

# NATURE PROJECTS

## FROZEN SUNCATCHER



Photo Credit: Kid World Citizen

Looking for a fun activity to do outdoors this winter? Make your own frozen suncatcher that looks delightful on a winter sunny day! It is a fascinating project for kids and adults alike. As seeing water freeze as a scientific process and looking at the beauty of natural objects glistening in the sun. This is a grounding and connection to nature in winter that can end up feeding birds as it melts.

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

## Materials

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

**Safety:** Wear proper winter attire outside while collecting objects. Ask an adult to help with cutting or tying on the tree.



Photo Credit: Kid World Citizen

## Directions

**Step 1:** We invite you to go out in nature and explore! You are welcome to gather a multitude of natural objects that you can include in your Frozen Suncatchers! These include twigs, pieces of pine and hemlock, pine needles, leaves, pinecones, acorns, and moss. If you have indoor natural objects you would like to include, feel free such as flower petals or dried herbs.



Photo Credit: Kid World Citizen

**Step 2:** Did you see any birds feeding on berries? You can also include from your kitchen, berries and orange slices for the birds to enjoy. In winter time, food is scarce and birds would enjoy another berry surprise! If you have dried flower petals from previous bouquets, you can include these too, or

**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.



Photo Credit: Kid World Citizen

**Step 4:** After you have arranged your objects, place twine in a way 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 above)

You can also drill a hole and string twine through that after the piece freezes. (picture on the left)



Photo Credit: Take Them Outside

**Step 5:** Once everything is placed how you would like it, now it is time to add the water. Fill it slowly 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.



Photo Credit: Kid World Citizen



Photo Credit: Iowa Department of Natural Resources



**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.

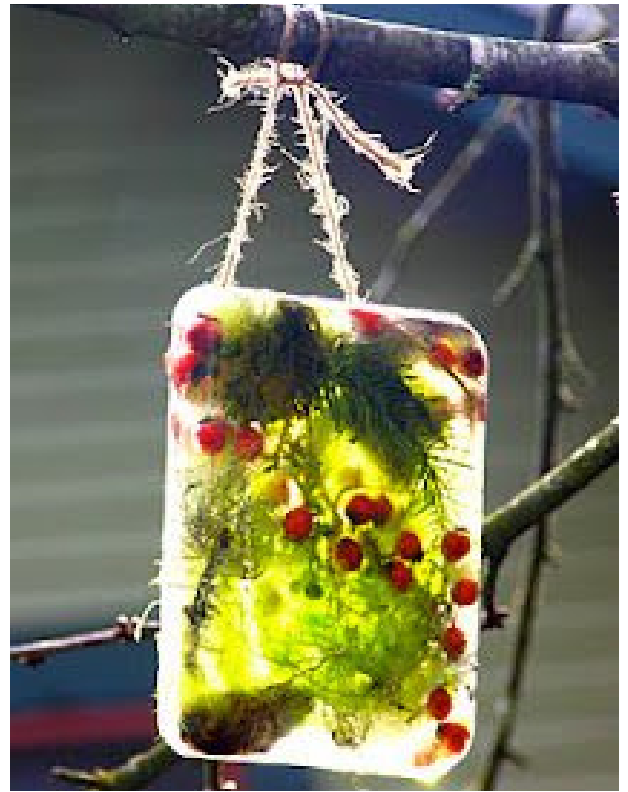


Photo Credit :Iowa Department of Natural Resources



Photo Credit: Twig and Toadstool

**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? How did you choose which objects to place into your suncatcher? What's your favorite visual part of the suncatcher?



Photo Credit: Take Them Outside

## Resources

**Resources:**

- [www.kidworldcitizen.org](http://www.kidworldcitizen.org)
- <https://runwildmychild.com/frozen-suncatchers/>
- [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)