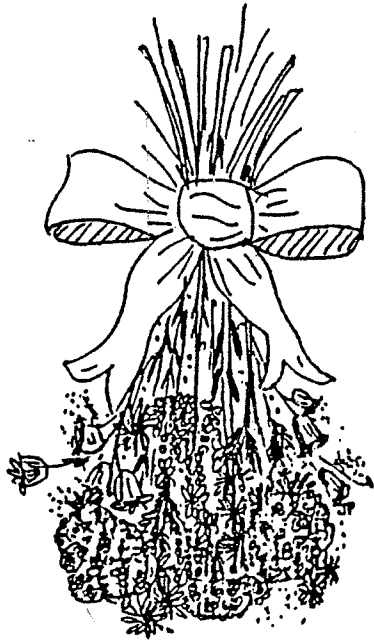


Plant Crafts Supplement



SHAWANO COUNTY PLANT CRAFTS SUPPLEMENT

The purpose of this supplement is to:

- illustrate and give directions for new plant crafts not described in the 4-H literature
- open up creativity by encouraging experimentation with materials
- invite an appreciation for the beauty and versatility in plant materials: their shapes, textures, colors and scents



WHERE DO I FIND. . .

Plant materials? The first place to start is your own back yard. You may find:

flowers	pine cones
pod	berries, fruits
vegetables	weeds

Next, look to different natural habitats--woods, swamps, road sides, fields, sandy areas. You may find:

tree bark	lichen, fungi
moss	nuts
vines	seed heads
wild flowers	reeds
leaves	twigs

Make these outings more fun by learning the names of some of the materials you collect. You can be sure that people who see your craft items will ask!

When collecting from the wild, respect the area. Do not harvest rare or unusual objects. A general rule of collecting is--if you see *ten*, you may pick *one*. However, use your judgement. Don't pick at all if you feel it would disturb the area or limit a plant species' ability to reproduce. The Extension Office has a DNR listing of threatened and endangered plants which may not be picked. Also, remember to ask the landowner before you collect on their property.

Refer to Plant Crafts literature, 4-H 330, for instructions on drying materials.

Ideas? Your own imagination is a good place to start. Look at the plants you see in new ways. Would those orange Mountain Ash berries in the backyard dry well? Work them into a fall wreath or swag. Do you like the texture or shape of a plant material but not the color? Try spray painting or gilding with gold paint.

Craft shops are a good place for ideas. Tour some local shops or visit shops while on vacation. While you're there, check the prices. How much can you save by making it yourself? What materials could you substitute?

Home decorating and craft magazines often showcase some unusual and creative ideas, usually the most current trends. Often they will include instructions for making your own projects. Your local library should subscribe to several of these magazines and probably has some craft books as well.

Share ideas with other 4-H members. Older members can help younger ones with techniques and designs. Look for ideas at the county fair, too.

DRIED FLOWER TOPIARY TREE

A live topiary is a plant which has been pruned and trimmed into shapes not typical of its normal growth habit - anything from spheres to cones to animal shapes. You can duplicate this look with dried materials to make unusual accents for your home.

Materials: Plant pot

Straight tree branch or wood dowel

Styrofoam ball 3,4, or 5 inches in diameter depending on desired size

Plaster of paris

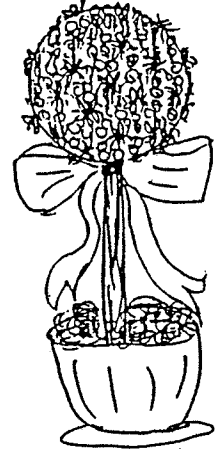
Sphagnum or Spanish moss

Thick craft glue

Glue gun and sticks (optional)

Various dried plant materials

Ribbon



Step 1. Choose a styrofoam ball in proportion to the size pot you have chosen (keep in mind that the ball will look larger when flowers are glued on.) Cut a hole in the styrofoam ball to insert stick. Starting in sections, coat ball with glue and cover with a thin layer of moss. When covered with moss, insert stick into hole in ball and glue in place.

