

Food Garland

This is a wonderful activity to do around the holidays. It gives the kids a chance to “decorate” the outdoors and feed the birds at the same time.

The objective is:

- to become aware of the needs of birds
- to learn some foods that the birds can eat

Background:	<p>The winter months can take its toll on birds and animals. Too much snow can cover the food they need. Early frost, too much or not enough rain all contribute to the food supply.</p> <p>We can feed the birds by setting out seed, other birds prefer fruit or nuts. This activity allows children to decorate the outdoors in a way that is helpful for the birds.</p>
Skills:	The children should be able to handle a large darning needle to thread the fruit and popcorn.
Age:	Grades 1 – adult
Material	Dental floss, fresh cranberries, popped popcorn (you may try other fruits and unshelled peanuts, too), large darning needles.
Activity:	<p>Find out which birds stay in your area throughout the winter. Determine if they eat fruit and nuts. Some birds prefer a certain fruit, other fruit eaters are not choosy. Most fruit eating birds will eat cranberries. Birds that really on grain and seeds will eat the popcorn. Jays will eat the peanuts, as will the squirrels if they can reach the garland.</p> <p>Give each child a length of dental floss threaded through a darning needle. Older children should be able to thread the needles themselves. Have the children string the cranberries, popcorn, and other fruits or nuts onto the string. Tie off each garland, or tie them together to make one large garland.</p> <p>Have the children hang the garlands on the trees surrounding your school or home. Observe the garland to see which birds come to it.</p>
Discussion:	How long do you think the food will last? Which birds will come to eat at the garlands? Will other animals try to eat this food? Why is it good to feed the birds during winter?
Brownie	Earth and Sky – The Sky’s My Home!
Junior Badge:	Ecology #4