

# Hanging Garden with Lee Farmer

Create your own version of a hanging garden, by making a nature-inspired mobile with artist and UHArts technician Lee Farmer.

Suitable for ages 5 to adult; younger makers may need some adult assistance/ supervision

**Materials and equipment required:**

found natural materials (sticks/ twigs, leaves, small stones, etc.) OR wire, drinking straws, rolled paper, bamboo skewers (with the sharp end removed) if you're unable to collect sticks; thread, wool, string or fishing line; safety scissors; some paper or card; sticky tape or double-sided tape

1. Decide on the **shape of your mobile** (see the sketch for some ideas).
2. Decide **what you want to include** in your hanging garden – plants, shrubs, trees, flowers, wildlife and insects, a bird feeder or bird bath, a shed, summerhouse, pergola or gazebo, a paddling or swimming pool, sports equipment like goalposts or a Frisbee, sculptures or ornaments like garden gnomes, etc. You might want to plan and sketch the whole thing out first on some paper.
3. **Collect:** If you have access to a garden or other safe outdoor space you could collect twigs and thin sticks for the structure and small stones, dried fallen leaves, etc. to use as hanging objects.
4. **Make objects:** If you can't collect those things, you can use drinking straws, blunt bamboo skewers or lengths of paper rolled up very tightly in place of sticks. For the hanging objects you could draw, collage or make them (see step 5).



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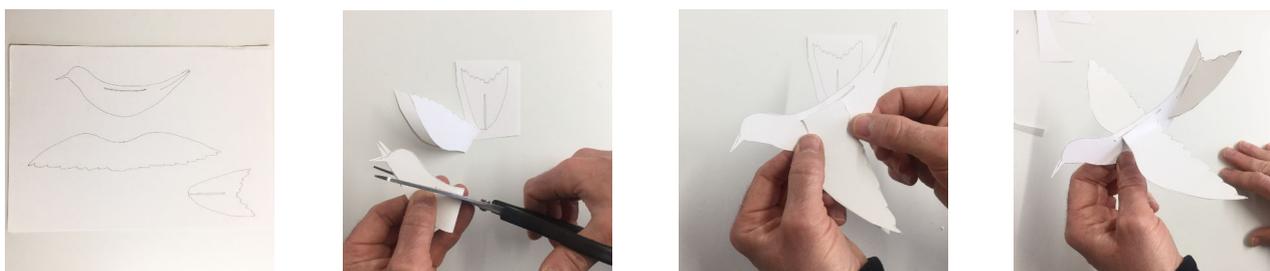
5. To make hanging objects for your mobile, you could make:

*NB If the feature you are making is flat, you might want to colour or draw on both sides, or make two halves to stick together, so that it can be viewed from all angles when the mobile moves.*

**Flowers** (see pictures below): roll a strip of paper, flatten, cut petal shape but keep the bottom joined, stick double-sided tape along the bottom on the inside (or regular sticky tape overhanging the bottom on the outside) then gather and stick the bottom of the petals as you turn the flower in your hand.



**Birds** (see pictures below): draw the shape of the body, wings and tail; mark the slots; cut out the pieces and fold the body in half to cut the wing slot; pass the wing piece through the body and slot the tail in; fold wing and tail pieces in half to keep them in position, then curve the edges back upwards for a good shape. Or, draw a bird and cut around it – colouring on both sides.



6. **Build your mobile** by starting at the bottom first, unless you are making it using hoops (see step 9). Attach two of your objects to each end of a stick by gluing or taping them straight to the stick, or carefully making a hole and tying them on to the end with some thread, wool, string or fishing line. If you are attaching small stones or shells, etc. you could bind them with thread, then tie them on.

7. **For balance:** find the centre of gravity of the first set of stick and objects by balancing it on your finger (see first picture below) - tie a piece of thread on at this point.

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8. **Attach two more objects** to the ends of another stick, then tie the thread from your first stick anywhere along the second one. Find the centre of gravity of this new arrangement by carefully balancing it on your finger (see second picture below). Tie a piece of thread on here.



9. **Carry on like this, adding sticks and objects and testing** the centre of gravity each time. When you have finished, test the centre of gravity again and attach a final piece of thread to suspend your garden.

10. If you are making a spiral-shaped hanging garden or another sort, which will hang from hoops, you can use strips of a flexible material like plastic or wire, or make a hoop from shorter pieces of twig, skewer or rolled paper by taping pieces together or binding them with string. If you are using several hoops of different sizes, fix them together in several places with short pieces of string. Hang all of your objects at differing heights with thread to create a spiral or a random effect.

11. **Hang your mobile!**



**Want to take this idea further? You could:**

- make a mobile on a different theme, like 'flight' or 'the ocean'
- experiment with a balancing sculpture instead of a hanging one
- use objects which make sounds, to make chimes instead of a mobile