

MAKE A NESTING BALL

Birds all around us are busy building nests this spring. These nests are *their* homes and places to keep first their eggs and soon their chicks safe.



What do birds use to build a nest?

Photo courtesy of Dmarquard <https://bit.ly/2KmhKDd>, CC BY-SA 3.0

And where do they get their supplies?



There are many types of bird nests. Watch this short clip from PBS Learning, shot at Yale's Peabody Museum of Natural History: <https://bit.ly/2xFOoxf>

What all birds have in common is that they have to find their building materials. You might have spotted a robin flying around with a twig, a piece of bark, flowers, or other natural materials. Many birds also use feathers they have plucked from their own bodies and you can even see them carry items we have left behind, such as tiny pieces of paper and plastic.

Interesting fact: In most bird species, the female bird builds the nest, although the male bird often helps.

Photo courtesy of [Kaarina Dillabough](https://bit.ly/2ywnfg4) <https://bit.ly/2ywnfg4>, CC BY-SA 2.0

Welcome some birds to your neighborhood and help them build a cozy home for their family.

Supplies

- Something to hold the nest material, such as a produce mesh bag (from onions, garlic, mandarins, etc.)
- Nesting materials (can include twigs, pine needles, dry grass clippings, moss, short pieces of yarn, little pieces of wool or cotton, feathers from an old coat or pillow, pet fur from your dog's or cat's brush)
- Scissors
- Twist tie
- Piece of string

*A typical robin weighs only about 2.7 ounces, roughly the weight of half an apple. Keep that in mind when collecting materials. If your twig is too heavy, the bird will not be able to carry it. **Do not use dryer lint (too many chemicals) or materials that will absorb water.***



Instructions

- Fill your nesting container with your materials. You might have to cut it to size.
- Close with a twist tie and hang it from a tree.
- Now wait for your neighborhood birds to come and “shop.”

Want to learn more about bird nests? A quick search on [Hoopla Digital](#) shows some titles:

Bird Nests by Stacy Tornio (two different editions)

A Bird in a Nest in a Tree by Yvonne Pearson

Birds Build Nests by Elizabeth Raum

Birds Build Nests by Elizabeth Raum shows nests built by a variety of birds from all over the world. It includes very simple instructions to build a model of a mud nest, a type of nest that cliff swallows build on the side of rocks.