



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.Alabama4H.com).

eXtreme Birdhouse is a 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

Look at **General Event Policy for eligibility.**

http://www.aces.edu/fourh/docs/programs/General_Contest_Policy.pdf

Check the **Alabama 4-H Age and Eligibility Chart to determine the divisions of 4-H Membership.**

http://www.aces.edu/fourh/docs/programs/Eligibility_Chart.pdf

The Rules for eXtreme Birdhouse

- Compete by yourself or on a two-person team. Youth on teams should be the same 4-H age level (e.g., Senior Level II).
- 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.



Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, and other related acts, in cooperation with the U. S. Department of Agriculture. The Alabama Cooperative Extension System (Alabama A & M University and Auburn University) offers educational programs, materials, and equal opportunity employment to all people without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, veteran status, or disability.

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 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 two 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/Area or State, 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.

4-H Regional/Area Awards will be determined by the planning committee for that event. Notice will be sent to each county involved.

State Competition and Awards

Each county may register one Senior Level I and one Senior Level II individual in each event that is offered.

On the state level, ribbons will be awarded to 50% of the participants in a contest using ordinal rankings up to a tenth place ranking.

Example: If there are 10 participants, first place will receive the Alabama State Trophy and a first place ribbon; placing ribbons will be awarded for the next four ranked participants for placing of second through fifth. The other five participants will receive honorable mention ribbons.

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.

At State Competition, judges will rank entries based on originality, quality of constructions, and youth responses to the judges' questions.

Disqualifications in eXtreme Birdhouse

- >Larger than required dimensions
- >Using a kit
- >Using an existing birdhouse

Identification of Entry

Name(s), county and level of participation should be displayed with each entry. 4-H Project Exhibit cards are available, but not required.

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.

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.

August, 2009

eXtreme Birdhouse Score Sheet

Participant Name: _____ County: _____

Level: ___ **Junior** (Ages 9-13) ___ **Senior I** (Ages 14-15) ___ **Senior II** (Ages 16-18)

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.

CATEGORY	Excellent	Good	Needs Improvement	Points Received	Comments
Quality of Construction 30 Points The project shows considerable attention to construction. It is solidly crafted and well put together.					
Design – 30 points Project is appropriate size and interesting shape and is arranged well. Project is attractive and well proportioned.					
Creativity – 40 points Materials used in the project reflect an exceptional degree of creativity in their arrangement and display.					
Total Score – 100 pts					

- Disqualifications:** Check as appropriate
- Larger than required dimensions of 18" x 18" x 18"
 - Using a kit
 - Using an existing birdhouse