out your gourd but there may still be some seeds left inside. Give your gourd a good shake to remove any that are still inside. Empty out through the hole. Don't worry if there is some left inside, the first resident will remove what they don't like.
2. Use the sandpaper to remove any rough spots on your gourd, make sure the hole for the opening doesn't have any rough spots.
3. Use the paint included in your kit, or other supplies you have at home such as permanent markers to decorate your gourd. You may want to sketch your design ideas down first in your journal or on a piece of paper.
4. Let the paint dry, once dry see if you missed any spots or need to reapply any paint.
5. Place the zip tie through the holes in the top of the gourd and zip closed, leaving a large loop, this will be used to hang your birdhouse. There is an additional string included if you need a longer hanger, loop the string through the zip tie and tie another large loop with the string.
6. For best results apply 2 coats of polyurethane (not included) to your painted gourd, this will keep it looking good and protect it from weather
7. Tips for hanging and caring for your birdhouse: Hang your gourd birdhouse outdoors in early spring before the birds arrive. Attach it to a post or tree with plenty of space between houses. Position the house with the opening away from prevailing winds. Familiarize yourself with the habits of the type of bird(s) you are trying to attract as they may have different preferences regarding nesting. At the end of the season, clean out the old nest material and store your birdhouse in a dry spot in the garage or basement to keep it from freezing and fading. If properly preserved and stored in the off season, it may last for years.

Essential questions

1. Thinking about your yard, where do you think the best spot in your yard would be to hang your birdhouse? Why?
2. What would the world be like if there were no birds?

Additional resources

Audubon bird guide - www.audubon.org

The Cornell Lab - www.allaboutbirds.org

Outdoor Activities

- Sit in a quiet spot outside for several minutes, and keep track of how many different bird calls you hear. Try and use words to describe how each call sounded.
- Try to build a bird nest using natural materials found in your yard. For a real challenge try using only 2 fingers similar to a bird's beak.

Bird Tracker (keep information on birds you see)

Date seen: _____

Location: _____

Bird name: _____

Picture of Bird

Observations: (What was the bird doing? Find out an interesting fact about the bird)