

# Green, Crafty & Creative

Natural & Recycled Activities for Kids



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## Green, Crafty & Creative

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Adult supervision is recommended for every project featured in this book. Please read the instructions for each activity thoroughly before deciding whether it is appropriate for your child(ren). The authors are not responsible for any injury or damage while replicating activities from this book.

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# Green, Crafty & Creative

## Introduction

Welcome, from all the authors of Green, Crafty and Creative! Together with nine of my closest blogging friends we created this book to help you on your greener path. We are a group of Moms, Crafters, Professionals, Gardeners, Homesteaders, and Educators, all looking for ways to make the world a greener place to live. The talented contributors of this book have collaborated on many projects already, so naturally we decided that we would pool our resources and ideas to create this resource for you.

We have collected some super creative crafts for kids that use recycled materials: think egg cartons and cardboard tubes! We have also compiled an amazing list of the greenest crafts using materials found right outside, such as leaves, pinecones and shells. And just to be sure we were providing a little something for everyone, we have also included heaps of ideas on how to make your home more eco-friendly, from brilliant DIY cleaners to easy gardening and composting instructions.

You'll love getting Green Crafty & Creative!

Evelyne Nemcsok  
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# **Nature Crafts and Activities**

## **For Kids**





# Acorn Wreath

By Georgina Bomer



## Supplies:

- Acorns
- Thick cardboard
- Scissors
- White glue
- Mod Podge (optional, but recommended)
- Ribbon

The first task is to go on an acorn hunt!



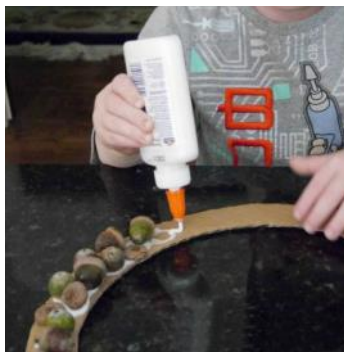
Back at home, cut out a wreath shape from thick cardboard. You may need two layers of cardboard to stabilize the wreath, as the acorns can get pretty heavy.

Add a generous amount of glue to the wreath and start attaching acorns.

Let the wreath dry overnight, then cover it in a layer of Mod Podge or other sealer. This stage is optional but the Mod Podge gives the acorns a

professional looking glossy shine and helps the acorns stick together.

Once everything has dried, add a bow and a hanging ribbon, then hang it up!





# Butternut Ghosts



By Wendy Marcum



## Supplies:

- Butternut squash of various sizes
- White and black acrylic paint
- Paintbrushes
- Mod Podge (or another sealant)

If your squash have any dirt on them give them a quick rinse and dry before applying paint.

Apply the white paint with a large paint brush first and let it dry. You can do either a thin coat or a thick coat, depending on whether you want your ghost to be bright white or to just have a bit of a ghostly appearance with a thin coat of white.

Next, use a small paint brush with the black paint to give your ghost some eyes and a mouth, then let dry. You can use a pencil to lightly sketch your mouth and eyes onto the ghost before painting if you don't want to do it free hand.

Lastly, apply the Mod Podge to seal the paint if you are using your ghosts as outside decorations. If you are keeping them inside, you could skip sealing them.

Once your ghosts are completely dry, you'll be ready to decorate!



# Craft Supplies from Nature

By Nell Kartychok



Crafting supplies found in nature are some of the best available, and they are most often free! There is always something on the ground just waiting for someone to pick up and create something beautiful.



If you cannot find them in nature, you could always check your local craft store. Here is a list of some of the most commonly used items:

Shells, rocks and stones, sand, twigs and small branches, bark, pine cones, leaves, walnut shells, acorns, seeds, flowers, chestnuts.

Here are some more ideas!

Beans and legumes, rice, bird seed, peanut shells, pistachio shells

There are so many things you can craft with each of these natural items. You can paint on them, make mobiles, collages, wall hangings, games, boats, luminaries, jewelry, creatures and animals, nature art, and even your own art supplies! You can also create natural home decor by gluing natural items onto things such as the shell frames found on [page 24](#).

Please be responsible when taking items from the natural world. Some areas and items are protected and should be left as they are. Pay attention to signs and ask local park or county employees whenever possible.

There is no limit to what you can do with all the natural items found above. They can be used for nature crafts, nature art, home decor, pretend play, sensory bins, and so much more!

