

# Creative ideas

A large amount of leisure and recreation time is spent in the garden. Make the most of your garden by creating useful and decorative items, such as bird feeders and tree swings. Water Wise shows you how.



Besides plants, every garden needs certain practical equipment as well as decorative ornaments for both the garden and patio. Items you can make include fruit fly traps, clay pots, wind chimes, wooden carvings, beaded ornaments, swings, clay bird baths, as well as a host of other things. Water Wise gives you some interesting ideas.

## A tyre swing

These provide an ideal way of recycling used tyres and are ideal for young children. This is how to do it:

- Use an old tyre to make a swing.
- Cut away half the tyre surface but keep the sides attached.
- By attaching ropes to the ‘handles’, you can make a swing.
- If you are more inventive, keep the cut away tyre pieces attached, and make them into an animal head and tail (Fig 1).
- If you want to, you can brighten up the tyre-swing by painting it.

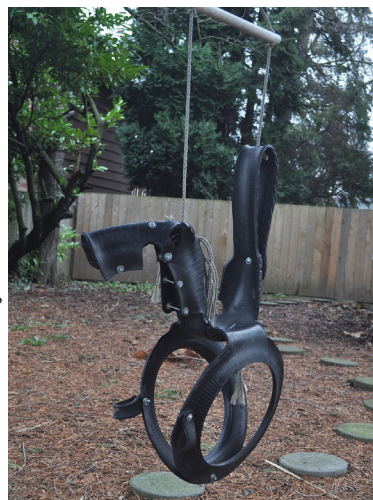


Fig 1. A creative tyre-swing for the garden.

## Make a bottle bird feeder

If you are handy with wood, you can make a pretty bird feeder. Alternatively, if you can find calabashes, you can make bird feeders from them. It is also very easy to make a bird feeder using a 2-litre plastic bottle and a few wooden dowel sticks (Fig 2). Follow the steps below to make your own bird-feeder:

- Cut two ‘openings’ on opposite sides of the bottle, about two thirds of the way up the bottle. This will allow birds to access the seed places in the bottom of the bottle.
- At random places along the height of the bottle, make two opposite holes and push the dowel sticks through these holes. These will form platforms for the birds to perch on.
- Make two small holes opposite one another in the neck of the bottle. Run a short dowel stick through these holes and tie a piece of string around the dowel stick. Run the stick through the top of the bottle neck and use the string to hang the bottle in a suitable tree.
- Fill the bottom of your bird feeder with seed and wait for your visitors to arrive.



Fig 2. A creative bird feeder made from one 2-litre plastic bottle.

## Supports for plants

Many perennials – for example, alstroemerias – have a floppy growth habit and need to be supported to keep them upright. It is easy to make a framework to support them out of coat hanger wire. A four-legged support can be wrapped around the plant and then linked together (Fig 3). Use coat hanger wire to make two circular pieces 1 m in length long and the four legs 70 cm in height. Peg the legs into the ground around the plant and wrap the longer pieces of wire around the legs to keep the supports together. Use thin wire pieces to attached the circular wire pieces to the legs. You can also make taller and narrower supports for tomatoes.



Fig 3. Brightly coloured wire plant supports add a splash of colour to this vegetables garden.

These creative and imaginative designs not only encourage recycling but can also brighten up a garden of any shape or size. Decorating the garden with homemade designs can be fun for the whole family.

