

# Help Birds Build Their Nests!

Yellow-shouldered Blackbirds use grass and twigs to build their nests. Other birds that are found in your backyard also use grass, twigs and other materials to build their nests! They use a lot of energy flying and searching for the nesting materials they need.



Bananaquit nest. Photo by Steven G. Johnson



Green-throated Carib nest. Photo by Mark Yokoyama

You can lend a helping hand to the birds in your area by supplying them with simple nesting materials. All you need to do is fill a mesh bag (like the kind onions or potatoes are packaged in) and hang it outside.

With an adult, gather the following from around your home and garden:

Empty mesh bag

Sticks or twigs OR broken bristles from a coconut broom

Torn pieces of cotton balls

Moss

Strips of tree bark

Grass clippings

Dried leaves/ Dried plant stems

**DO NOT use plants that have been treated with toxic chemicals like pesticides or weedicides**

## Build A Nest Challenge

Things can get messy, so work outside if possible. Using the same materials listed above, try to build a nest that can safely hold one egg. Test your 'nest' by blowing gently on it and picking it up. If it falls apart, continue working on it until it is safe to hold one egg. You can ask your friends and family to build nests of their own.

**Who will be able to build the sturdiest nest in the shortest amount of time?**

1. Fill the mesh bag with the materials. You will want to have the materials stick out of the mesh so birds can easily see and remove them.
2. Hang the bag in a location that the birds can get to without being disturbed by people or pets like cats and dogs.
3. At a safe distance, so that you don't disturb them, watch the birds collect the materials for their nests. Can you tell if any bird has a favourite nesting material? You can use the table below to write down what you see.





Describe or draw the bird you see here	Nesting material removed from the mesh bag