



eXtreme Birdhouse

A 4-H Art and Architecture Event

A totally cool bird moves into your neighborhood. It's a blue bird with a fabulous sense of style. Would you expect it to live in a plain old wooden box? No way!

Your challenge is to construct the absolutely coolest birdhouse possible. It doesn't have to be a *real* birdhouse. Don't worry about it being weatherproof, so it can be made of any material. And there is no right way or wrong way of doing it!

eXtreme Birdhouse lets you:

- Show off your creativity.
- Share your design abilities.
- Use your skill as an architect, artist and craftsman.
- Plan, organize and carry through on a challenging project.

What You Will Learn

- **eXtreme Birdhouse** will help you learn the basics of good design.
- **eXtreme Birdhouse** will help you learn to recognize and practice good art and construction techniques.
- **eXtreme Birdhouse** will help you learn to explore your own personal design preferences, making decisions and choices.
- **eXtreme Birdhouse** will help you learn and practice skills that will be useful in an array of careers.

Who Can Participate

Any Alabama young person may participate in any 4-H competitive event. However, you must be a member of an Alabama 4-H Club. It's easy and quick to join – just call or e-mail your county Alabama Cooperative Extension System Office for information (for contact information, go to www.aces.edu/counties).

If you and your friends are interested, you might wish to start a 4-H Project Club. It could focus on Art and Architecture. Or it might be about Construction, Making and Selling Crafts, or Computer-Aided Design. For information, see **Starting a 4-H Club** (www.AL4H.org).

eXtreme Birdhouse is a Junior ages 9-13 and Senior 4-H Event. Your local Extension Office has information on local and regional **eXtreme Birdhouse** events, as well as other 4-H activities.

Levels of Competition

For details on eligibility, see the General Event Policy.

- **Juniors:** 9 – 13 Years Old. Must be 9, 10, 11, 12, or 13 years old on January 1 of the current calendar year. (Compete only at local and regional level).
- **Senior – Level I:** 14 – 15 Years Old. Must be 14 or 15 years old on January 1 of the current calendar year.
- **Senior – Level II:** 16 – 19 Years Old. Must be 16, 17, 18 or 19 years old on January 1 of the current calendar year.

A Celebration of Creativity!

The most creative, best-built birdhouses will be displayed in locations across the state. Do a great job, and you'll become famous!

The Rules

The rules are:

- It can't be any larger than 18 inches x 18 inches x 18 inches.
- You must create an original design and do all the construction yourself.
- You can't use a kit or build from an existing birdhouse.

Parents' and Volunteers' Guide

Like all 4-H projects, this activity is just for young people. It is expected that the young person create an original presentation. The role of adult helper is to support and encourage youth in their efforts, to ask and answer questions about the project, and to help youth learn specific techniques (such as sawing) that they might use in their project.



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Going to eXtremes

Thinking About *Design*

What does ***design*** mean? ***Design*** is how a piece of art or a product (anything from a toothpick to a skyscraper) is arranged and put together. Think about the hottest sports car or the coolest piece of technology. Good ***design*** makes it attractive to look at and easy to use.

Design combines artistic awareness and knowledge of the materials (such as metal or plastic) used in putting the object together.

Where Do I Start?

There are dozens of different ways to bring your birdhouse to life. If you have a clear idea in mind, you might just start building. If you like to use a computer, you might begin with a Sims game or another design program. Or you might try the approach we have written out here.

Let your imagination flow. Start thinking about some eXtreme ideas. What would an undersea house for penguins look like? What about a high-rise apartment building? Think about unusual houses. What about a tent, an igloo, a traditional Creek or Choctaw dwelling, a Hobbit hole, an historical building in your community? Look at examples of great architecture (see www.greatbuildings.com)

Begin roughly sketching out your design ideas.

Start thinking about what materials to use in your birdhouse. Do you want to make it from wood or metal or Legos or cardboard or several materials? How easy are those materials to use? A glass birdhouse might be pretty, but it would require greater skill than plastic. Do you want to use materials you have to buy or use items and objects that you find around the house or in nature?

Now you might begin thinking about how to put your materials together. Will it be woven from vines or nailed or hot-glued? Those are all important decisions.

Safety Is Always First!

Just like cooking or yard work, building an **eXtreme Birdhouse** has some important safety concerns that you need to keep in mind.

When working with power tools, cutting tools, or any dangerous equipment, work under the supervision of an adult and follow the safety directions listed in the owner's manual and on the equipment.

Carefully read and follow the directions on all paints, glues, varnishes and other materials. Observe the directions regarding ventilation, skin contact, and eye contact.

Be alert and careful with all equipment and materials. Hammers are made to use on nails, not fingers! Scissors, knives and saws will cut skin just as easily as wood!

Use appropriate safety equipment such as goggles, gloves, masks or ear plugs.

Team eXtreme

Team eXtreme uses the same rules and guidelines as individual competition. Team constructions are judged against individual constructions and are part of the same event.

However, the design and construction are undertaken by teams of 2 – 4 young people. All must be at the same 4-H age level (for example, Senior Level II).

It can be fun and educational to work with others on a challenging project. Each team member may have special skills or better ideas.

Besides the other great stuff you learn through **Team eXtreme**, **Team eXtreme** helps teach teamwork, communications, leadership, and cooperation.

Each team member should be fully involved in the process, from start to finish, and should be fully prepared to answer any questions about how the design was developed and the piece constructed.

