

eXTREME BIRDHOUSE



Alabama 4-H
Alabama Cooperative Extension System

An awesome 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 best birdhouse possible. It doesn't have to be a real birdhouse. It can be made of any material; don't worry about weatherproofing. There is no right way or wrong way to do it!

What You Will Do in eXTREME Birdhouse

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

What You Will Learn

- Learn the basics of good design.
- Recognize and practice good art and construction techniques.
- Explore your own personal design preferences and making decisions.
- Practice skills that will be useful in an array of careers.

LEVELS OF COMPETITION

For details on eligibility, see the General Event Policy.

Junior Level I:

9 to 11 years old on December 31 of the current calendar year (compete only at local and regional level).

Intermediate:

12 to 13 years old on December 31 of the current calendar year (compete only at local and regional level).

Senior Level I:

14 to 15 years old on December 31 of the current calendar year.

Senior Level II:

16 to 18 years old on December 31 of the current calendar year.

Community Service

Telling a great story, showcasing projects at a community library, speaking at the local nursing home, or organizing a community cooking or a building block workshop are great opportunities to serve others. Serving others helps build your academic skills, learn civic responsibility, and develop leadership. It may also give you a good opportunity to meet new people, publicize 4-H, and practice your communication skills. Alabama 4-H is now requiring all Senior Level 4-H members to add a community service component to all 4-H Competitive Events. Each Senior Level 4-H member will have to complete the 4-H Community Service Report as a part of their project. 4-H members will be disqualified if the community service report is not included.

It is important that you decide what service you can provide, not have a parent or 4-H leader make this decision for you. Groups of young people are encouraged to work together to discover how they can serve their community.

Refer to the [Alabama 4-H Competitive Events webpage](#) to review the General Contest Policy and the Age & Eligibility Chart.

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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.

The Rules for eXtreme Birdhouse

- 1** 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).
- 2** It can't be any larger than 18 inches × 18 inches × 18 inches. This includes any base the birdhouse may be attached to. The entire exhibit is measured.
- 3** You must create an original design and do all the construction yourself.
- 4** You can't use a kit or build from an existing birdhouse.
- 5** Senior Level 4-H member must submit a community service report. Failure to do so will result in disqualification.

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 design program. Or you might try the approach we have written 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, or a historical building in your community? 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, metal, 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?

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

Identification of Entry

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

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Safety Is Always First!

Just like cooking or yard work, building an eXtreme Birdhouse has some important safety concerns.

When working with power tools, cutting tools, or any dangerous equipment, work under the supervision of an adult. 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. Scissors, knives, and saws will cut skin just as easily as wood!

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

Career Connections

Skills that are developed through this project have direct connections to many 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.

More 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.