Step 2. Mix up enough plaster of paris to fill pot 3/4 full. Insert stick into plaster of paris when thick but not set. Let harden.

Step 3. When plaster of paris is set, begin gluing plant material to ball until it is completely covered. Suggested materials:

Rose buds	Cockscomb (Celosia)
Lavender buds	Plumed Thistle
Globe Amaranth	Statice
Ornamental Pepper	Strawflower
Yarrow	Xeranthemum
Tansy	Nuts and seed pods
Small pine cones	Baby's Breath
Sumac berry clusters	Etc.....

Finishing: Cover plaster of paris in pot with moss, dried flowers, etc. Attach bow at base of ball if desired.

Going further: Experiment with different styrofoam forms (cones, wreaths); spray painting plant materials to suit your color scheme; vary ball, pot, and stick sizes; look for ideas in craft shops and check their prices.

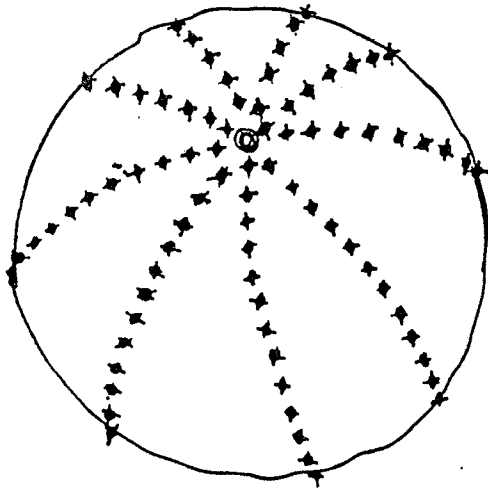
POMANDER

- Materials: 1 orange, lemon, or lime
Whole cloves
Thick needle such as a yarn needle
- Optional: Ground cinnamon, cloves, &/or allspice
Orris root powder - a fixative (found in specialty craft stores, some health food stores, by mail order)
Ribbon, dried flowers

Cover fruit with cloves, either all over or in a design, using the needle to start holes in the skin and inserting stem of clove into the hole. Space cloves at least one clove space apart to allow for shrinkage of the fruit. Rolling the clove covered fruit in a 50-50 mixture of spices and orris root powder helps to hold and intensify the odor.

Let cure in a warm, dry place for 4-6 weeks. Tie up with ribbon and glue on dried flowers if desired, or make several and place in a bowl or basket.

Scent lasts about one year.



Going further: Calculate the cost to make. How would these fit into your Christmas gift budget?

DRIED FRUIT AND VEGETABLE GARLAND

Materials: Variety of fruits and vegetables, sliced about 1/4 inch thick (try apples, oranges, other citrus fruits, summer squash, zucchini, carrots, beets)
Variety of fruits and vegetables, left whole (beans, hot peppers, crab apples, cranberries)
Heavy needle, such as a yarn needle
String or twine
Heavy gauge wire
1 cup lemon juice
1 T. salt

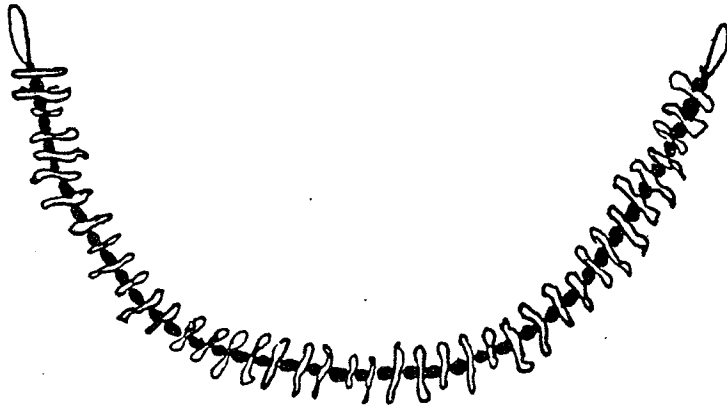
Fruits like apples that turn brown when exposed to air should be soaked in a mixture of 1 cup lemon juice and 1 tablespoon salt for several minutes; pat dry with paper towels.

