

Edible Ornaments for Birds and other Wildlife

The Los Gatos Birdwatcher is here to help...

During the winter, it is a challenge for birds and other wildlife to find sufficient food to survive because natural food sources are limited. During the holiday season you can decorate outdoor trees with natural ornaments for the birds and critters as a fun family project. Here are a few ideas that are easy for children, with adult supervision, to create:

Seed and Suet (or Peanut Butter) Pine Cones

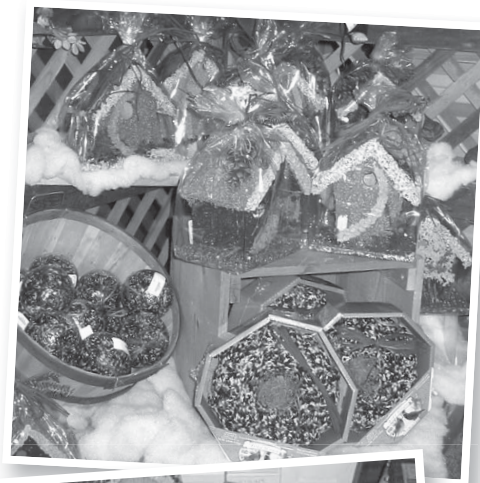
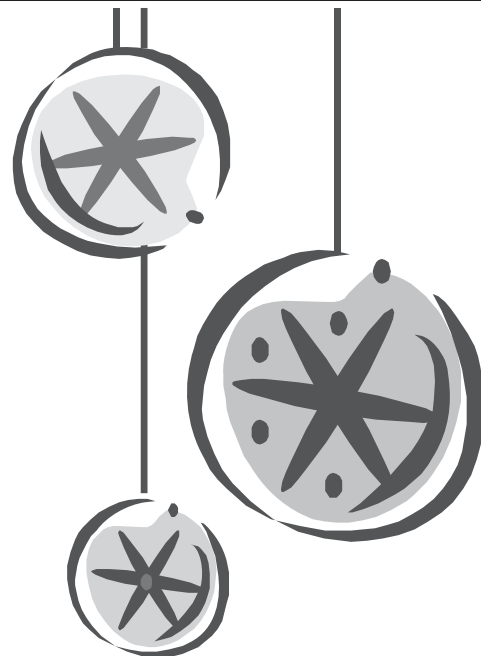
- Collect as many pinecones as you want to hang on a bush or tree.
- For the hanger, fasten twine, ribbon, or wire to the pointy end of the pinecone.
- If using pure suet cakes, divide the cake into quarters and put a quarter at a time into a paper cup. Soften in the microwave for 20-second intervals and stir after each time. Try to avoid melting the suet because it is very hot and takes awhile to re-solidify.
- With a spoon or blunt knife work the peanut butter or softened suet into the openings on the pinecone.
- Put a few handfuls of Black Oil Sunflower, Birder's Choice, or Songbird Select seed mix into a plastic bag.
- Drop in the pinecones one at a time and shake or roll so that the seed sticks to the peanut butter or suet.
- Repeat until all the pinecones are complete and then go outside and hang them on your chosen tree or bush.

Whole Peanut and Cranberry Garland

- Tapestry needles, which take a large thread but have a dull point, work best for this and can be purchased at most craft centers.
- Cut 3-foot lengths of twine or string. Thread into eye of the needle.
- Make a loop for hanging onto the tree on one end and leave the other end plain.
- Take a whole peanut and poke the needle between the two kernels.
- If you want to put a gap between the peanuts, tie a knot in the twine before threading another peanut. Add cranberries as desired.
- When you come to the end of the string, tie another loop and hang.
- Make as many garlands as will fit on the tree.

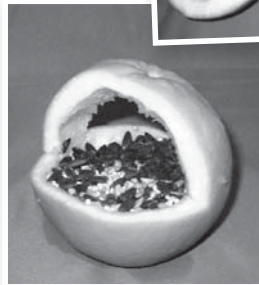
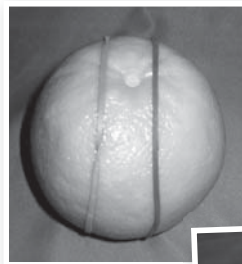
Bread Cookie Cutter Ornaments

- Choose a fairly dense bread such as whole grain or pumpernickel.
- Choose holiday cookie cutters or our nature-themed *Ann Clark* cookie cutters.
- Spread peanut butter on one side of the bread then turn it over onto a plate of Birder's Choice Mix seed and press down.
- Cut shape with cookie cutter.
- Poke a hole in the top and tie string or ribbon. (Using a straw to make the hole works well.)