# Egg Carton Seed Starter



By Georgina Bomer



## Supplies:

- Cardboard egg carton
- Soil
- Seeds
- Water
- Plastic wrap

This seed starter is a wonderful way of recycling an item from your kitchen!

Cut the carton in half, and trim any edges. Place the lid under the bottom section. Fill the cavities with soil. Kids will love to help with this part so you may prefer to do this outside!

Provide your kids with whichever seeds you'd like to grow, and show them how to press them into the soil, then cover them up with soil.

Give the soil some water, then wrap the whole egg carton in plastic wrap (or a large clear plastic bag would also work!).



This creates an incubator for the seeds that will remain moist. Place it somewhere warm and wait for the seeds to start growing – it should only take a few days, depending on the temperature and the seeds.

# Fall Prints in Play Dough

By Meghan Rabuse



## Supplies:

- Assorted leaves, flowers, acorns and grasses
- Sectioned tray
- Fall-scented play dough

Do your kids like to play with play dough? Add a seasonal and natural element with color, scent and collections from your outdoor adventures!

To create fall-scented play dough, use this basic, cooked play dough recipe. Add red food coloring and a teaspoon or two of apple scent, found in the candle making section of your local craft store, to the water for color and scent. These scents are far more affordable, come in a wider variety of flavors and larger quantities than many extracts or flavoring options.



## Basic Play Dough Recipe

- 1 cup water
- 1 cup flour
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup salt
- 2 TBSP vegetable oil
- $\frac{1}{2}$  TBSP cream of tartar

While the play dough cools, take a nature walk through your yard, neighborhood or local park to collect signs of the season: colored leaves, flowers, acorns, branches and wild grasses. Sort them into a sectioned tray, like a dip tray. Then, give each child a portion of play dough to roll out and play with.

Some children may use the play dough as the base for a festive, fall arrangement. Others may use it to make impressions of the various elements they collected. Acorns make interesting impressions, as do fall leaves. What fall creations will your scented play dough and collection inspire?

# Flower Classification



By Julie Nixon



## Supplies:

- Various flowers (Or print out pictures of flowers if more variety is needed)
- Paper
- Pen

Flowers are gorgeous, delicate, and aromatic. But you can do far more than just enjoy a flower. Get your kids learning and exploring with this classification activity that can be modified for various ages and skill levels.

Have your child sort and classify the flowers based on various criteria. Write out the main classification at the top and the different possibilities down the side. Invite your child to organize the flowers in the appropriate grid.

For a two year old, they can sort flowers by color. Have them explore the yard or woods for more of a certain color. A child who knows how to count can group flowers according to how many petals they have. Or vary this by having only two categories, such as even number of petals and an odd number.

An older child can classify flowers based on size, growth rate, soil type or light needs. The possibilities are endless!

Be sure to ask your child about their observations. They may come up with new ways to sort the flowers that you never thought of.

So get outside and enjoy the beauty and science behind flowers!



# Forsythia Suncatchers

By Meghan Rabuse



## Supplies:

- Thin twigs
- Yellow tissue paper, cut in 1-2" squares
- Contact paper
- Yellow cardstock or construction paper
- Clear tape

Signs of spring vary globally... in some areas forsythia in bloom means that spring has finally arrived!



First, take a walk outside and pick out a few bare twigs. Look for ones that have some "V" shapes for character and that will lie relatively flat. Next, prep the frames for your sun catcher. Using 8.5" x 11" sheets of yellow cardstock cut out the centers leaving a 1" frame. Then, cut a piece of contact paper to fit the frame, remove the

backing and attach it to the frame. Last, cut down your twigs to fit the frames, and tape them to the frame edges with clear tape.

Give each child a prepped frame and a small handful of yellow tissue paper squares. Demonstrate how to scrunch up a piece of tissue and place it against the branch on the frame. When they are finished, hang the frames in a sunlit window. The remaining open contact paper is all you need to affix it to the glass. They make beautiful spring sun catchers!





# Leaf Owl Collage



By Nicola Simpson



## Supplies:

- Selection of leaves of different shapes, sizes and colours
- Paper
- Glue
- Scissors
- Googly eyes

Creating collages is a great activity for kids of all ages to enjoy. You can give older children the freedom to explore and use the materials as they wish, leaving you time to help your younger children prepare the materials they need to glue and stick.

