Craft a colorful birdhouse

What you need
- Clean empty milk carton
- Fine sandpaper
- Craft knife
- 10 wide craft sticks, optional
- Cap from a jar to trace (about 1.5-inch diameter)
- Pencil
- Ruler
- Waterproof glue or hot glue
- Gesso or white acrylic paint, optional
- Paintbrush
- Scissors
- Acrylic paint
- Low-tack masking tape
- String to hang, optional
- Skinny dowel or skewer, optional

Instructions

1. Lightly sand the milk carton to remove the glossy finish so the paint and glue will adhere. Cut off the plastic spout if there is one (have an adult help with the craft knife).

2. Cut the craft sticks in half and glue 5 halves on each side of the top of the carton to create a roof. (You can skip this step if you don’t have craft sticks.)

3. Trace a circle onto one side of the carton using a jar cap. Then cut the entrance hole with the craft knife (get an adult to help). If you don’t use craft sticks for the roof, cover the spout hole by gluing the circle scrap over it.

4. Prime the outside of the milk carton with gesso or white acrylic paint to conceal the printing. Note: Priming will make your final paint colors look brighter, but this step is optional.

5. After the primer dries, paint the outside of the birdhouse. Use one color to paint the roof and sides and let dry. Then use low-tack masking tape to make a neat edge (about a third of the way up from the bottom of the carton, on the roof, or both) before painting the bottom part of the carton or roof a second color. Paint on whatever other decorations you like.

6. If you’d like to add string so you can hang your birdhouse, carefully push the pointy tip of the scissors blade into the top of the carton edge to make a small hole for the string. If you’d like to add a perch, push the scissors tip about an inch below the entrance hole and press the dowel or skewer in.

Tip: If you want to attract a particular bird in your area, search online to find out what size entrance hole that bird prefers, where the entrance should be, and whether or not you should add a perch. One helpful website you can try is audubon.org.

Did you know?
Native Americans used hollow gourds as birdhouses.

Eco tip of the week

Eat less meat to help the planet

Many families are helping the Earth by eating less meat and adding more plant-based foods to their meals. This is important because the production of meat is responsible for more than 50% of the planet’s greenhouse gases (gases that remain in Earth’s atmosphere and trap heat, causing the planet to warm up). You don’t have to eliminate meat entirely to make a difference. One way to start? Try Meatless Mondays, a campaign that has become increasingly popular in recent years. Every Monday, instead of burgers or chicken, try rice and beans, vegetable pizza, or other meat-free meals. To find recipes, go to mondaycampaigns.org.