

Large Tin Can & Fence Board Bird Feeder

Made from a large recycled tin can and a commonly available fence board, this study and inexpensive bird feeder requires minimum carpentry skills and can be made in as little as one hour. Cost is less than \$10.



Materials:

- 1–6 ft long, 1” thick x 6” wide cedar or cypress fence board (a recycled board can also be used, including old weathered treated boards. New treated boards, however, are not recommended.)
- 1–1-gallon tin can (top removed)
- 3–#10 x 1/2”-long round-headed screws
- 46–7/8” long #17 wire nails
- 24” length of 1/4” cotton or nylon cord

Tools needed:

- Hand saw (and table saw to make ripping boards easier)
 - 1/4” and 1/8” drill bits and drill
 - Household tin can punch (makes triangular holes in tin cans)
 - Screwdriver* (phillips or flat head, as needed for screw used)
- * A magnetized tip helps to hold and guide screws into can.

Board Cutting Instructions

1. Cut board into seven pieces as follows. Starting from the square bottom of a dog-eared board, cut six pieces of equal length. Note: length of each piece should be equal to twice the width of the fence board (typically=5-5/8”) or about 11-1/4” long. Retain the seventh, dog-eared piece.
2. Rip two of the six pieces into four strips each. Hint: rip boards in half and then in half again. For a 5-5/8” wide board and a typical saw kerf of 3/16”, these pieces will be about 1-3/8” wide.

Can Preparation

3. Drill a single 1/4” hole in the center of the can bottom and three, 1/8” holes equally-spaced around the outside “valley” of the can bottom (about 1/2” from edge).
4. Using the can opener, punch six holes along the outside bottom edge of the can (as shown). For a standard one-gallon can, holes should be about 3-1/8” apart. Note: this process will cause the can sides to be indented inward at each hole. After holes are punched, use the handle of the screwdriver or a piece of wood to push can sides outward again (from the inside). Be CAREFUL not to cut yourself!

Assembly

1. The top and bottom of the feeder consist of two wide boards held together by two narrow boards, positioned about 2" from the edge. Note: stagger nails about 2" apart across the board to avoid splitting the board and to add strength to the assembly. Note: if spitting becomes a problem, pre-drill nail holes with 1/16" bit.
2. Drill a 1/4" hole in the center of the assembled top and bottom.
3. In turn, align the can bottom with the hole on both the top and bottom and outline the can in pencil to aid in final assembly.
4. Use the remaining narrow strips to create a border around the top side of the bottom of the feeder. Use full length strips on two opposite sides. Cut remaining strips to allow 1/4" gap at each corner to allow for drainage.
5. Position and attached the dog-eared or short piece on the underside of the top, ensuring that it stays within the inside of the can's outline that you previously made. This piece will "stop" the top from sliding off the can when in use.
6. Drill a 1/4" hole through this stopper piece to match the one in the top.
7. Position the can bottom on the feeder bottom and attached using three #10 round-headed screws.
8. Tie a double knot in one end of the cord and thread it through the feeder bottom, tin can, and feeder top. Create an end knot and a loop at remaining end to hang feeder.
9. If you like, paint the outside of the can to brighten it up. If not, a thin layer of rust will form, but the can will last for years!!!

