

Butterfly Feeder



The Thick-billed Vireo, and many other birds, enjoy munching on insects. Scientists estimate that worldwide, birds eat more than 400 million tonnes of insects each year! Insects provide birds with protein- which gives them energy, calcium- which we know is important for strong bones but also for growing eggshells, and water.

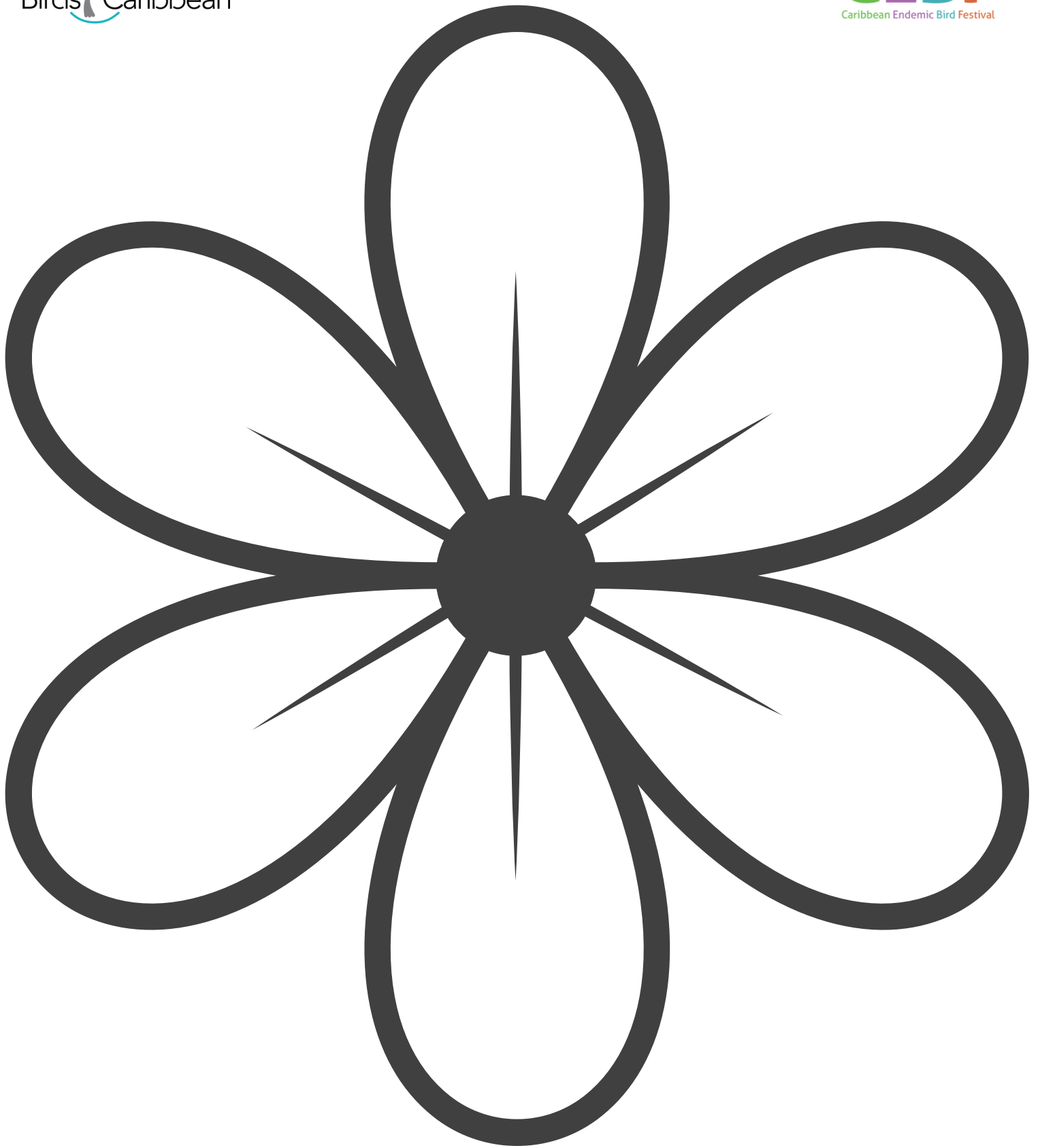
Now, you may be spooked by the thought of encouraging insects into your backyard or garden. But in addition to providing food for birds, butterflies, beetles, bees and other larger insects can feed on the insects that are actually pests like aphids and caterpillars. They also help to pollinate your plants!

Here is an easy to make butterfly feeder for your garden.

You will need an adult to help you find and use the following:

- An old postcard or any other sturdy material that is easy to draw on and cut (cereal box, shoebox)
- Pencil
- Coloring pencils, markers
- Screw bottle cap
- Straw or craft stick
- Glue
- Scissors





- Sponge or cotton balls
- Flower template (optional)
- Sugar
- Water

Instructions

1. Mix 1 part sugar with 4 parts water and boil for a few minutes until the sugar dissolves.
2. Allow butterfly nectar to cool before using.
3. Draw a flower shape onto the card. Or print the flower template and stick onto the card.
4. Using bright colors; blue, purple, orange, yellow etc., color in the flower.
5. Carefully cut out the flower. Ask an adult to help you with this step if needed.
6. Once the flower has been cut out, stick the bottle cap to the center of the flower using the glue.
7. Allow glue to dry.
8. Stick straw or craft stick to the back of the flower. This will act as the stem.
9. Allow glue to dry.
10. Dip cotton balls in the butterfly nectar and place in the bottle cap. You will want to ensure that the cotton ball fits snug so it will not fall off. If using a sponge, cut a piece of sponge that will also fit snugly into the bottle cap.
11. If you are not using butterfly nectar, add pieces of the overripe fruits to the bottle cap.
12. You can stick your butterfly feeder directly into your garden bed or flower pot.

Other ways to welcome insects into your yard:



Have a Wildflower Patch. If your garden isn't big enough for a full-blown meadow, even a small patch of wildflowers are great for pollinating insects.

Plant Native. Although adult insects will take nectar from many flowers, larvae can often only live on very specific native plants. So choose natives where you can to encourage insects for birds.



Get Messy. Weeds and decaying vegetation provide food and habitat for insects and foraging grounds for birds. So try not to be too tidy in the garden.

Ditch the Pesticides. Pesticides kill insects, but they can have unintended ill effects on other wildlife too.

