DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR
news release

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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BUILD A BIRD FEEDER FOR ABOUT A BUCK; HOUSEHOLD TRASH CAN BE TURNED INTO WINTER FEEDING STATIONS, FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE ADVISES

Americans spend over $54 million each year on backyard birdfeeding stations and more than $500 million on bird seed.

Now the Fish and Wildlife Service has a way for you to build your own winter feeding station for next to nothing.

In fact, the Interior Department agency's two new novel birdfeeding designs can help make a big dent in your load of trash, as well as supply you with quick and easy crafts ideas for schoolchildren.

Where the price of many commercial bird feeders often startsat $10, these two designs can be built for about a dollar, depending upon the household materials and simple tools you might already have at hand. Both feeders can be built in about an hour.

The first, a sunflower feeder, will draw chickadees, nuthatches, cardinals, and other winter residents, according to Fish and Wildlife Service biologists Alex Knight and Willard M. Spaulding, Jr., who created the designs. The other, a smaller, thistle seed feeder, is popular with goldfinches, wild canaries, pine siskins, and redpolls.

"A person doesn't have to be rich to enjoy the wealth of America's wildlife," says Fish and Wildlife Service Director Robert A. Jantzen. "With a little ingenuity, anyone can bring wildlife to the back doorstep, opening a whole new world for adults as well as children. These two birdfeeders provide a window on that world that's quick and inexpensive. It even helps solve the dilemma of what to do with those throwaway bottles."

Directions for each feeder follow, illustrated with step-by-step instructions on the attached pages.

(over)

Sunflower seed feeder

Materials needed: Three 2-liter plastic soft-drink bottles, a 7-inch dessert topping lid, a baby food jar lid, a coping saw, a single-edged razor blade or "X-acto" knife, all-weather rubber sealant, 8 inches of wire or monofilament fishing line, a small nail or 7/16-inch bit and hand drill, a metal or wood screw 1

Soak a 2-liter bottle in warm, soapy water to clean inside and remove label. Pull off the colored plastic base, but save it for use as a measuring device when cutting the feeding holes.

Step 1: Using a second 2-liter bottle, make a perpendicular cut with the coping saw at the bottle's mouth down to the point at which the neck collar begins. Make a second cut at, and slightly above, the collar perpendicular to the first cut. Discard the cut piece. Cut the remaining section of the neck and collar away from the bottle, leaving at least a 1-inch flange of plastic beneath the collar. Using a third 2-liter bottle, repeat these same steps. The two spouts that result will be used as feeding holes, with their neck pieces preventing seed spill-out.

Step 2: Cut two 1-inch circular holes across from each other in the sides of the first bottle. The top of the plastic base that was removed earlier will serve as a guide -- the top of each cut should be made at the same point as the top of the plastic base.

Step 3: Apply sealant around the outside of each feeding hole. Insert the spouts into the bottle, flange end outward. The collar on each spout and the sealant will form a watertight "gasket." Secure with a rubber band until dry.

Step 4: Using the drill or small nail, make small holes in the bottom of the bottle and the dessert topping and baby food lids. Attach the two lids, with the baby food lid on the bottom, to the bottom of the bottle with the metal or wood screw. The topping lid will form the perch that the baby food lid will stabilize.

Step 5: Drill or punch two small, parallel holes in the bottle top. String wire or monofilament line through the holes and tie. Once the bottle is filled with sunflower seeds, screw the top onto the bottle.

Thistle seed feeder

Materials needed: 1-liter plastic soft-drink bottle; three or four 3/16-inch wide, 5-inch long wooden dowels (straight, hardwood sticks will do): a single-edged razor blade or "X-acto" knife; 8 inches of wire or monofilament fishing line, a metal eye screw, a hand drill and small bit

Soak the bottle in warm, soapy water to clean inside and remove label. Pull off the colored plastic base and discard.

Step 1: Make small parallel cuts in each side of the bottle with the razor blade, "X-acto" knife, or hand drill. Insert the dowels as perches. Alternate the radial alignment of each perch so that all sides of the bottle can be used.