Fruit and vegetable slices can be dried in several ways:

1. in a dehydrator
2. air dried - place in a single layer on a tray, screen, wicker paper plate holder, etc. for several days or more
3. in a warm oven (140 -200 degrees) for several hours

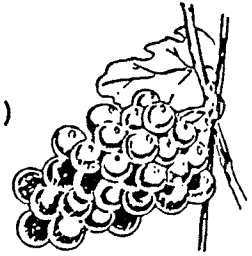
Whole fruits and vegetables can be strung on a heavy gauge wire and left to air dry - the wire, when removed, leaves a hole for stringing.

When fruits and vegetables are dry, string them using twine and heavy needle. Leave a small loop at each end of twine for hanging.



Going further: What rooms in your house would be appropriate for a garland? Do you prefer a pattern or randomness when stringing your materials? Which fruits and vegetables are suitable for certain holidays? Which would you use in a Southwestern style home? A Country style home?

Grapevine Wreaths



Materials: approx. 12 yards of grapevines (per wreath)
pruners or strong shears
ribbon or string for hanger
decorating materials

Grapevine wreaths are fun and easy to make, and it doesn't take much time to twist up a bunch. Of all the methods ever invented for making wreaths, the following is the quickest and simplest one you could ever hope to find.

Begin by locating a source of grapevines; either in the woods, along a fence, or in someones backyard arbor, and get permission to use them, if necessary. Plan to make your wreath while the vines are dormant, which occurs from mid-September through April. Also, take into account that by November many of the leaves will have fallen off the vines, saving you the trouble of having to strip them off and rake them up.

Armed with your cutting tool, head out to your grapevine territory and begin by cutting a vine at least two to three yards long. Strip off the leaves and fruit, but leave the twisty little tendrils on the vine whenever possible. (Leaves and fruit will shrivel and mold or attract bugs, but the tendrils will give your wreath more character.)

Starting with the thicker end, bend your vine into a circle with a diameter of 10 to 12 inches. Then continue twisting and weaving the rest of the vine around this first circle so it will hold together. This first round is approximately the size and shape that your finished wreath will be, so make it as symmetrical as possible. Cut more vines, and continue tucking the ends and weaving them around the first circle until the wreath is as thick as you want it.

When the size and shape of the wreath is just right, you can start adding decorations. Dried flowers, herbs, grasses, and seed pods are natural choices for this. Dried fruit or vegetables (apple slices or red peppers, for example), and large whole spices like cinnamon sticks or star anise work well, too. Silk flowers and bows of any material are another possibility. These materials can be glued on, wired on, or simply wedged into spaces between the vines so you can change the decorations for different occasions.

If you don't happen to have the time to make your wreath when you harvest the vines, just tie them together in manageable bundles and carry them home. If it takes longer than a day to get back to making the wreath, you may have to soak the vines for a few hours to restore their flexibility.

As you get better at making grapevine wreaths, try making them larger or smaller, or use wire to form them into other shapes. You might also experiment with using other types of vines such as honeysuckle, wisteria, or bittersweet.

(Handout received at 1990 National NJHA Convention, Green Bay)

POTPOURRI



Materials:

2 qts. of fresh flowers and herbs (= 1 qt. dried)

Flowers for scent: Roses, carnations, lilacs, lily of the valley, chamomile, bergamot, lavender, violets, mock orange . . .

Flowers for color and bulk: Calendula, hollyhock, delphinium, larkspur, columbine, daffodils, gladioli, pansy, foxglove, pinks, peony, others. . .

Herbs: Angelica root, sweet basil, sweet bay, mints, sweet woodruff, marjoram, rosemary, scented leaf geraniums, lemon verbena, sage, thyme, lemonbalm, sweet clover, others.

