



Decorate a Tree for the Birds!



Margaret Wise Brown, the author of *Goodnight Moon*, was the great-great-granddaughter of John and Margaretta Brown of Liberty Hall. In her holiday book, *The Little Fir Tree*, children decorate a tree with strings of berries, apples, and cookies for the birds. Here's how you can do the same!

Supplies and equipment for berry strings

- Cranberries
- Colander
- Button or craft thread
- Scissors
- 1-inch plastic rings or steel washers
- Large-eye needle (such as an embroidery or tapestry needle)

Instructions

1. Place the cranberries in the colander and rinse with cold water. Discard spoiled berries.
2. Cut an 18-inch piece of thread and tie one end to a ring or washer.
3. Thread the needle with the other end of the thread.
4. Push the needle through a cranberry and slide the berry to the ring end of the thread.
5. Repeat until the thread is almost full, then tie a ring to the end.
6. Use the rings to attach the berry string to the branches of a small tree.

Note: It's safer for the birds to use several short strings because they are less likely to create tangles when the fruit is gone. For berry substitutions and other tips, check out <https://www.thespruce.com/bird-garland-project-diy-385752>



Supplies and equipment for apple ornaments

- Large apples
- Cutting board
- Sharp knife
- Waxed paper
- Plastic drinking straw
- Peanut butter
- Table knife
- Rimmed baking sheet
- Bird seed
- Brightly colored yarn or string

Instructions for apple ornaments

1. Rinse an apple and place it on the cutting board, stem side up.
2. Use the sharp knife to cut vertical slices and lay them on a sheet of waxed paper.
3. Make a hole near the top of each slice by pushing the straw through the flesh about 1/4 inch below the stem.
4. Spread peanut butter on one side of each slice.
5. Pour a thin layer of bird seed in the baking sheet and press the peanut butter side of the apple into the seed.
6. Tie a loop of yarn or string through the hole. (You may need to use the straw to push seed out of the hole.)
7. Repeat with other apple slices.

Note: For crafters with peanut allergies, substitute other nut butters or vegetable shortening. Be sure to check the bird seed for nuts as well!

Supplies and equipment for cookie cutter ornaments

- Unflavored gelatin packets
- Large mixing bowl
- Measuring cup
- Bird seed
- Mixing spoon
- Rimmed baking sheet
- Waxed paper
- 1-inch deep cookie cutters
- Plastic drinking straw
- Scissors
- Brightly colored yarn or string

Instructions for cookie cutter ornaments

1. Pour two packets of gelatin (about 2 tablespoons) into the mixing bowl.
2. Add 2/3 cup of boiling water and stir until gelatin is dissolved.
3. Add 2 cups of bird seed and mix for 2-3 minutes, until most of the gelatin is absorbed.
4. Line the baking sheet with waxed paper and arrange the cookie cutters on it. Fill the cutters with seed mixture, using the back of the spoon to press in the mixture.
5. Cut the straw into 2-inch pieces and push them through the seed mixture to make a hole about 1/4 inch from the top of the cutter.
6. Allow the mixture to dry for at least 4 hours before removing the straws.
7. Flip the cutters so the seed mixture can dry thoroughly. Then carefully remove the cutters.
8. Tie a loop of yarn or string through the hole.