

Sussex Wildlife Trust has already received over £3,000 from Vine House Farm, the official bird seed partner of the Royal Society of Wildlife Trusts.

Every time anyone in Sussex buys their bird seed from Vine House Farm, a donation is triggered to donate a generous 5% of the purchase price to us.

Vine House Farm in Lincolnshire is totally dedicated to bird conservation, especially to reversing the decline in farmland birds. Much of the seed is grown on site and is of the highest quality. Nicholas Watts, who runs the family owned business, has received an MBE for his services to farming and conservation and his daughter Lucy is carrying on the good work managing their bird seed business.

Nicholas Watts told *Wildlife*:

'Our aim is to be able to farm sympathetically to wildlife while still being able to maintain a profitable farming operation.

'Every spring I carry out bird population surveys in our local area. It gives us a fantastic insight into how the conservation measures that we have implemented have benefited species.

'Our tree sparrow population is doing well and has been especially successful where we have dug a series of ponds. These ponds not only provided water but a huge increase in diversity of plant species compared to other areas of the farm.

'Spring Watch this year highlighted the fact that the cuckoo numbers are down. Here at Vine House Farm we have also seen a decline in their numbers but this year saw five cuckoos all vying for territory along the edge of one of the hedges we planted ten years ago.'

Please take time to look at the Vine House Farm catalogue which will be included with your January edition of *Wildlife*. By purchasing their seed you will be helping Sussex birds and supporting our conservation work.

If you want to place an order now please visit www.vinehousefarm.co.uk



© Vine House Farm

Feed the birds

Bird Feed Cakes

Makes about 6

You will need:

- Six clean empty yogurt pots
- String
- Scissors
- Pencil
- Six small sticks or lollipop sticks
- 300g bird seed
- 200g peanuts (must be unsalted)
- 50g dry fruit (optional)
- 100g fat e.g. lard or suet
- Mixing bowl
- Saucepan
- Wooden spoon



Turn your yogurt pot so it is face down on a solid surface. Pierce a hole in the centre of the top with

the pencil or a sharp ended implement. Children should be assisted with this process.

Cut a piece of string that is about three times longer than the depth of your yogurt pot and tie the stick to one end.

Feed the other end of the string through the yogurt pot and out of the hole you have made. Pull the string through until the stick is over the opening of the yogurt pot.

Continue the previous steps with the remaining yogurt pots and place them on a baking tray.

In a bowl place the bird seed, nuts and dried fruit. Make a well in the centre of the bowl. (Always ensure you are using nuts and seed produced specially for birds as others may contain additives that are harmful).



Place 100g of your fat into a saucepan and melt over a low heat, stirring occasionally with a wooden spoon.

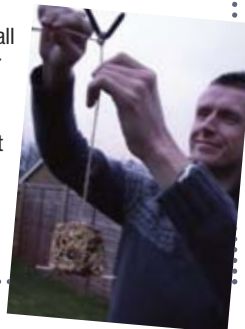
Pour the melted fat into the bowl and stir until thoroughly mixed.

Spoon the mixture into the yogurt pots and pat down firmly.

Place your tray of yogurt pots in a cool dry place to set. This should take about two hours.

When set turn them upside down and tap firmly on a solid surface. Pull out of the pot making sure the string is still attached.

Hang your bird food ball on a tree or feeder pole and watch to see what birds come for dinner.



Bird feed scoop

Designed by Peter Burton
Woods Mill Hit Squad volunteer

What you need:

- Plastic milk container with handle (1 or 2 litre)
- Permanent marker pen
- Scissors with a pointed end
- 45 degree set square or wooden angle marker
- Small screwdriver or sharp implement
- Sandpaper



How to make:

Children should be supervised throughout this process

Remove the label from the milk container and wash thoroughly.

From the side of the container furthest from the handle mark a line up towards the handle using your angled guide.



Take your sharp implement or screwdriver and make a hole along your marked line.

Now use your scissors to cut out the triangular section.

Any rough or sharp edges can be smoothed with a small piece of sandpaper.

Your scoop is now ready to use.

Remove the lid to use as a smaller funnel.

You can also use the part you cut out as a feeder. Attach to the wall to create a shelf for food,



Squirrel proof containers for fat balls, feeder poles, seeds and nuts are all available to buy direct from Vine House Farm (VHF) – and for every purchase you make VHF will donate 5% of the total to Sussex Wildlife Trust.

Visit: www.vinehousefarm.co.uk

Thanks to Elli Saunders our photo library assistant who worked with volunteers to produce this photographic guide to making bird cake and feed scoops