1 T. of fixative to hold the scent (calamus root, gum benzoin, orris root, tonka beans, frankincense, myrrh - can be found in some specialty stores, health food stores, pharmacies - if they don't carry it they may be able to order it for you).

A few drops of essential oil (concentrated plant distillates that increase and hold the scent - try sweet orange, lemon, lavender, rose geranium, rose, rosemary, bayberry, pine, patchouli, mint - can be found where you find fixatives)

1 T. of spices (allspice, cloves, cinnamon sticks, star anise, ginger, mace, vanilla beans)
lemon, orange, or other citrus peel
Berries, cones, pods, etc.

Drop oil onto fixative. Mix all blossoms, spices, herbs; add fixative. Store in an airtight container for 4 to 6 weeks, stirring or shaking occasionally to blend. Set out in a large bowl, stirring with hands when you wish to scent the room. Give your potpourri a "rest" after a few weeks by putting it back in its container. Store in a dark place to preserve colors.

Tips for Success

1. The more scented material you use, the longer your potpourri will last.
2. Potpourri can be renewed by adding more scented oil.
3. Try to choose scents that complement each other. Lavender would compete with lilac, but goes nicely with rose. Bayberry and spices are delightful with citrus in a Christmas blend.
4. Dry potpourri is meant to be stimulating visually as well. Keep color combinations and textures in mind.
5. Simmering potpourri is designed to be added to water and simmered on the stove or special crock. These can be simple mixtures of citrus peel, spices, oils, and/or herbs - the bulk and color of flowers is not needed.
6. Have fun experimenting with various combinations. Make up your own specialty blend and give as gifts.

PRESSED FLOWERS

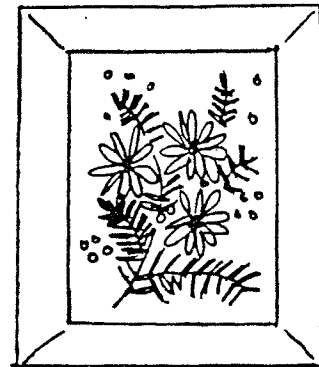
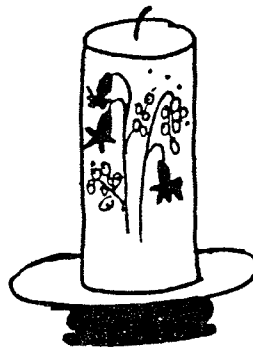
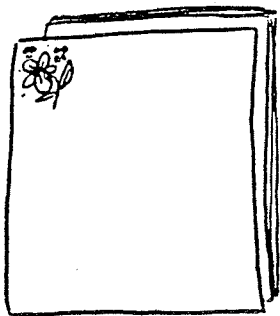
- Materials: Plant and flower press (purchase one or make your own)
Flowers and foliage
- Optional: Stationery and notecards
Heavy paper, frame
Pillar candles
White craft glue
Paraffin wax
Old paint brush



Place desired flowers and foliage in plant press; leave until completely dry. The 4-H Wildflower project literature, 4-H 392, describes how to make a simple plant press and gives tips for getting good quality specimens. "Flat" flowers like violets, pansies, daisies, and cosmos dry well. Ferns are pretty, too.

Once flowers are dry, there are many uses. Here are some ideas:

1. Decorate notecards and stationery. Arrange in a pleasing manner, and attach with glue.
2. Mount on heavy paper, and frame it.
3. Decorate pillar candles. Melt paraffin wax carefully in a tin can set in very hot water. With an old paintbrush, "paint" melted wax over the pressed material onto a candle, to coat the material and attach it to the candle.



Going further: If you know how or know someone who can show you, make suncatchers of pressed flowers between two sheets of leaded glass. Why will your flowers eventually fade? What can you do to slow down the fading?

