Spring into STEM: Build an Upcycled Perch Bird Feeder

BACKGROUND
Researchers at Virginia Tech found in a recent study that 57 million households in the United States feed backyard birds (2019). With the proper care, bird feeders can provide a reliable food source for birds year-round. Feeders are most beneficial during the winter when resources are scarce. However, many birds will visit feeders during the spring and fall migrations as well as during their nesting season, allowing them less time away from the nest foraging for food. Like many people, birds are picky eaters. Selecting the right food and location for your feeder will attract more birds for you to observe up close!

WHAT TO DO
Planning
1. Take a walk around your neighborhood or sit quietly outside for 10 minutes to look and listen for birds.
   - How many birds did you see?
   - What did you hear?
   - Where did you see the most birds?
   - What kinds of birds are currently visiting your home or neighborhood?
   - What types of birds do you want to attract to your feeder?
2. Review the chart below to learn more about the types of food that birds like to eat.
   - Based on the chart what type(s) of food will you need to put out to attract the desired birds?
3. Visit https://feederwatch.org/learn/common-feeder-birds/ to identify the best type of feeder to build based on your location and type of food you plan to offer.
   - What type of feeder do you plan to build?
Do Ahead:
- Review lesson
- Gather supplies

Supplemental Resources:
- Ohio Birds 4-H Project Book [https://www.ohio4h.org/stayathomeprojects]

Sources:

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Building an Upcycled Perch Feeder

SUPPLIES NEEDED:
- Clean 1-liter soda bottle, wrapper removed
- Ruler
- Utility knife (adult use only)
- 2 wooden spoons or dowel rods
- Small eye-screw
- Twine or yarn

INSTRUCTIONS:
1. Draw a 1/2-inch "x" on the side of a clean 1-liter soda bottle.
2. Rotate the bottle 90 degrees and draw another "x" 2 inches from the bottom.
3. Draw a 1-inch diameter circle opposite each star.
4. Have an adult use a utility knife to slit the "x" lines and cut out the circles.
5. Insert a wooden spoon or dowel rod, handle first, through each hole and then through the opposite "x."
6. Remove the bottle cap and twist a small eye screw into the cap for hanging.
7. Fill your feeder with birdseed, recap it, and use twine or yarn to hang it from a tree.

For other bird feeder plans or to learn more about birds, check out the Ohio Birds 4-H project book under supplemental resources.

TALK IT OVER
Reflect:
- What kinds of birds are visiting your feeder?
- What time of day do birds visit your feeder?
- If you are using a birdseed mix, which ingredients do the birds like most?
- How do the birds behave around the feeder?

Apply:
- Track the number and kinds of birds visiting your feeder.

EARTH TAKE ACTION TIP
Upcycling is to reuse discarded objects or materials to create a product of higher quality or value than the original item. Use 2-liter bottles, milk jugs/cartons, peanut butter jars and other items found around your house to build a bird feeder, instead of buying one. This will prevent plastics, from going to our landfills.

CITIZEN SCIENCE CHALLENGE
- Contribute to science by sharing your observations with eBird or Project FeederWatch, citizen science projects designed to help scientists with the understanding and conservation of birds.