

# NATURE ACTIVITIES

## FROZEN SUNCATCHER

Looking for a fun activity to do outdoors this winter? Go outside and make your own nature-based Frozen Suncatcher! You can include berries for birds to enjoy too.

**Resources/materials needed:** Pie plate or other mold, natural objects (sticks, pine needles, leaves, nuts, berries, pinecones), water, twine, scissors, and frozen temperature.

**Skills:** Cognitive, Motor Skills, Environmental Appreciation, Hand-Eye Coordination, Technical Skills, Creative Problem Solving

### DIRECTIONS:

**Step 1:** Go out in nature and explore! You can gather all sorts of objects that you can include in your Frozen Suncatchers! These include twigs, pieces of pine and hemlock, pine needles, leaves, pinecones, acorns, and moss. What have you observed in nature? See any birds feeding on berries?

**Step 2:** You can also include from your kitchen, berries and orange slices for the birds to enjoy. If you have dried flower petals from previous bouquets, you can include these too, or if you want to take some petals from a fresh flower that is just as welcome!

**Step 3:** Set up your pie pan or other type of mold outdoors if the temperature is 32 degrees or colder. You can spray it with cooking spray for an easy way out of the mold, it will still detach without the spray though.

Start arranging your natural objects in the pan. You can do it artistically or however you would like.

**Step 4:** Once you have the objects arranged, it is time to place twine so that the suncatcher has something to hang off of. Cut a piece of twine about a foot long. Put a looped end into the pie plate at least a third of the way down. (see the picture to the right) This is so it will be more sturdy. Another alternative is to drill a hole and string twine through that after the piece freezes.



Photo Credit: Kid World Citizen



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**Step 5:** Once everything is placed how you would like it, now it is time to add the water. Fill it like you would and ice cube tray,, almost to the top but not quite lining the edge. When it freezes, it will expand.

**Step 6:** Leave the pan outside in place to freeze overnight. If it isn't quite cold enough outside, make room in your freezer and place it inside overnight as well.

**Step 7:** The next day, go look at your pan. Make sure it looks frozen the full way through. you can tell by picking the container up and moving it side to side to see if any liquid is moving around. If it isn't completely frozen give it more time and look at the weather to make sure it will be cold enough at night outside.

If it is fully frozen, carefully pop out suncatcher from the pan. Make sure that your string is intact and able to hold the suncatcher while hanging from it. If it is falling out or not sturdy enough, get a power drill out and drill a hole at least an inch from the edge with a drill bit big enough to fit the string through. Tie twine through this hole.

**Step 8:** Take your Frozen Suncatcher with the twine and find somewhere to hang it outside around your house. Is there a tree branch you can use? Would you like it on your front porch? If you included berries for birds, place it where they can access it and you can watch from inside.

**Step 9:** Enjoy seeing the sun shine through your Frozen Suncatcher. It will start to melt on warmer days, so it may get smaller and smaller. The impermanence is beautiful and reflects nature.

**Reflection:** Talk about your experience. What was your experience searching for these materials? Do you like this process? What would you do differently next time? What's your favorite visual part of the suncatcher?

#### Resources:

[www.kidworldcitizen.org](http://www.kidworldcitizen.org)  
[www.takethemoutside.com/frozen-sun-catchers/](http://www.takethemoutside.com/frozen-sun-catchers/)  
[www.twigandtoadstool.blogspot.com/2014/01/ice-rainbow-sun-catchers.html](http://www.twigandtoadstool.blogspot.com/2014/01/ice-rainbow-sun-catchers.html)



Photo Credit : Take Them Outside

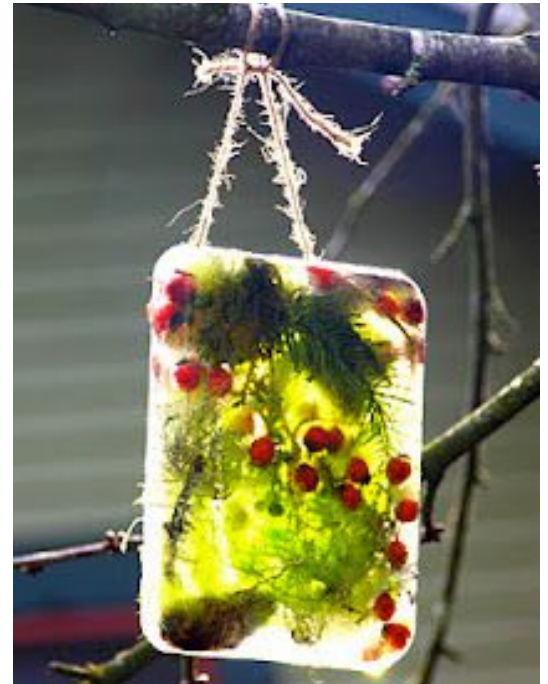


Photo Credit :Iowa Department of Natural Resources



Photo Credit: Twig and Toadstool



Photo Credit:Take Them Outside