TUSSIE MUSSIES

Back in sixteenth century Europe, tussie-mussies or nosegays were carried through the streets to protect one from unpleasant smells and the diseases that were thought to go with them. Different plants had symbolic meanings, and eventually became a way to send an unspoken message. Tussie-mussies generally start with a central flower and are surrounded by flowers and foliage in concentric circles. They can contain either fresh or dried flowers, and dried ones are commonly surrounded by lace.

Materials: Assortment of flowers, herbs, foliage
Florist tape
Lace doily or small wedding bouquet "funnel" with lace attached

Start with a central flower. Encircle it with contrasting leaves and flowers, wrapping florist tape around the stems as you go. Finish off with large leaves for emphasis.

Keep flowers fresh by placing in water, or hang upside-down and let dry. If drying your tussie-mussie, it may be easier to place it in the bouquet "funnel" or doily before bouquet becomes brittle.

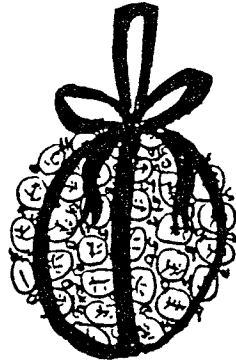


Going further: Check in your local library for books describing the old meanings of various herbs and flowers. Could you put together a bridal tussie-mussie, or one for your sweetheart, or for someone who's sick?

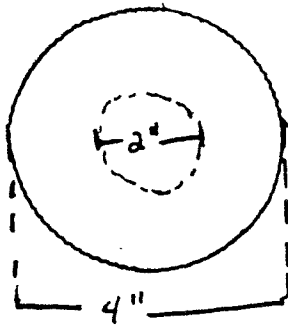
SOME QUICK CRAFT IDEAS

Here are a few quick craft ideas. They would be suitable for holiday ornaments and gifts. Let your imagination take over and come up with your own ideas as well.

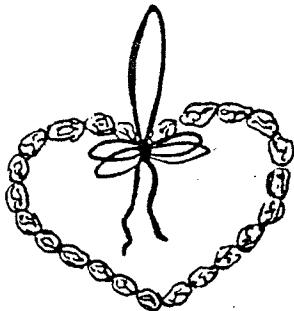
Holiday "Kissing Balls" - Take a 3" or 4" diameter polystyrene ball. Use a glue gun or white craft glue to attach small nuts, cones, pistachios, etc. Place several in bowls, or tie on ribbon and hang from ceiling or doorway.



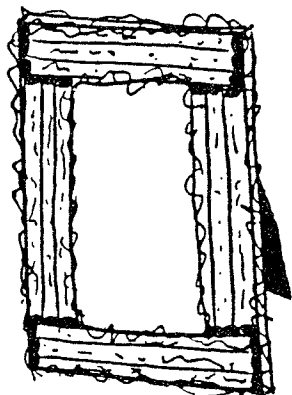
Small Pine Cone Wreaths - Cut a 4" circle out of cardboard, and cut a 2" circle out of the middle of the circle to form a wreath shape. Glue small cedar or tamarack cones to the cardboard form, covering the cardboard completely. Glue ribbon to the back for hanging.



Dried Crabapple Hearts - String small ripe crabapples or cranberries onto medium gauge wire. When dry, bend wire into a heart shape. Glue on ribbon bow and small dried flowers to cover where wire meets. Other ideas: rosebuds, rosehips.



"Woody" Picture Frame - Recycle an old frame or make one out of sturdy cardboard. Cover with glue and a layer of dried moss. When dry, glue on birch or other straight twigs to cover moss.



Preserving Fall Leaves for Arrangements - Collect colorful leaves and small branches. Pound the ends of the leaves and branches with a hammer to help stems absorb water. Place in a warm mixture of one part glycerine (available in drug stores) to three parts water. In several days to a week, the leaves will darken as they fully absorb the glycerine. Taken out of the solution, they will stay pliable indefinitely.



Pine Cone "Trees" - Using the cones from "hard pines" such as red or ponderosa, paint the tips of the scales white to appear as though they are snow covered. Having an assortment of sizes sitting on their bases looks like a small "forest." Other ideas: glue and glitter.

