

Tomato Cage Bird Bath

You can't have a bird-friendly garden without a spot for the birds to drink from, bathe in or just cool themselves down on a hot day. Like humans, all birds need a reliable source of clean water which means you may also attract birds that don't eat seeds or drink nectar, to your garden.

Traditional concrete bird baths sold in garden shops are nice to look at but they are not the best type for birds. They are often too deep, glazed ones may be too slippery, and they are often hard to clean. The best birdbaths mimic nature's birdbaths which are puddles and shallow pools of water in slow streams. They also have a gentle slope which allows birds to wade into the water.

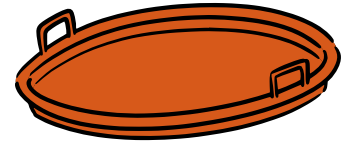
You can make your own birdbath using materials from around your house and yard.



Greater Antillean Grackle enjoying a bath (Jamaica). ©Emma Lewis

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

- an old garbage bin lid, flower pot drip tray or serving tray
- rocks or pebbles
- Any size and color tomato cage*
- Wire cutters



*If you don't have a tomato cage, an old flower pot, vase or stack of rocks can work as the pedestal too.

Instructions:

1. Cut the wire off right above the bottom ring of the tomato cage so that it is approximately the same height or slightly lower than the plants in your garden. You can skip this if you have a larger garden.
2. Insert the tomato cage in the garden and just lay the old garbage bin lid/flower pot drip tray/ serving tray on top.
3. Place rocks or pebbles in the bath to make it extra sturdy and provide additional perches for the birds.
4. Fill with water.



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Remember birds like shallow water. The water should be no deeper than 0.5 to 1 inch at the edges.

Keeping your bird bath safe for the birds & you!

Bathing birds may leave behind dirty feathers and droppings, making the bath increasingly unsanitary for other birds. Grackles ('blackbirds') often drop their nestlings' fecal sacs into birdbaths, another cause of filthy water.

Algae grows much more quickly when the water isn't cleaned frequently.

Also mosquitoes most likely to transmit West Nile virus often lay their eggs in bird baths.

By frequently changing the water, you won't give the eggs time to hatch or for the larvae to emerge.



Cut this out and
use it as a reminder!

