



Content Strand: Living things, Environmental awareness & care

Cross-curricular relevance:

- SESE - Living things, environmental awareness & care, recording, observing.
- Maths - Counting, estimating, recording, active learning
- Geography - Migration routes of birds
- History - Birds in folklore
- Literacy - Writing, spelling
- Art - Drawing

Title: Make a Bird Feeder from clay & seeds

Class: All ages



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| <p>Background Information</p> | <p>Many small animals hibernate in winter. There are a couple of reasons why they do this but mainly it is because of the cold weather and the lack for food.</p> <p>Birds don't hibernate. Instead, some birds (such as swallows) migrate long distances from Ireland to avoid the cold and food shortages. On the other hand, some countries get even colder than Ireland in winter and so many birds (such as geese) migrate to Ireland. So many different species come and go through the seasons.</p> <p>However some birds tough it out and stay in Ireland. They need a little help to get them through the winter. So you can help by providing water and food during the harshest times of the year.</p> |
| <p>Trigger Questions</p> | <p>Why do animals hibernate? Plants cannot grow in the cold winter months. Therefore many animals such plant eating insects have no food. This leaves the larger animals, such as hedgehogs and bats, without any food. So they eat lots of food before winter, put on plenty of weight and then live off this extra weight all winter when they are hibernating.</p> <p>Why do birds not hibernate? Birds migrate instead of hibernating. Some birds leave Ireland for very hot counties and some other birds arrive in Ireland from far colder counties. Other birds stay in Ireland. These remaining birds try and adjust to the cold weather and change in diet.</p> <p>Can we help birds in winter? How? We can provide them with water and also food on bird tables.</p> |
| <p>Equipment</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clay • A mixture of different bird seed (eg. nyger seed, peanuts, sunflower seeds) • 15cm of string |

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| Activity | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Give each child a lump of clay the size of a mandarin orange. 2. Roll out into a sausage shape. 3. Join both ends of the 'sausage' together to form a donut shape. Squeeze these ends together well to ensure the doughnut doesn't break. 4. Thread the sting through the middle of the clay doughnut. Tie the two ends of the string together, forming a loop for hanging up the feeder. 5. Roll the clay around in the seed mixture, pressing firmly onto the seed to ensure the seeds stick. If the doughnut shape does not hold, press back into a spherical shape with the string running through the core. 6. Hang outside and wait for the birds to come and eat! 7. Remember the clay can be reused a number of times. Just dampen and roll around in the seeds again. |
| Safety | Do not eat the seeds. |
| Follow-up Activities | <p>This activity could be used as an investigation, by using different seeds and seeing if they attract different birds.</p> <p>The class could join BirdWatch Ireland's School Winter Garden Bird Survey and could record and count what birds visit their feeders all winter.</p> <p>Any birds that visit the table could be drawn and named. Hang the pictures near the window to help with identification.</p> <p>What birds migrate from Ireland in winter and what birds come to Ireland in winter?</p> <p>Write a poem about your favourite bird.</p> <p>Are there any birds associated with your area? What facts and folklore is associated with this bird?</p> |