Going on a nature walk provides the perfect opportunity to talk to your child about the world around them and to gather supplies for a nature inspired arts and crafts project to do when you get home. Fall is the ideal time to go foraging for leaves to use in arts and crafts. Leaves can be painted, printed or you can use them to create a collage like this awesome owl.



Begin by tracing the outline of an owl onto sheet of paper.

Look through the collection of leaves and play around with them on the template, to work out which will work out best for the different parts of the owl. Cut the leaves if necessary.

Then after the final design is set, glue all of the leaves into place.

Add big googly eyes to finish off the owl in style.

# Leaf Soup

By Nicola Simpson



## Supplies

- Selection of leaves
- Plastic tub
- Kitchen tongs
- Potato masher
- Whisk
- Ladle
- Bowl



Sensory soups are basically made up of water and a selection of other themed ingredients.

Mixing up a sensory soup recipe is perfect for toddlers and pre-schoolers to work on important pouring and scooping skills. Add a selection of kitchen utensils and you have a fine motor skills work out as well.

Place the leaves into a large plastic tub and fill it about half full with water. Be careful not to overfill it or you will have more spills to clean up during and after the activity.



*Tip – place a large towel underneath the plastic tub to catch some of the inevitable spills.*

Invite your child to explore the sensory soup with the materials provided. Let them take the lead as much as possible in which utensils they choose to explore with and how long for.

Try not to stress about the mess as they tip and pour the water into the bowl and then back into the tub. Remember that your little ones are learning and that practice makes perfect.



# Leaf Totem



By Wendy Marcum



## Supplies:

- Sticks
- Leaves

These Leaf Totem Poles are super simple and fun to make! They can be used to decorate your walkway or to mark your favorite path.

Look around on the ground for some sticks. Be sure the sticks are sturdy enough to be placed in the ground and stand, but small enough to be able to thread the leaves onto without breaking them. Next, look for leaves that are various shapes, colors and sizes.

Consider making patterns on your totem pole by alternating leaves that are yellow, red, orange, brown and green. Or you can make a pattern of small, medium and large leaves. Maybe you'll want to mix different sizes and colors to make each totem pole unique, the possibilities are endless!

Take your first leaf and thread it onto the stick, repeat with remaining leaves until you have as many leaves as you like on the stick.

Once your Leaf Totem Pole is ready, find a place to display it. Perhaps you can decorate near a walkway, or mark your favorite path in the woods. Any place where the dirt is a bit soft will be ideal for placing your totem pole. You'll want to push the thicker end of the stick into the ground so it will stay upright.



# Make A Bug

By Wendy Marcum



## Supplies:

- Nature finds to create your bugs
- Paper
- Marker
- Glue



What are your child's favorite bugs or insects? This craft will show you how to use everyday outdoor finds, like sticks and flowers to recreate their favorite bugs or insects.

First, decide what bugs your child would like to make. We chose to make a dragonfly, a butterfly and a caterpillar. If your child is not quite sure which bug to make you could check insect themed books for some inspiration!

Next, make a template to help your child look for shapes in nature that can be used to recreate the bugs. Simply draw the general shape of the bug you are making so your child can use it as a reminder of what shapes they are looking for.

Head out into your backyard or the woods and take a look around. What natural shapes can your child find that mimic the shapes on their template? Gather all your nature supplies and bring them back to your work area.

Use the glue to attach the nature supplies to your template and recreate your bug!



# Nature Scavenger Hunt



By Nell Kartychok



## Supplies:

- 9 X 11" piece of cardboard
- Piece of construction paper
- Glue
- Nature items collected from your backyard, park or out in nature (have your hunt in the same place that you collect your items)
- Basket or bag

There are many ways to create a nature scavenger hunt. This one uses items found in nature glued to a large sensory card. Other variations can be found below.

- Glue construction paper to cardboard
- Glue nature items onto construction paper and allow to dry
- Give card and basket to child in the area that you collected the items and tell them to find the items that match what is on the card
- When they bring their basket back with all the items they have found sort them and discuss the items. This is a great matching and sensory activity

## Variations:

- Place the items in a bag to show the child what they need to collect
- Bring the card along on the hunt to refer to, or allow the child to go hunting using only memory
- Have child collect a certain number of each of the items to practice counting
- After the hunt place a blindfold on the child and see if they can identify the items by touch
- Hunt for textures, colors, shapes, sizes, etc.
- Create a printable instead of a card with real items

There is no right or wrong way to have a nature scavenger hunt. The whole point is to get outside and have fun learning about nature. Use any of these ideas or do it your own way. Happy hunting!

