



A Friend In Feed

Full Seed Ahead - A tray birdfeeder from one board - great beginner's project

As winter approaches it's harder to go barefoot, but you don't hear any complaints from birds. It's a mystery how they avoid frostbite in their little toes and ankles. In winter, many birds burn up a third of their bodyweight **OVERNIGHT**, just trying to stay warm. Birds spend the night huddled in hedges. Then when they wake up, freezing and stiff, breakfast might be buried under five inches of snow. But do they complain? No, they sing.



It's time to give something back to our feathered buddies. Build this simple tray feeder and stock it with their favourite treats.

Materials:

- 1"x8" cedar - one 8' board [**Note:** You can also use pine. It's not as weather resistant as cedar, but will still give years of service.]
- 3' and 5' lengths of threaded galvanized steel pipe
- Galvanized 4" flange
- Galvanized cap
- Galvanized coupling
- 18 - 1 1/4" zinc-plated wood screws
- Slinky

Tools

- Measuring tape
- Pencil
- Countersink bit
- Drill
- Hand saw
- Speed square
- Sledgehammer
- Pipe wrenches or tongue-in-groove pliers
- Optional: Finder-driver bit

Tools you might not be familiar with:



Countersink bit



Finder-driver bit



Tongue & groove pliers



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Steps:



Cut off any bad ends before cutting the pieces for the feeder.



Mark the board for ripping at one and one half inches using a speed square.



'Rip' a board to one and one half inches using a rip saw.

From the 8' cedar board, cut the following:

- Two 24" lengths to form floor of tray
- One 18" support piece
- Two edge-pieces measuring 1 1/2" by 16"
- Two edge-pieces measuring 1 1/2 by 24"



Use a shorter piece to support and tie the two floor pieces together.

Lay the two 24" lengths side by side. Center the 18" support piece on top of the first two pieces.



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Use zinc or other weather resistant screws.



Be sure to countersink for the head of the screw to prevent splitting.



Attach the support with the screws.

Using a countersink bit, drill a 1" deep hole at each corner of the support piece. A countersink bit carves out extra wood to make room for the head of the screw. If you don't countersink the head of the screw, the metal will force the wood fibers apart, splitting the board at the ends, and compromising the durability of your project.

Drive a 1 1/4" zinc screw into each of the holes. If you have trouble keeping the drill steady, try using a finder-driver bit. It takes care of the aiming, so all you have to do is push.



Pre-drill before attaching the sides or ends.



Attach the sides at three locations.



Attach the end at four locations.

Turn the assembly over. Attach the edge pieces, screwing them together at the corners - remember to countersink!

Drive two additional screws along each of the short sides to join the edge-pieces to the floor of the feeding tray. Drive three more screws along each of the long sides to connect the edge-pieces to the floor.



Drill 4, half-inch holes - one in each corner.



Drain holes are necessary to keep the seeds dry.



Top of completed tray.

Drill four 1/2" drainage holes in the floor of the tray. Drainage holes keep the seed from getting moldy or starting to sprout in the tray. Smaller drainage holes get gummed up with seed, so 1/2" holes work best.





Center the flange on the bottom of the feeder.



Use a slinky as an alternative to a cone to deter squirrels.



Place the flange over the end of the slinky.



Attach the flange with screws over the end of the slinky.

Mount the threaded flange in the center of the base of the feeding tray, securing one end of a Slinky under two of the flange screws.



Screw the three quarter inch pipe into the flange.



Galvanized flange and pipe attached to the tray.

Screw the 5' galvanized pipe into the flange.

Turn your feeder right side up.

The Slinky hangs down the length of the pole, making an ingenious squirrel-discourager.

(Mind you, it won't do much good if you set up the feeding tray too close to the house.

The squirrels leap off the roof and land on the tray. I indulge them, since they are barefoot.)





Use a short pipe - 3 to 4 feet long - to drive into the ground.



Put a cap on the end of the short pipe to protect the threads.



Drive the capped short pipe into the ground using a sledge hammer.



Attach a three quarter inch galvanized coupling to the short pipe.

To mount your feeder in the ground, screw the threaded cap onto the 3' length of threaded galvanized pipe. Pound the pipe two feet into the ground using a sledgehammer. Remove the cap and replace it with the coupling. Then screw the pole-mounted feeder into the coupling and tighten the coupling using a pair of pipe wrenches or tongue-in-groove pliers.



Finished birdfeeder with slinky, pole and coupling.

Remember to put some seed out just before it starts to get dark, around 4:00. The littlest birds have to eat late in the day in order to survive the coldest nights. Throw out the odd peanut for the squirrel. Or even the normal peanut.



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