

Mourning Dove Nest Cone

A wire nesting cone from one square of hardware cloth

KID-FRIENDLY PLAN

Doves build flimsy nests, and a wire cone gives them a sturdy base. There is no woodworking here: you cut a circle of hardware cloth, snip out a wedge, and pull it into a shallow cone. Kids can help trace, shape, and wire the cone; an adult should handle the snips, because cut hardware cloth is sharp.

Design Specs

Spec	Measurement
Cone	12" circle of 1/4" hardware cloth with a 2 1/2" wedge removed, edges overlapped about 1"
Mounting height	6 to 10 ft
Spacing	One cone per 2.5 acres
Location	Wired into a horizontal fork of a shady tree limb, with branches overhead

Materials

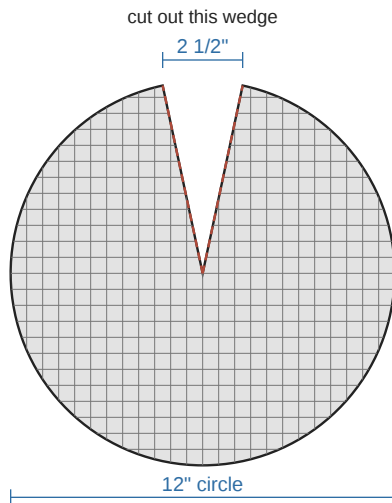
Item	Qty	Notes
1/4" galvanized hardware cloth	12" x 12" piece	One piece makes one cone
Galvanized wire	A few feet	Closes the seam and ties the cone into the tree

Tools

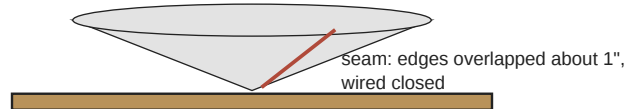
Tin snips • Work gloves • Safety glasses • Pliers • Marker • A 6" string and pencil (or a 12" plate) to trace the circle • Ruler • Ladder

Where the cone size comes from: The Maryland Department of Natural Resources ("Maryland's Wild Acres: Mourning Dove") gives these steps: trim a 12" x 12" square of hardware cloth into a circle, cut a 2 1/2" wedge along the outer edge, pull the cut edges together into a cone, overlap them about 1", and bend back the sharp edges. The 1/4" mesh size follows Bass Pro Shops' dove cone guide, which calls for 1/4"-mesh galvanized hardware cloth.

Cutting Pattern and Finished Cone



1. Cut the pattern



2. Shape a shallow cone and set it in a fork

Steps

- 1 **Trace the circle.** Tie a 6" string to a marker, hold the free end at the center of the 12" x 12" hardware cloth, and trace a 12" circle (or trace around a 12" plate). Kids can do this part.
- 2 **Cut it out (adult job).** Wearing gloves and safety glasses, cut along the line with tin snips.
- 3 **Cut the wedge (adult job).** Mark two points 2 1/2" apart on the outer edge. Snip from each point straight in to the center and remove the pie-shaped wedge.
- 4 **Form the cone.** Pull the two cut edges together until they overlap about 1". That makes a shallow cone.
- 5 **Close the seam.** Thread short pieces of galvanized wire through both layers along the overlap and twist them tight with pliers. Tuck the twisted ends underneath.
- 6 **Bend back the sharp edges.** Fold any cut wire ends along the rim and seam down and under so nothing sharp points into the cone.

Where to Put It

Placement	Guideline
Mounting height	6 to 10 ft
Spot	A horizontal fork of a shady tree limb, with branches overhead
Spacing	One cone per 2.5 acres

Putting It Up

- 1 Pick the spot:** a horizontal fork in a shady limb, 6 to 10 ft up, with branches overhead.
- 2 Set the cone** down into the fork so it sits level and snug.
- 3 Wire it in.** Run galvanized wire through the rim of the cone and around the branches on each side, then twist tight. The cone should not rock or tip.
- 4 Check for sharp ends** one more time and bend any under.

Tips

- Doves may nest two or three times in a row in the same spot, so leave the cone in place through the season.
- Use a sturdy ladder, and have an adult do the climbing and wiring.