

# Recycled Tire Bird Feeder

## Materials and Tools

- 3 2-foot sections of chain
- 4 S-Hooks
- 2 square feet (approx) mesh window screen
- Standard tire
- Spray paint (optional)
- Jigsaw, drill, bolt cutters, pliers, staple gun (1/4" staples), scissors



## Constructing your Feeder

- Trace your pattern with a marker onto the tire. For ease of cutting, avoid too many petals or making sharp angles. Don't trace into the tire's tread or get too close to the inner wall.
- Use the drill to start a hole along your pattern line, then cut the feeder shape out with the jigsaw.
- Lay the mesh over the tire opening and trace out a circle, leaving at least an inch of overhang. Cut out and use a staple gun to attach the mesh to the tire. Keep the staples about an inch apart. Trim any excess.
- Use the drill to create 3 holes for the chain attachments. They should be evenly spaced around the tire, and placed at a valley between petals, as in the picture above.
- Insert 3 S-Hooks into the drill holes and use the pliers to close the hooks over the tire.
- If you want, decorate your tire with spray paint.
- Attach one chain length to each S-Hook on the tire, closing the hook over the chain. Fasten the tail ends of the chains together with the 4<sup>th</sup> S-Hook.

## Hanging your Feeder

There are many options for hanging your feeder, from special stands available at many garden stores to tree limbs. Use an option that will provide you with the best view of visiting birds and will be convenient to refill.

## Feed Choice

Different feeders are best for different bird feeds. The recycled-tire feeder is considered a platform feeder. Below is a list of some suitable feeds for this feeder type and their pros and cons. Winneshiek County Conservation recommends black-oil sunflower as the most economical feed choice that will attract the widest variety of birds to your feeder. This feeder is not squirrel-proof, so keep that in mind as you make your decisions. Commercial bird feed mixes will contain a variety of different types of seed and may or may not be an economical choice.

Feed	Primary Birds Attracted	Additional Notes
Black-oil Sunflower	Just about everything	Best bang for your buck. Preferred by the widest variety of species. Can be messy: rake hulls in spring to protect grass.
Safflower	Northern cardinals, rose-breasted grosbeaks, finches	Squirrels may avoid. Less messy than black-oil sunflower, but more expensive. Won't attract as wide a variety of birds.
Peanuts	Blue jays, nuthatches, woodpeckers	Expensive, messy. Will attract squirrels.
Cracked Corn	Mourning doves, grackles, sparrows	Not a good choice for in-town users. Will attract deer and squirrels.

## Additional Tips

- Provide a water source like a bird bath or shallow pan.
- Add additional feeders with different feed to attract a wider variety of birds. Try suet, peanut butter, fruits, nectar, and thistle seed in different feeders set at different heights.
- Pay attention to how the birds in your yard change with the seasons. Adjust your feeder options to best suit those different birds.
- Make a bird-friendly yard. If possible, plant trees, shrubs, and flowers that will provide shelter and habitat. Try to keep feeders within 3 feet of windows to reduce collisions and several feet away from any cat hiding places.
- If you can, place feeders in sunny areas on the east or south side of a house to protect from winter winds.
- To keep your grass healthy and prevent disease in birds, rake up seed hulls in the spring after winter feeding and over the course of the summer and fall.