Step 2: At points about 1-inch below each dowel, make small 1/4-inch long, 1/8-inch wide incisions through the bottle for feeding holes. Don't make the cuts too large -- the correct size will allow birds to pick out individual seeds yet prevent spillage. (A wood-burning needle will also make the right-sized feeding holes.)

Step 3: Bore a 7/16-inch hole in the bottom of the bottle and insert the eye screw. When suspended, the bottom becomes the top of the feeder. Affix wire or monofilament line to the eye screw and tie.

Gas line antifreeze plastic bottles provide an easy way to fill both feeders with seed. Cut a funnel from a 12-ounce bottle with a coping saw about halfway up. The necks of this funnel and both feeder bottles will mate, providing a convenient way to fill them without spillage.

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Now that you've built your bird feeders, what should you feed backyard birds? In some cases, not the birdseed you commonly find at the grocery store. The Fish and Wildlife Service's report, "Relative Attractiveness of Different Foods at Wild Bird Feeders," will tell you what seed mixtures draw the most sought-after species where you live. For a copy, send a check or money order for $2.75 to the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402 (specify the report by title and by stock number 024-010-00587-4).

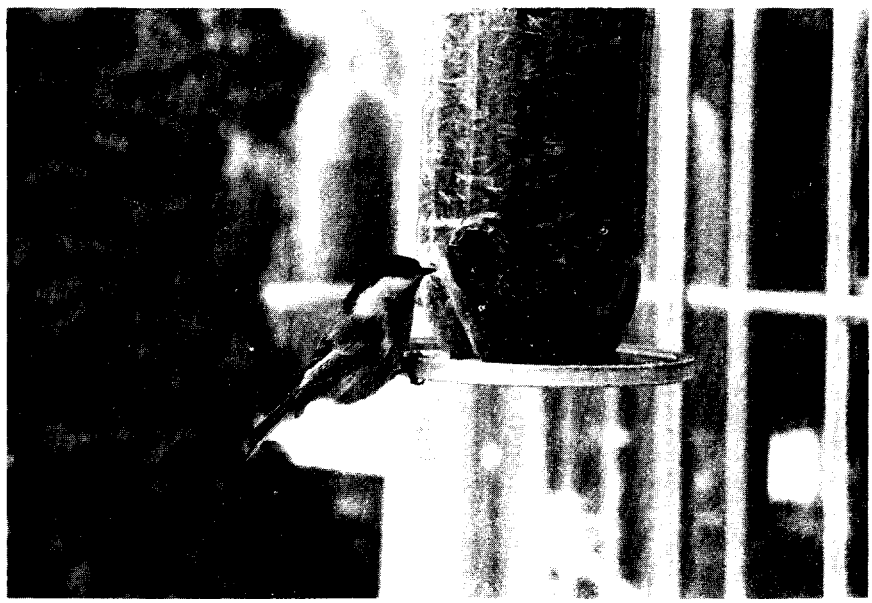

photo by Alex Knight

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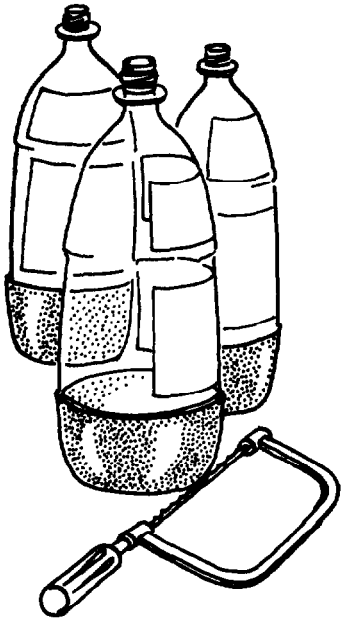
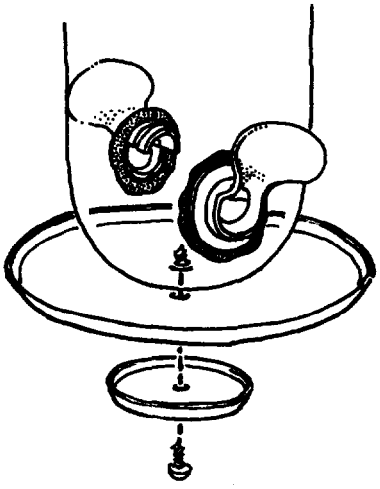
SUNFLOWER SEED FEEDER