# Nature Sensory Bin

By Nell Kartychok



A nature sensory bin is a container, basket, or tray filled with items found in nature. The best part about natural sensory bins is that they will all be different.

A sensory bin of someone who lives near a beach will look different from the sensory bin of someone who lives in the mountains. Just as a sensory bin gathered in the spring will look different from one collected in the fall.

Wonderful bins, baskets, and trays can be found at thrift stores and garage sales. Don't put anything in that may be harmful or toxic to touch or taste. When in doubt leave it out. Please don't allow your children to play with anything they are not yet mature enough to handle. If you child still puts things in their mouth make sure you don't include small items. Treasures you might add to a nature sensory bin include:

Pinecones, feathers, sticks, rocks/stones, shells, leaves, fruits, vegetables, acorns, seeds, fresh herbs , flowers.

Sensory play contributes in crucial ways to brain development. From the time of their birth, children have learned everything they know about the world by touching, tasting, smelling, seeing, and hearing. Stimulating the senses sends signals to children's brains that help to strengthen neural pathways important for all types of learning. Think of it as "food for the brain."



Nature sensory bins are a wonderful way for children to develop their sensory systems, and learn about the world around them. As children play with items found in nature they learn more about them. Discovering and differentiating these characteristics is a first step in classification, or sorting — an important part of learning and discovery.

# Nature Sunprint



By Wendy Marcum



## Supplies:

- Sunprint Kit
- Leaves, flowers, grass etc.
- Cardboard

Have you ever noticed how the sun can lighten the color of an object if it is exposed to the sun's rays for an extended period of time? A Sunprint Kit is a fun way to see that change more quickly and to use natural items to make imprints on Sunprint paper.

Look over the directions on your Sunprint Kit and then gather your supplies. Take a look around your backyard for uniquely shaped leaves and flowers and gather several to use.



Back at your indoor work station, assemble the supplies by laying down the cardboard, then the Sunprint paper. The leaves and flowers are next, then the acrylic sheet from the kit goes on top.

Carry your layered kit outside and expose it to the sunlight. Leave it in the sun until the Sunprint paper turns white. This can take 1-5 minutes, depending on how bright the sun is. Be careful not to overexpose the paper - setting a timer is a good idea!

Bring the layered kit back inside and quickly remove the natural items and then rinse the Sunprint paper with water and lay it flat to dry.

When your Sunprint paper is dry you can enjoy it as it is or make it into a card for someone special, maybe even use a couple of pieces as wrapping paper!

# Nature Tables

By Nell Kartychok



A nature table is a place in the home dedicated to placing items found in the natural world and other objects that reflect the season. It is most often a table, corner or shelf that is meant to be manipulated, played with, and enjoyed.

Nature tables are made to reflect the subtle changes in the world surrounding us so children can begin to take notice of these changes and the passing of time. The idea is to allow children to connect with the objects and the scene depicted on the table. This connection is said to foster an inner relationship with the items and rhythms found in the natural world.

Nature tables also create a rich sensory experience for the child. Playing with objects found in nature provides the perfect input for the development of a child's sensory systems. They can also be used for pretend play.

Making space for a nature table in the home get kids outside learning about nature, and collecting things to bring home and explore in more depth.

Nature Tables Can Include:

Any items found in nature that are safe for children to handle and play with (rocks, leaves, sticks, acorns, feathers, pinecones, shells, etc.), real house plants, fresh flowers, seasonal artwork and crafts, play silks in seasonal colors, seasonal books, seasonal toys and dolls, seasonal foods, vases, baskets, bowls, bins, and trays and anything else that reflects nature, the season, holiday, festival, culture, or family values.

There are many wonderful ways to design a nature table. The space you will use, your interests and values, the resources you have available, and the ages of your children will all influence the nature table you create. It can be as simple or complex as you want it to be.



# Outdoor Nature Collage



By Georgina Bomer



## Supplies:

- Large piece of cardboard
- Contact paper (sticky backed plastic)
- Tape
- Items found in nature!

To prepare the collage board, cover the cardboard in contact paper, sticky side out. Wrap the edges of the paper around the back of the cardboard and tape them into place. This can be quite tricky, but try and make the contact paper as smooth as possible.

