Grow and Construct a Gourd Bird House

**Supplies:**
- Gourd bird house seeds
- A trellis or fence will help them vine or let them spread across the ground
- A pencil
- An electric drill (1/8" and 3/8" bits)
- A keyhole saw bit
- A tub or sink to scrub gourd in
- Detergent and bleach
- A scrub brush
- A piece of wire or nylon rope

**Instructions:**
- Plant your gourd bird house seeds in a sunny location with fertile, well-drained soil.
- Water and fertilize regularly until your gourds turn a creamy brown. At this point stop watering the gourds and leave them on the vine to harden.
- Harvest your gourds after the first frost. Make sure to leave some stem on the gourd when you cut it from the vine.
- Place your gourds to dry in a well-ventilated place. It takes three to six months for a gourd to completely dry!
- Soak the gourd in soapy water with a little bleach and then scrub the gourd with brush and steel wool. Let dry. Then drill four small holes 1/8" in the bottom of the gourd for drainage.
- With an adult’s help drill a 3/8" hole just inside the circle of the gourd. Then use your key hole saw-blade into the hole and cut a round 1” circle. (See table)
- Scoop out the seeds and pulp.
- Drill two 1/8” holes in the top of the gourd for inserting a wire or nylon rope to hang your new bird house.

**SUPPLIES:**
BIRDS THAT WILL USE A GOURD BIRD HOUSE
The chart below shows the minimum size gourd needed and the size of the entrance hole required for many bird species found in Iowa

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Hole Size</th>
<th>Inside gourd size</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>House Wren</td>
<td>1”</td>
<td>4” by 4”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chickadee</td>
<td>1-1/8”</td>
<td>4” by 4”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nuthatch</td>
<td>1-1/4”</td>
<td>4” by 4”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tufted Titmouse</td>
<td>1-1/4”</td>
<td>4” by 4”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bluebird</td>
<td>1-1/2”</td>
<td>5” by 5”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Purple Martin</td>
<td>2”</td>
<td>6” by 6”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Flicker</td>
<td>2-1/2”</td>
<td>7” by 7”</td>
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</tbody>
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