



Make a Bird's Nest!

Before you start:

Let's learn a bit about bird's nests:

- Birds build nests to lay their eggs in and keep their chicks safe in until they can fly.
- Generally when a bird lays its eggs in the nest it will sit on them to keep them warm- cosy!
- After the eggs hatch the chicks remain in the nest and will rely on their parents for food until they learn how to fly and feed themselves.
- Whenever mam or dad arrives back with some juicy worms the chicks will all open their beaks and make lots of noise to show they are hungry!
- Most birds build nests in trees or bushes where they are out of sight.
- Nests come in many shapes and sizes but usually have a hollow area in the middle to stop the eggs from rolling out.
- They are often made from twigs, grass, mud, fur, feathers, moss and anything else the birds can find.



The Challenge

The challenge is to build your own bird nest and place it in a tree, bush or other suitable place. The nest must be able to hold an egg safely. You can use

anything you find outside on the ground (no breaking branches) that a bird would be able to pick up and use (no plant pots etc!). Decide what style, shape and size nest you will make. Think about how it will fit in the tree or bush. What is the best shape to keep an egg in without it falling out? When you are finished there are two tests:

1. Is it safe from predators? Ask someone in your family to be a fox. They have 2 mins to see if they can easily find and reach any nests (they must pretend to be as tall as a fox!)
2. Is it in a stable position? Now ask your tester to transform into a strong wind. Place a real egg or small ball in the nest and then gently shake the branch the nest is on or blow as hard as you can towards the nest. If the egg doesn't fall out it has passed the test!

Top Tips...

- When choosing where to put the nest pick somewhere stable (won't wobble easily). The closer to the tree trunk it is the better. The further away from the trunk you are the more likely the branch is to snap or get moved around easily in the wind (same rules apply if you are climbing a tree!).
- Look for "y" or "u" shapes in a tree or bush. These are ideal for placing nests. They occur as a branch is growing from the trunk.
- When making the nest it is often easiest to build it directly in the tree. One technique is to layer your material over each other in a triangle, square or circular shape. Start off with big sticks and then get smaller and smaller. You can add softer material like grass, feathers, moss etc on top and mould it into the shape you want.
- Or you may be able to find some bendy material you can weave into a nest before you place it in the tree. Branches from silver birch tree, ivy or the "sticky back" plant (cleavers) can be used easily to make into a variety of shapes or to use like rope to tie parts of your nest together.