

Build a Bird Nest Challenge

Challenge: to build a nest that will hold three eggs

The goal of this challenge is to think like a bird! Gather up nest building materials in your backyard and then try to make a nest that will hold three egg-like items. Maybe your parents will let you use some from the fridge, or you can find small stones or larger round objects to see how much your nest can hold!

Rules:

1. Use only natural materials (no glue, tape, etc)
2. The nest must be able to hold the eggs when lifted off of the ground
3. You can look online or in books for photos of different types of bird nests for inspiration

Reflection:

- Was it harder or easier to build a bird nest than you expected?
- Did your nest support more or less weight than you thought it would?
- How would you improve upon your design if you were to build another nest?
- Think about if you were a bird in your backyard looking for a safe spot to build a nest. What qualities would an ideal nesting site have? Which spot would you choose?

Examples of Nests for Inspiration



Images courtesy of canva.com

Bird Nest Snack Recipe

After building a nest you've likely worked up an appetite- why not try this fun recipe for edible bird nest snacks?

Ingredients Needed:

- 6 cups of Rice Krispies
- 1 10oz. bag of marshmallows
- 3 Tablespoons of butter
- Yogurt covered raisins, almonds, or anything that resembles eggs

Directions:

1. Melt the butter in a pan over medium heat and stir in the marshmallows. Stir until marshmallows are completely melted.
2. Remove from heat and add Rice Krispies. Stir until combined.
3. Grease a muffin tin and add a spoonful of the mixture to each cup, pressing down with the spoon to shape the nests in each muffin cup. You may need more than one muffin tin. Also, if the spoon is sticking, you can butter the spoon.
4. Let mixture cool in muffin tins, then carefully remove and add eggs to each nest. Enjoy!



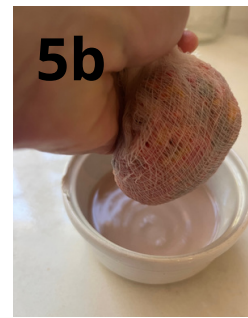
Image courtesy of Ashley Megquier

How to Make Recycled Paper Seed Balls

Materials needed:

Construction paper, newspaper, or other recycled paper to shred
Plastic sandwich bag or bowl
Cheesecloth
Wildflower seeds

1. Tear your pieces of paper into shreds and place in a plastic sandwich bag or bowl. You can choose to mix paper colors all together, or repeat this process with separate colors of paper if you want to have distinctly colored seed balls.
2. Add enough water to the bag (or bowl) until your paper is covered and seal the bag, pushing excess air out as you seal it. If the bag is overflowing, you can also do this in a bowl instead.
3. Let the bag of water and paper sit for 20 minutes so the paper can get thoroughly soaked.
4. Once the paper is soaked, you can either knead the bag to break up the wet paper into a pulp, or put the paper and water mixture into a food processor to blend.
5. Lay out your cheesecloth on a cookie sheet, or in bowl, and place the wet paper pulp on top. Gather the edges of the cheesecloth together, tightening and twisting so that the water in the pulp gets strained out.
6. Sprinkle your wildflower seeds onto the pulp and squeeze again, getting out any excess water.
7. Divide and form the pulp/ seed mixture into balls by rolling around in your hands.
8. Allow the seed balls to dry, then plant them in some soil and give them some water, or gift them to others. These could make a great end-of-the-year teacher gift!



Images courtesy of Ashley Megquier

Helpful Instructional Link with More Photos:

<https://www.cbc.ca/parents/play/view/diy-earth-day-wildflower-seed-bombs>

What kinds of wildflower seeds would be good to use for this project?



Purple Coneflowers



Black-Eyed Susans



New England Asters

Images courtesy of canva.com

Common Bird Songs

Many birds are singing right now, trying to find mates. Here are examples of what some common backyard bird songs sound like. See how many of these birdsongs you can hear when you are outdoors. You can practice your bird calls by trying to sing back to them and see if they respond!



Onk-er-eeee!

Red Winged Blackbird



Meow! Meow!

