TOILET PAPER ROLL BIRD FEEDERS

Chances are your family has a lot of toilet paper rolls building up right now! This is a great way to put them to a fun use while helping the earth and learning about birds.

Birds are lovely to look at and listen to, but they are also earth's important helpers! Birds help to keep our planet's systems in balance- They contribute to the biodiversity of plant life by pollinating plants, dispersing seeds, and recycling nutrients back into the earth. They also help to control insect outbreaks by snacking on bugs, and create important nesting vessels for other animals. But something we don't often think about is that birds help rid the world of disease through scavenger "clean-up" services!

How can we give back to these lovely earth-stewards and help their mission? By feeding them! Making Toilet Paper Roll Bird Feeds is fun, creates rewarding sensory experiences, and provides opportunities for continued learning through bird observations and nature journaling.

MATERIALS
Toilet Paper Roll
Bird Seed
Butter Knife or Spoon
Plate
Nut or Seed Butter
Optional: String/Ribbon

STEPS

Gather your materials! Pour a generous layer of bird seed onto your plate. Next, spread your nut or seed butter (i.e. peanut or almond butter; sunflower seed butter; etc.) onto the outside of your toilet paper roll using a butter knife or spoon. From here, roll your toilet paper roll in the bird seed. Continue rolling until all the nut/seed butter is covered with bird seed. If you have string/ribbon, cut about a 20-inch piece, and loop it through the toilet paper roll, then tie the ends into a knot. Finally, go outside and choose a home for your bird feeder! If you have a tree somewhere on or near your property, consider hanging it on a branch that you can easily see every day. If you do not, go for a walk in your neighborhood and find a tree you think birds would like to visit, and hang it from one of its branches. If you used string/ribbon, you can hang the bird feeder from a branch by that. If not, simply place the bird feeder onto a tree by sticking a branch through it!

No Birdseed? No Problem!

You can easily make your own birdseed by combining any of these ingredients:

- Sunflower Seeds
- Crushed Popcorn Kernels
- Crushed Peanuts
- Raisins

OPPORTUNITIES FOR EXPANDED LEARNING

Now that you have a feeder that will attract birds in your neighborhood, consider engaging in bird watching activities! Quietly observe your feeder each day, and use a journal or notebook to write down or draw your observations. What do the birds that visit your feeder look like? What colors are they? How are they different from one another? How are they similar? What sounds do they make? What are their habits- Do they visit during a specific time of day? Do they respond to sun or shade? Do they interact with the tree or other organisms around them?

Consider making a few different feeders using different bird seed ingredients, and comparing the activity at each of them. Do the different feeders attract different birds or activity?

Research the birds you see in books, field guides, or the internet to identify them and learn more about them, and why they like living in your neighborhood!

Fun & Quirky Bird Facts:
https://www.sciencekids.co.nz/sciencefacts/animals/bird.html
https://www.coolkidfacts.com/bird-facts/
https://www.kidzone.ws/animals/birds1.htm
https://www.insider.com/interesting-bird-facts-2018-12#baby-hoatzins-have-tiny-claws-on-their-wings-2

Bird Identification Resources:
https://www.allaboutbirds.org/news/
http://www.birdsandblooms.com/birding/birding-basics/5-birding-apps/

LET'S STAY CONNECTED!

We'd love to see photos of your family doing
At-Home Nature Adventures!
Post your photos and videos on Instagram and Facebook
using our hashtags
#LAArboretumKids and #LAArboretumAtHome
for a chance to be featured on our social media pages.
Don't use social media? Just email us your footage at
brooke.applegate@arboretum.org.