Orange Baskets

- Place two rubber bands parallel around the orange about an inch apart at the top.
- To form the handle, with a knife, slice halfway down the orange on the outer side of each rubberband.
- Remove the rubberbands and slice the horizontal side to the cut you just made. Be sure not to slice through the handle. Repeat on the other side. Remove the quarter section on each side.
- Remove the pulp from the basket base with a knife or spoon.
- Soften purchased suet (*see page 1*) and add some Birder's Choice or Songbird Select mix.
- Spoon suet or seed mixes alone into the orange baskets and hang with twine, ribbon, or wire.



Seed Ornaments

- Caution: These do not stand up in rainy weather!
- Put Birder's Choice seed mix in a bowl and add one egg white per pound of seed. Stir to blend together.
- On a paper plate, pat seed into a mold or cookie cutter.
- Gently remove the mold or cookie cutter and put paper plate, with ornament, into the microwave for 1-2 minutes until firm.
- Let it cool.
- With glue gun, attach ribbon or twine for hanging.

Black Oil Sunflower Heads and Millet Sprays

- Dried sunflower heads are available at Los Gatos Birdwatcher in various sizes. They are very festive when tied with colorful ribbon and hung where they can be seen as they are devoured by the local birds and critters.
- Millet sprays come in bags of 5 sprays. Tie bright ribbons on each stem and tie to the tree.
- Chickadees and titmice love the sunflower and the "crowned" sparrows love the millet.

Pre-made Seed Ornaments

During the holiday season, pre-made ornament garlands, seed balls, whimsical

seed ornaments, seed wreaths, and seed decorated bird houses are available at Los Gatos Birdwatcher to give your yard a "holiday party" feeling.

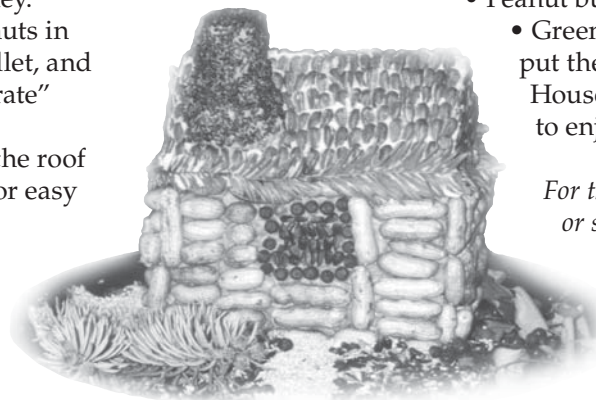


GingerSeed Houses Kits and Workshop

Los Gatos Birdwatcher's signature GingerSeed House kits include everything for a bird's "gingerbread" house. Los Gatos Birdwatcher hosts a family workshop on the day after Thanksgiving to build these marvelous structures. Our kits allow you to create your own on a rainy day, invite the Grandparents to participate, or give as a gift to a family. Kits are \$25.00.

We provide the following supplies:

- The seed block for the structure of the house, pre-cut matzo pieces for the roof, and a custom cut ice cream cone for the chimney.
- Packets of sunflower seeds, peanuts in the shell and out of the shell, millet, and thistle that can be used to "decorate" the house.
- Pure suet makes the "snow" on the roof and a suet "pastry bag" makes for easy spreading.
- Instructions, both written and visual.



You provide:

- The base which can be a plant saucer, cookie sheet, or platform of wood.
- Peanut butter to hold everything else together.
- Greenery and berries from your yard that put the finishing touches on the GingerSeed House as you put it out for the birds and critters to enjoy.

For those with peanut allergies vegetable shortening or sunflower butter can be used instead of peanut butter. Safflower can be substituted for the peanuts to decorate the house. Just let us know and we will take care of the substitutions.