The Day of the Big Event

Each county or region will schedule its own **eXtreme Birdhouse** competition. It may be part of a County Round-Up or Regional Congress. Some places may have the event as part of a 4-H arts festival or a community fair. Some may have workshops that help young people build their artistic skills and meet other artists and crafters.

On the day of the event, allow yourself plenty of time to set up. Bring along repair supplies in case your roof blows off or your basement floods.

Be ready to *informally* answer questions from the judges. These questions might be things like:

- “How did you create your design?”
- “Why did you use the materials you selected?”
- “What would you do differently?”
- “Could you use your design to make a real building?”

Advancing Through Competition

Congratulations! If you make it to Regional or State Congress, you are among the best in Alabama! The judges recognize that you have come up with a really good birdhouse and made great choices. Your hard work and your skill created something wonderful.

At the regional level, you will not compete against other 4-H’ers. You will compete against a standard of excellence. *Blue, red, or white* will be given.

Ribbons will be given on the following basis:

Blue: For excellent birdhouses which demonstrate great originality and skill.

Red: For good quality birdhouses. They are well done, but are not outstanding.

White: Acceptable birdhouses.

[Score equivalents for those using Score Sheets in local or regional events:

Blue: 90 – 100

Red: 80 – 89

White: 79 and below]

Best of Show: The judges will determine one birdhouse from Sr. Level I and Sr. Level II to advance from the regional level to state competition.

State Competition

At State Competition, the judges will select one birdhouse from the regional winners. This birdhouse will be designated **Alabama State 4-H Best in Show**.

Career Connections

Skills that are developed through this project have direct connections to a number of exciting and rewarding careers. These include: Architecture, Construction, Fine Art, Art Therapy, Advertising, Fashion Design, Theatre Design, Craft, Graphic Design, Illustration, Teaching, Industrial Design, Interior Design, and Museum Display.

Further career-related skills are developed in the Above and Beyond section and through **Team eXtreme**. These include planning, leadership, and organization. If birdhouses are sold, there is also an element of entrepreneurship.

Judging Guidelines

The selection of the judges is important to the success of the event. The ideal judge knows about art and design and can easily chat with young people. The selection of an architect, art teacher, and working artist or crafter provides a perfect judging panel.

On the day of the event, each individual or team enters the judging area in a designated order. The facilitator will introduce the participant to the judges. The judges will talk informally with the participants about the design and construction techniques. Judges are encouraged to positively offer their comments on the originality of the birdhouse, what was most effective in the construction, and suggestions for improvement.

There is no score sheet for this event. At State Competition, judges will select one **Best of Show** based on originality, quality of construction, and youth responses to the judges’ questions.

Above and Beyond

All 4-H projects can be taken “above and beyond” just being a short-term activity. Awards and recognition throughout Alabama 4-H are not based on how well you do in competitive events; they are based on your all-round community service, leadership, and project work.

Here are some ideas for taking your interest in Art and Architecture to a level where you can both grow as a person and have an impact on the lives of others:

- Hold a different kind of competition: divide your club, your youth group, or your friends into teams and provide all teams with the same supplies. Give them a set amount of time. See whose birdhouse is best.
- Organize a community show of 4-H birdhouses and other art projects.
- Sell your birdhouse on-line or at a community event.
- Create a web site with photos of the birdhouses.
- Talk with a builder or architect about the training that is required to build real buildings.
- Teach younger kids to make birdhouses.
- Make a video about your project or use it in an animated story.
- Take photographs of your project.
- Create a 3-D model of your birdhouse using CAD (Computer Aided Design) software.
- Write and illustrate a children’s story about the birds who live in your house.
- Invite an artist, woodworker, or crafter to provide a workshop.
- Build “real” birdhouses for your school, Habitat for Humanity, or your city library.

November, 2006

eXtreme Birdhouse Score Sheet

Participant Name: _____ Date: _____ County: _____

Level: ___ *Junior* (Ages 9-13) ___ *Senior I* (Ages 14-15) ___ *Senior II* (Ages 16-19)

This score sheet is not designed to determine placement. It is designed to give feedback to the participants. Local judges will need to determine 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place. Regional judges will award Blue, Red and White Ribbons and also determine a Best in Show to advance to state competition and an alternate. State judges will determine Best in Show.

CATEGORY	Excellent	Above Average	Average	Needs Improvement
Quality of Construction	The project shows considerable attention to construction. It is solidly crafted and well put together. X	The project shows attention to construction. It is well put together. X	The project shows some attention to construction. It is put together adequately. X	The project is not put together neatly. Items appear to be carelessly or hurriedly attached. X
Design	Project is appropriate size and interesting shape and is arranged well. Project is attractive and well proportioned. X	Project is appropriate size and interesting shape and is arranged well. Project is attractive but does not appear proportioned. X	Project is appropriate size but is not very attractive. It appears there was not a lot of planning in the item placement. X	Project is not appropriate size. It appears that little thought and attention was given to designing the project. X
Creativity	Materials used in the project reflect an exceptional degree of creativity in their arrangement and display. X	Some materials reflect student creativity in their arrangement and display. X	Ideas were typical rather than creative. X	The student did not demonstrate originality or creativity in the overall project. X
Judges' Comments				

Few art events use a "score sheet" to determine what makes a good work of art. It is suggested that the county or regional event facilitator talk with the judges to determine their preferences in judging.

Please remember that the sole purpose of this event is to provide young people with an opportunity for self-expression and to learn more about design. Competition and judging should emphasize creativity and the development of knowledge and skill.