

Suet Feeder

Created by Gary Baltz, Article written by Dottie Baltz

This style suet feeder is very popular with woodpeckers as they are able to balance their tails on the wood while feeding and are able to cling to the feeder better due to the hardware cloth that is used. You can adjust the length of the lumber used based on how many suet cakes you want it to hold at one time. One or two cakes at a time seems to work the best.

What you will need:

- 1 - 2x8 piece of cedar or fir cut to 21" long
- 1 - 3/4" thick piece of cedar or fir cut to 4" W x 12" L
- 2 - pieces of 1/4" hardware cloth cut to 6-1/4" W x 11" L
- 28 - #5 3/8" aluminum cloth staples
- 1 - 30" piece of nylon rope
- 2 - 1/2" screw eyes
- 1 - 3/4" drill bit

Recommended Tools:

- Saw
- Hammer
- Drill
- Sandpaper or rasp
- Heavy Duty Scissors
- Ruler
- Pencil

Instructions:

1. Take a 2x8 piece of cedar or fir and cut it to 21" long. Keep in mind that a 2x8 is actually 1-1/2" x 7-1/4".
2. At one end of the board, center and cut out an opening large enough for two suet cakes. The opening should be approximately 9" long x 5-1/4" wide.
3. At the other end of the board, taper the end using a table saw or jig saw. The easiest way to do this is to find the center of the board and then measure 1-1/2 inches on either side of that center point and make a mark with a pencil on both sides. Starting at the top of the feeder (the end you have already cut out) measure down 9-1/2 inches and make a mark. Using a ruler connect the dots. This will be the angle of wood that you will be cutting away. At this point, you can get creative and router the edge or just soften the edge with a rasp or sandpaper as we have done in the example shown.
4. Cut the hardware cloth so that you have two pieces that are 6-1/4" wide x 11" long.
5. Staple one piece of the hardware cloth to each side of the board to cover the opening. Make sure the hardware cloth is flush with the end of the board that is cut out and hangs a couple of inches below the cut out. Woodpeckers will cling to this to eat, which is why you want it to be longer than your opening. Using a hammer, pound in the aluminum staples to secure the hardware cloth about every 1-1/2 - 2 inches. We used 14 staples for each side. You can also use a staple gun, but we have found that this type of hammered in staple works better.

6. Attach one screw eye to each side of the feeder about one inch down from the top at the same end as the hardware cloth.
7. Next, cut a 3/4" thick piece of cedar or fir so that it measures 4" wide x 12" long. This will become the top of the feeder. You may sand, rasp, or router the edges, to soften them, if you like.
8. Using a drill bit about the same size as the rope you have selected, drill one hole on either side of this board, centered on the edge about 1-1/2 inches in from the edge of the board. Each hole should line up with the screw eyes once the top of the feeder is in place.
9. Thread the rope through each hole on the board. On each side, tie the rope to the screw eye. If you have trouble tying a knot with the rope you have chosen, pick a smaller diameter rope or you can use some wire and a crimping tool to hold it instead.

Fill with store bought or homemade suet cakes and enjoy. This feeder can also be used to hold shelled or unshelled peanuts as well, another favorite of woodpeckers as well as chickadees, blue jays and other birds.