



DIY Birdfeeders and Nature Journals:

Attract Nantucket's beautiful birds to your yard! Each year, thousands of colorful, vocal songbirds visit our community- A pinecone, some string, peanut butter and sunflower seed will get you started on a new hobby.

Birding has been a global pastime for thousands of years. Passionate birders the world over arm themselves with binoculars, scopes, tripods, long camera lenses, and stacks of guidebooks. This can be overwhelming for a beginner- but fear not! The birds in your neighborhood are more than happy to visit without any special equipment.

Most of the birds you see flitting from tree to tree and singing on the powerlines are known as passerines, or songbirds. These include Nantucket staples such as the cardinal, black-capped chickadee (our state bird!), robin, red-winged blackbird, sparrow, grackle, mourning dove, and my personal favorite, the eastern towhee. There are many more, but these are some you will likely see visiting your DIY bird feeder. These birds can often be heard long before you spot them, such as the iconic *chick-a-dee-dee-dee!* of the black-capped chickadee or the towhee's signature *drink your tea!* call.

There's no need to spend money on an elaborate bird feeder for attracting feathered friends- Just provide them some food in an area where you and friends can observe them without disturbing them, and you'll be on your way to a new hobby.

Materials:

- Pinecone- Preferably one that has "opened," as these provide more surface area for seeds.
- String or wire- to hang your DIY birdfeeder from a tree, clothesline, etc.
- Peanut butter, Crisco, almond butter, etc.- to coat the pinecone and provide a sticky surface for your seeds.
- Bird seed- There are all sorts of bird seed mixes, designed to attract certain species. I prefer sunflower seeds, as they are a favorite with many bird species.
- Notebook or sketchbook- It helps to keep a nature journal by the window facing your DIY feeder. Keep track of what birds visit when, how many species you've seen, and what non-birds are visiting (squirrels and deer are commonly spotted around bird feeders, and are fun to watch as well!)

- **OPTIONAL:** A camera is a great way to capture your visitors- some birders set up a wildlife camera facing their birdfeeder, snapping a closeup photo without scaring off your hungry visitors.

Instructions:

- 1. Head out on a nature walk to track down a nice big pinecone.**
- 2. Tie a length of string or wire to the top of the pinecone to hang it outside. Be sure your string is tied tight- a flying bird can really yank on a bird feeder!**
- 3. Coat the pinecone in peanut butter. This provides a sticky surface for your bird seed. If you don't have peanut butter or are allergic, you can use Crisco, almond butter, sunflower butter, etc. as a substitute.**
- 4. Roll the peanut butter covered pinecone in your choice bird seed.**
- 5. Hang your DIY birdfeeder outside, in view of a window where you can watch for visitors. I prefer the kitchen window- bird watching makes dishes easier to clean!**
- 6. Keep a nature journal- this way you can keep track of when birds most like to visit, and what species are visiting. Enjoy!**

What to look for:

Some birds will land on your bird feeder and eat directly off of it. Others will prefer eating the seeds and peanut butter that have fallen to the ground, like grackles and mourning doves. Some birds are shy, and will only visit when the others have left. What types of birds do you see visiting? What time of day do they like best?

