

Products & People You'll Want to Know

Tea Cup Bird Feeders

BY LAURA JEAN WHITCOMB

It's an unexpected treat. You look out into a colorful garden and, sitting in the middle of purple morning glories, is a green glass tea cup. It wasn't left there accidentally; it's a bird feeder crafted by entrepreneur Jenny Berube of She's Crafty. "You don't expect a tea cup to be in your rose-bush or morning glories. So when you see it, it's a little treasure," she says.

Berube, a Lempster, N.H., resident, saw a tea cup bird feeder years ago, but wasn't happy with the construction. "They drilled through the cup. I wondered how many cups they broke before they got one that would work. Then I wondered about water leakage; if water could get in there, bacteria could collect," she says.

Berube spent a lot of time at hardware stores looking at parts before she found the perfect combination: a two-part fixture attached to both the dowel and the tea cup with outdoor epoxy. Not only is it safe for birds, you can "bring the tea cup in at night and put it out during the day. You can bring in the tea cup to wash it. You can have several dowels set up in your garden, and move the bird feeder to the dowel in the area that is blooming," she says.

The dowel, typically cemented into the ground, has been cleverly modified fit the fixture, and Berube is patenting her design. "It's not a mop head," she says. "People have tried to copy my design, but their bird feeder

usually breaks." She also adds her own personal touch: a spoon decorated with jewelry grade copper wire and sparking beads (safely and permanently glued to the spoon).

"I love making them," Berube says. "Tea cups are really beautiful objects. People don't drink tea anymore. I spend a lot of time in antique shops hunting for nice teacups: a solid bottom, no scalloped edges, interesting shapes and bright colors. I pick them up, bring them home, and clean them up."

She'll also craft custom orders — give Berube an antique cup, perhaps a family heirloom, and a week later she'll return it as a bird feeder. "I love doing custom orders," she says. "I love to do things that make people happy and make them smile. If you come to me with your grandmother's cup and a great story, then every time you look at it you're going to love it more." She's even used a tea cup in combination with a piece of costume jewelry from a family member, which she broke up and used as beads on the spoon. A recent order was from a grandmother, who brought in six of her cups and later gave one to each of her grandchildren as birdfeeders.

If you're worried about bears going after the seed, the tea cups are versatile. Berube suggests lighting candles in them at night. Or filling it with hummingbird food that you've bought or made yourself (she includes recipes with her tea cup bird feeders). "A piece of ripe fruit will attract butterflies and hummingbirds," she says. "Or just let it fill with rainwater. The birds will still play in there."

The cost is \$30 per bird feeder. If you use your own cup, Berube will take \$5 off. She also offers a quantity discount. Contact She's Crafty at shesacrafty1@yahoo.com or www.shesacrafty1.etsy.com ■



photo courtesy of Jenny Berube