



Milk Carton Bird Feeder

By: National Gardening Association Staff

For a family activity that all ages can enjoy, try birdwatching this spring!

Observing the colorful parade of birds that visit a feeder is a great way to introduce kids to the world of birds and to encourage their sense of environmental stewardship toward birds and other wild creatures. Making your own bird feeder from a recycled milk or juice carton is a quick and easy project to do with your kids that will bring birds flocking into your backyard for food.

Hang your bird feeder in a spot that allows for easy viewing from inside and have fun together learning to identify your feathered visitors. Start a family journal to keep track of the various species seen and encourage your kids to note the bird behaviors and interactions they observe as well.



To help you figure out who's who in the bird world invest in a good field guide – there are some excellent kid-oriented ones available – or download the free bird ID app Merlin to your smart phone. **Then get watching!**

Materials and Tools Needed

- Half-gallon coated milk or juice carton with pour spout (keep plastic cap on pour spout)
- Permanent marker or wax pencil
- Craft knife
- Ruler
- Hand-held hole punch (optional)
- (1) 18-inch long ¼-inch diameter wooden dowel, cut into two 9-inch sections (available at a craft store)
- Length of twine for hanging the feeder (length will vary depending on where you hang your feeder)
- Bird seed, such as black oil sunflower seeds

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Directions

1 CLEAN YOUR CARTON

Wash and rinse your carton and let air dry.

2 CUT FEEDER OPENINGS

Using a marker or wax pencil and ruler, measure and outline the areas to cut out at each corner of the carton as shown in illustration 2.

Have an adult cut out the four openings with a craft knife.

3 ASSEMBLE THE PERCH

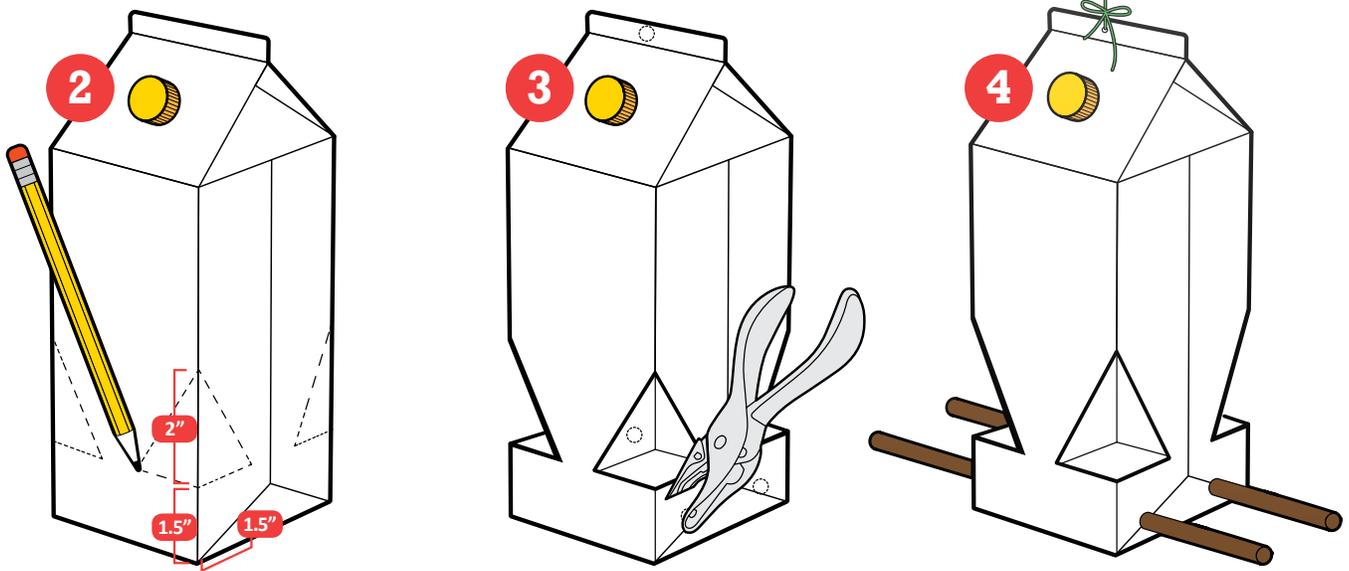
Using a hand-held hole punch or the tip of the craft knife, make $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch diameter holes at the base and top of the carton as shown in illustration 3.

Poke the 9-inch long dowel pieces through the holes at the base and top of the carton so that they run through the middle of the carton, protruding about $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches from either side of the carton to form perches as shown in illustration 4.

4 PREPARE TO HANG YOUR FEEDER

Thread a length of twine through the hole at the top of the carton (illustration 4). Make the length of twine suitable for the location where you plan to hang your feeder.

Fill the feeder with bird seed. Black oil sunflower seeds are relished by many birds and are a high-energy food, but a high-quality seed mix is also suitable.



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