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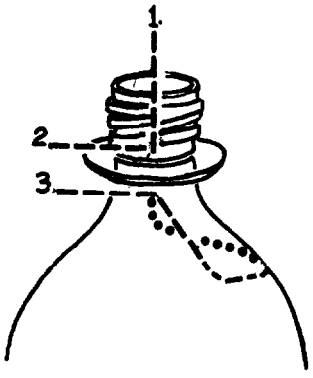

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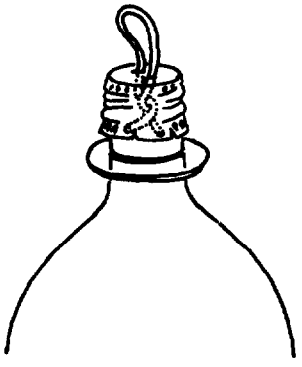

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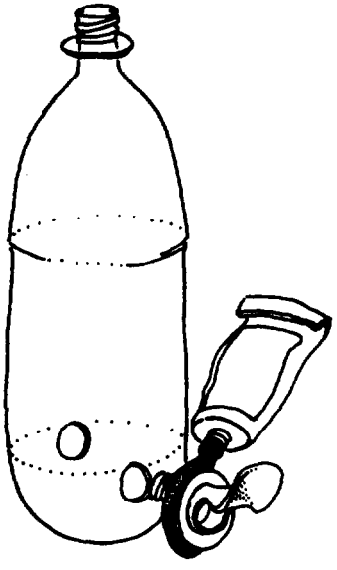
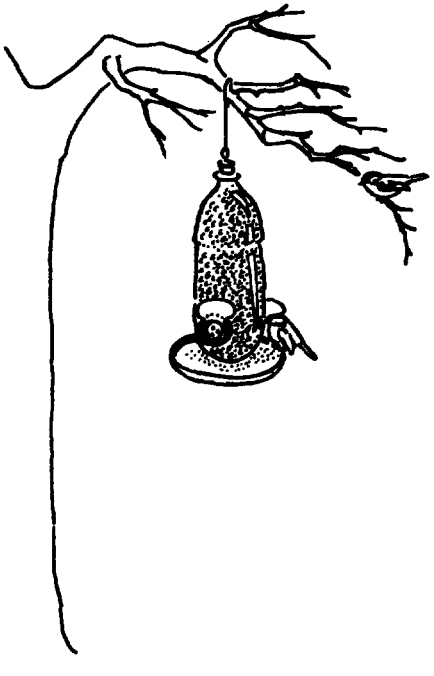
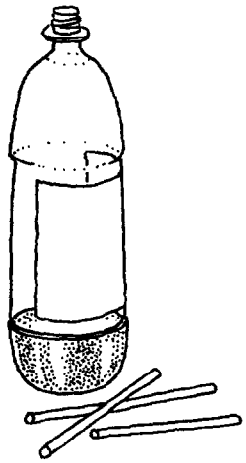
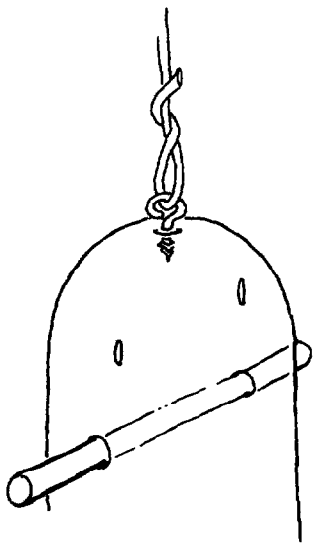


Steps 2, 3



THISTLE SEED FEEDER





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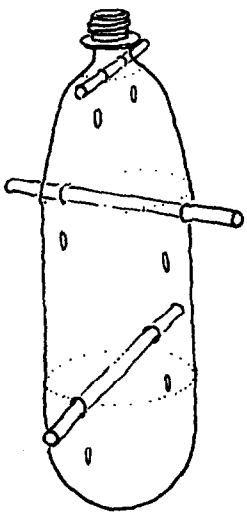

Step 1