

SEED & BEAN MOSAIC BIRD FEEDERS

Residents will create unique mosaics of birds using edible seeds for beautiful bird feeders! Eldergrow offers a therapeutic connection to nature where residents engage in meaningful ways – cognitively, socially, spiritually, emotionally, & physically.

Please amend this lesson to adapt to the abilities and interest of your residents. You know your residents best!

If you don't have an Eldergrow garden, you can still interact with nature by collecting flowers and leaves during a garden courtyard or nature walk. You can also safely enjoy nature from a window!

Wellness Objectives:

Objective 1: Resident will use motor skills (MS)

Objective 2: Resident will engage creative expression (CE)

Objective 3: Resident will engage cognitive stimulation (CS)

MATERIALS:



- Seeds - ½ cup of each (black oil sunflower seed, cracked corn, safflower seed, red beans, peanuts, peas, etc) (grocery, Dollar or hardware stores) (Sample of 4 small seed bags [here](#))
- Print out the **Bird Images** pages (or find ones you know your residents will like) & give blank paper for anyone wanting to draw their own birds/ designs
- Elmer's Glues
- Spoon for pouring seeds onto page
- Toothpicks or pencils, for poking down seeds
- Cardboard to mount the bird images onto
- Paint or colored pencils to add more color to the page
- Bowls or Paper Cups to hold the different types of seeds
- Merlin **Bird ID app** (for smartphones) or see our instructions for the **Feeder Watch** website if you have iPad or laptop (Bring speakers or arrange with community beforehand to use theirs.)
- Talking Points: "**Benefits of Birds**"
- *Optional: "How to Use the Bird Apps", if needed*

PREPARATION:

- If you have a garden, have residents gather around it, or at table by a window with a view of nature. Have journal ready for garden/nature observations.
- Pour the different seed types into bowls for residents to use. Set out materials, printed Bird Images, and Talking Points to the side.
- Have an example mosaic or photo to show residents to encourage them to join in the activity.

ACTIVITY DIRECTIONS – CHOOSE 1 OR ALL 3 PARTS:

1. “BENEFITS OF BIRDS” TALKING POINTS:

- If you have a garden, gather around it or your outdoor garden/courtyard so residents can make observations.
- Have any bird ID books or bird app ready to use and garden journal with pen for notes.
- With spring returning, birds will also be arriving in the outside gardens and yards and they will be hungry.
- Print out the Talking Points and have residents take turns reading the “Benefits of Birds” aloud. Encourage conversations that may be sparked by the photos!

2. ACTIVITY DIRECTIONS: CREATING BIRD FEEDER MOSAICS

Please see the short video on the Nature Connect portal for activity tips & tricks on this activity.

- Hand out the Bird Images that each resident participating would like to fill in with a mosaic, or they can draw their own bird images to fill in..
- Spread glue over a cardboard piece to fit each bird image and have residents attached their bird (can cut out the shape first) cardboard to create a stiff mosaic holder.
- Have each person work in one section at a time, adding a layer of glue where they want to start, and filling in with the one kind of seed before moving to a new section. It’s recommended to start with smaller more detailed sections first. Spread glue between the lines of sections.
- Some may find **pouring seeds** onto the glue with the spoons easier to do than placing individual seeds, especially for small seeds.
- Use a toothpick or pencil to press seeds down into the glue and adjust their position as needed.
- Add details in areas with out glue using paint or colored pencils (like the skinny feet or tree branches).
- Allow mosaics to sit on table or safe spot undisturbed for the rest of class.



3. BIRD APPS FOR BIRD CALLS

- Listen to bird calls and find out which birds might be in our backyards now- residents love this!
- Use the Merlin App (on smartphone, set up prior) or Feederwatch.org (iPad/laptop) to explore which birds might be found in your region & what their bird calls sound like!
 - Refer to our “**How to Use the Bird Apps**” document for extra help on set up.
- Take notes in a garden journal with highlights from the bird discussion
 - *What birds will return first and be heard calling for our spring?*
 - *Which bird are you hoping to see this year?*
 - *Does anyone have a favorite bird? Would anyone like to share their favorite bird story?*

CLOSING & AMENDMENTS FOR DIFFERENT LEVELS

Have your **garden journal ready** again to write down resident **comments, garden, or activity highlights**.

- If residents are tired or sleepy from dreary winter, warm up the crowd before you start observing the garden or reading the Talking Points. In the Daily Programming, you'll find some silly garden jokes or ask residents what their favorite songs are and create a playlist to start each lesson!
- For residents who are visually-impaired, **bring plants and objects to their eyes and describe** or place in their hands to explore. They may enjoy feeling the texture of a finished mosaic and each seed type.
- Assist as minimally as possible to the particular resident's ability. **This way it's a collaboration that plays to the resident's strengths, allowing them to be successful and fulfilled with the work they can do!**
- **Compare the different seeds** as well and make guesses which ones certain birds will want to eat the most.
- **Assist residents with walkers or wheelchairs** to either the Eldergrow garden, outside, or a window to make nature observations, and tend to the garden when possible. If a resident can't make it to the garden, **bring the garden to them** - take pruned leaves or plant parts in a bowl for them to explore!
- If some residents complete the lesson before others, you can ask them to **tend to their garden**, e.g. prune dead leaves or till/aerate the soil or help another resident who may need some extra help
- **For something a little more challenging for IL participants-** have residents try placing each seed on the glue using tweezers, or filling the entire page with a full mosaic design (like the one pictured below).
- Give everyone a round of happy applause for a job well done!

