



# THE LAB

**Eight pages of things  
to make and do**

**WARNING!**  
Ask an adult to help  
when using scissors.



# Make a fat ball

Look after your local birds as the weather gets colder by making them a calorie-packed snack.

## What you need

- Clean yoghurt pot
- Scissors
- 30cm string
- Microwave-safe bowl
- 70g lard
- 45g bird-seed mix
- 45g oats
- 45g raisins
- Spoon
- Clingfilm

## Instructions

- 1** Ask an adult to help you make a small hole in the bottom of the yoghurt pot with scissors.
- 2** Thread the string through the hole and tie a large knot in one end inside the pot.
- 3** Put lard, bird seed, oats and raisins into a microwave-safe bowl. Warm in a microwave until the fat is soft. Mix it all together well.
- 4** Line the yoghurt pot with clingfilm. Holding the knotted end of the string above the pot, spoon the soft lard mixture into the pot. Then pull the string so the knot is in the centre of the fat ball. Pop the pot into the fridge to harden.
- 5** When the fat is hard, take it out of the fridge and pull on the clingfilm to release it from the pot, then peel off the clingfilm.



## How does it work?

Fat is a bird's best friend. Birds store it beneath their skin and use it to fuel their activities. Keeping warm takes a lot of energy, so in cold weather fat is essential – especially for small garden birds. Birds can actually weigh less in the morning than they do before they go to roost, because of the fat they use overnight. Hard fats like lard make the best fat balls. Avoid using leftover cooking fat because soft grease can damage birds' feathers if it gets on them.

### DID YOU KNOW?

Birds eat on average a half to a quarter of their body weight every day.