

Pinecone bird feeders



Pinecone bird feeders are a simple nature based activity that encourages tamariki to explore, create, and connect with the natural world. This open ended experience is grounded in Te Whāriki and supports curiosity, care for the environment, and meaningful learning through hands on discovery.

Making pinecone bird feeders can help tamariki to:

- Explore the natural world using their senses, noticing texture, shape, weight, and how materials change when they are combined
- Focus and stay engaged as they create something meaningful for birds in their environment
- Imagine, experiment, and problem solve while designing and building their feeder
- Develop early maths thinking through measuring, counting, and exploring quantity of seeds and materials
- Build language and storytelling skills as they talk about birds, nature, and what they observe during the experience

What you need

- A few large pinecones
- Mixing bowl
- Natural string
- A handful of ice-cream sticks
- Birdseed
- Scissors
- Cremelta/lard/stale bread

Fun fact

In winter when food is more scarce, the birds get braver and will venture much closer to the house.

How to

1. Preheat oven to 180°C and place pinecones inside for about 10 minutes until they open up. Remove and allow to cool.
2. Spread cremelta over the inside of each pinecone using an ice cream stick.
3. Place birdseed or crushed stale bread into a bowl.
4. Roll the pinecones in the seed mix until well coated.
5. Tie string to the top of each pinecone for hanging.
6. Hang in a tree outside and top up with extra seed as needed.
7. Keep your camera nearby to capture the feeding birds, and the wide eyes and smiles from your children as they watch their creation bring birds in to visit.

How you can support this play

- Let tamariki explore at their own pace and their own way
- Encourage their ideas and decision making
- Extend learning through simple conversation and questions