Gray Catbird



Chick-a-dee, dee, dee!

Black-capped Chickadee



Cheer! Cheer! Cheer!
Perty, perty, perty!

Northern Cardinal



Peter, Peter, Peter!

Tufted Titmouse



Sweet, sweet, Canada,
Canada, Canada!

White-throated Sparrow



Potato chip!
Potato chip!
Potato chip!

American Goldfinch



Jay, jay!

Blue Jay



Who cooks for you?
Who cooks for you all?

Barred Owl

Images courtesy of canva.com



Want to hear examples of actual bird songs?

Visit: allaboutbirds.org

You can search for any bird by name, and then click on the sound symbol to hear the song of that species!

Identifying Bird Nests

Here are some common nests you might spot in nature.

To learn more about bird nests and eggs, visit nestwatch.org.

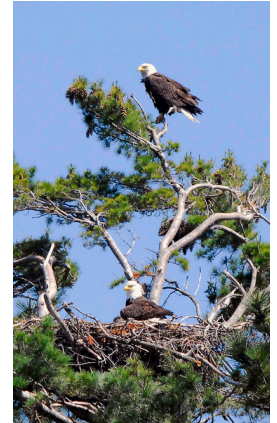
American Robin ▶

Robins use mud to cement moss, grass, and bark together to make their cup-shaped nest. They can be located in the crotch of a tree, a bush, or on a ledge of a house. Bright blue eggs are a telltale sign of a robin's nest. They typically lay 4.



Bald Eagle ▶

Large birds require large nests! Bald eagle nests are high up in trees, woven from sticks, usually 5-6ft in diameter, and 2-4ft tall. The inside can be lined with moss and feathers.



◀ Ruby-throated Hummingbird

A hummingbird uses spider webs or pine sap and lichen to construct a nest that has an opening only as wide as a quarter! Dandelion fluff can be used for cushioning inside the nest. A hummingbird usually lays 2 oval white eggs the size of black beans!



Northern Cardinal ▶

Cardinals make cup-shaped nests from twigs, leaves, vines, and weeds in dense shrubs. The nest can be lined with fine grass. They usually lay 2-5 greenish eggs speckled with brown.



Osprey ▲

Osprey weave large nests out of sticks. They are commonly seen on top of telephone poles, bridges and other posts.

Baltimore Oriole ▼

These aren't very common to see, but oriole nests are distinctive because they weave hanging teardrop-shaped pouch nests of grasses, vines, and plant stems high in deciduous trees. They typically lay 4 pale blue/ gray eggs.



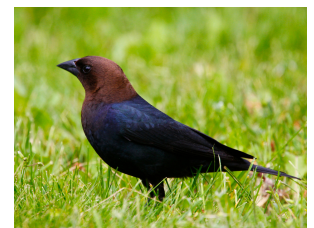
◀ Common Loon

Loons make nests of mud and grasses right at the water's edge, since they can't walk on land. They usually lay 1-2 olive colored eggs with dark spots.



Brown-headed Cowbirds ▶

Cowbirds are sneaky. They don't make their own nests- they lay their eggs in other birds' nests and let other species of birds raise their young!



Cavity Nesting Birds ▶

Some birds, like woodpeckers, chickadees, swallows, and bluebirds nest in holes or cavities in trees (or in birdhouses). Unless you have one of these birds nesting in a birdhouse where you can lift the lid and peer in, it can be difficult to see their nests and eggs.



Signs of Spring Scavenger Hunt

How many of these can you find?

- Mud puddle- if you find one, jump in it!
- Muddy footprints
- Robins in your yard
- Three different types of wildflowers blooming
- Bird Nest
- Mosquitoes
- Maple tree flowers fallen to the ground
- Oak seedlings growing from acorns
- A squirrel eating something
- Three different birdsongs
- Dandelions
- A butterfly
- A worm
- A bee
- Morning dew on the grass
- Frogs (either see or hear them calling)
- Leaf buds
- Eggshells from a hatched egg
- Spring rain or a rain cloud
- A rainbow
- Something from nature that is each color of the rainbow

