

# Nut Butter Cone Feeder

All those nooks and crannies in cones make them perfect for a homemade backyard bird feeder! Here's what you'll need to make a snack that birds (and other critters, too) will be sure to love:

## You Will Need:

- A few large pinecones (*see what you can collect on your next nature adventure!*)
- Peanut butter (*or vegetable shortening if someone in your house has a nut allergy*)
- Birdseed
- String, pipe cleaners, or wire
- Scissors
- A butter knife or rubber spatula
- Two wide, shallow bowls or plates

1. First, gather some cones on a nature walk or hike. Make sure you take them from the ground and not from the tree. Also be sure to check if it's okay to take cones from the place you are exploring. At many parks and nature trails it's against the rules to take anything but your trash with you. If you don't have much luck, you can buy cones at a craft store.
2. If the cones are tightly closed up, you can either let them sit in a windowsill for a few days until they "bloom". To speed things up, ask your favorite adult to help you bake them for 10 minutes in a 300°F oven.
3. Once your pinecones are opened up, securely attach a string or pipe cleaner to the tip of the cone. This is how you will hang your feeder outside, so make sure it's tight!
4. Here comes the fun/messy part: Use a butter knife or rubber spatula to spread peanut butter or vegetable shortening all over the cone. Be sure you get it inside all the nooks and crannies!
5. Once your cone is covered in sticky stuff, pour some birdseed into a shallow bowl or plate and get ready to rock and roll—Roll the cone back and forth in the birdseed to coat it completely. You can use your hands to push the seed into the crevices and then roll the cone some more.
6. Take your birdfeeder outside and hang it from a tree branch or poll that is near a window, so you can enjoy watching the visitors that come to sample your delicious treat! If you have a dog or cat, make sure you hang it high enough that it is out of their reach.
7. Watch and wait! It won't take long for birds to find your feeder.

**Who's visiting your feeder?** Try to identify the birds by what they look like or the calls they make. There are lots of guidebooks you can use to help you identify birds: you can borrow one from the library, print out our list of [commonly found birds](#) in Massachusetts, or take a beginner [birding program](#) at one of our sanctuaries.

Happy crafting!