

# Ellen's Birdbath Project



This 'How To' is very special; one of our long-term customers, Ellen Nolet, shares her secrets for creating this gorgeous mosaic birdbath.

Ellen guides you through what materials and supplies you will need and provides step-by-step instructions so you can make one for yourself.

We approached Ellen to share her project instructions with us after an overwhelming response to her beautiful mosaic birdbath on Facebook. Thank you, Ellen, for your generosity. Your project will inspire many people.

# MATERIALS & SUPPLIES

## BASE

Terracotta plant saucer

As large as you can get, a minimum of 36 cm, 5 cm deep, is the best. You can not use glazed ones or plastic.



## TILES

Exterior tiles

Ceramic Pebbles, glass bits, glass wishing stones, ceramic discs and ceramic petals, glass droplets. Endless choices!

Ceramic birds, if you like, from garden centres, \$2 shops, marketplace or gift shops, not easy to find



## SEALER / PRIMER / ADHESIVE

- Tile & grout sealer - "Davco" solvent based
- Terracotta Primer - "Terratreat" from hardware store
- Exterior flexible cement-based tile adhesive "Davco" from hardware store or tile shop.



## OTHER SUPPLIES

- Tile nippers ( 2 wheels ) and tile scorer
- Paddle pop sticks and containers to mix the adhesive
- You will not believe this, but I have two cats and use the little tins containing cat food. Perfect size for the adhesive because you want to work with small quantities before it dries out.
- Grout, container, spatula, sponges, bucket, rubber gloves, Jiffy cloth and a soft cloth.
- Turntable to sit the base on, so you can see your creation from all angles while you are working on it.



## PROJECT INSTRUCTIONS

1. Prime the terracotta base with the primer inside and a bit over the edge, and let it dry.
2. Make a colour palette with the tiles you like to use; inspiration might be from the little bird.



3. Mix the adhesive ( with the paddle pop stick ) first, the powder, and then little bits of water, not too thin, but like porridge. If the weather is very hot I sometimes wet the base of the birdbath a bit before tiling so the adhesive doesn't dry too fast.

4. Position the bird and butter it on the base, and off you go. Mosaic the inside first and then the inside wall. Sometimes the base might have a nice flat edge which you can mosaic too. Some birdbaths will take ages to create and finish because I might change the design and tiles. LET IT ALL DRY OVERNIGHT

5. And then you have to decide what colour grout to use. Making a grout sample is helpful. With very bright colours, black grout works well and terracotta colour, which you must mix yourself. I use " Davco "Tuscan Clay or a beige and mix it with powdered TerracottaGrout Colourant from the Mosaic Store. White grout gets very dirty, so avoid using that; light grey is a better option.

While grouting, listen to music and turn your mobile off; your gloves are too dirty to answer any calls!!!

Again, be patient and let it dry overnight so you can seal it the next day.

I have used solvent-based sealer for years, painted it on, even on the tiles and let it penetrate the grout for around 10 minutes. Wipe the tiles with a damp cloth, it smells a bit, but the smell will go—Polish and buff them with a soft cloth.

I buy materials from The Mosaic Store, tile shops, Bunnings, garage sales, Marketplace and garden centres. Always on the lookout; I get lucky with random tiles. Years ago, I bought lots of dirty vintage tiles at a garage sale and recently more tiles from a lady that gave up on mosaic.

If you like to raise your birdbath, glue on a flowerpot which you can also mosaic.

I have made large birdbaths on pedestals, which are hard work and heavy, but they become a sculpture in your garden.