Head outside with the kids and your new collage board and get collecting and creating! You may prefer to suggest a rule that means they can only collect items that have already *fallen* from a plant, tree, or flower - not from something that is still growing.

Here are some ideas:

- Petals
- Leaves
- Small twigs
- Feathers
- Grass
- Seeds (like maple or sycamore)

Try this activity in spring, summer or fall and you'll get three completely different collages, even if the kids only collect from the same area!



The great thing about this activity is that the board is completely reusable! You may find that petals don't look so great the next day, but the kids can either keep adding to it, or remove it all and start again.

# Paper Bag Leaf Owls

By Meghan Rabuse



## Supplies:

- Brown, paper lunch bag
- Large, googly eyes (optional)
- Fall leaves, acorn tops, twigs
- Newspaper or packing paper
- Glue dots
- Pipe cleaner

First, and the most important part, go for a walk in your yard or around your neighborhood to gather fallen leaves, acorns, twigs, and any other materials you think will contribute to your owl. Next, empty your bag, lay it flat, and create an owl face in the upper third of your brown bag. You can use googly eyes or acorn tops to make the eyes. Use a leaf for a beak.

After you put a face on the owl, stuff the bottom half of the lunch bag. Torn and crumpled newspaper or packing paper make for good stuffing, as do extra leaves, if you collected enough on your walk. Once the bottom half of the bag is stuffed, use a pipe cleaner to cinch and tie off the face of your owl from the bottom stuffed portion of the bag.



Attach your remaining leaves with glue dots to give your owls wings, chest feathers, and any other adornments. You can insert twigs into your bag and attach leaves to make more dramatic wings. Make multiple owls and use them as fun, fall décor!



# Pine Cone Garland



By Jennifer Tammy



## Supplies:

- Ribbon (twine gets too tangled)
- Hot glue gun
- Pine cones
- Leftover paint
- Glitter, optional

Attach the pine cones to a length of ribbon first, using hot glue or a strong craft glue.

Allow the glue to dry, and then pour the paint into narrow, tall containers, big enough to fit the largest pine cone.

Use the ribbon to help dip the pinecones one at a time into the paint. Allow the paint to drip off and then lay on a protected surface to dry. If adding glitter, do so when the paint is wet.

Alternatively you could paint the pinecones using a paintbrush, however dipping is a quicker process.

Embellish the pine cones however you would like - pom poms, bells, or leave them plain. Let your kids get creative!

Depending on the type of paint that you use, they should last for many years.



# Pine Cone Gnomes

By Jennifer Tammy



## Supplies:

- Pine cones
- Felt - one white and one color
- Glitter
- Craft glue and felt glue
- Acorns
- Office or laundry clip, optional
- Permanent markers or acrylic paint



Cut mitten shapes, feet shapes, and triangles out of the colored felt, and a beard-shape or triangle out of the white felt.

Roll the color felt triangle into a cone and add a dab of felt glue to hold. (Use the clip to help keep the hat closed, if needed.)

Attach the acorn to the top, smallest end of the pine cone for the "head,"

and then attach the mittens and feet. Attach the beard and hat once the acorn and hat have fully dried.



Optionally, you can leave your gnome's face blank or adorn it with markers or paint.

# Relief Art Cards



By Wendy Marcum



## Supplies:

- Leaves of various shapes and sizes
- White paper and colored card
- Crayons or colored pencils
- Glue
- Scissors (optional)

Head outside and find some beautiful leaves. For younger children it's a good idea for the leaves to be flat and of a good size. Also, look for leaves that have unique shapes, textures and ridges that will emerge as you are making your cards.

Bring the leaves to your work station and one at a time, lay them flat and "face" side up on a sheet of paper, then place another sheet on top. Use a crayon (or pencil) to color gently over the leaf so the shape of the leaf emerges. Continue until you have added as many leaves as you would like to the paper.

Once you are done coloring over the leaves you can make a card by gluing your paper to a piece of card stock and then folding in half to make a large card.

You could use your scissors to cut the paper and card stock to make mid-size or even small cards or place setting markers if you prefer.



# Ribbon Sticks

By Emma Craig



## Supplies:

- Sticks
- Ribbon (various colors)



Collecting the materials is at least half the fun for this project! After your sticks are chosen, it's time to pick some ribbon colors. Tie an ordinary knot - nothing fancy needed - and then tie it again. (With lots of waving and dancing, those ribbons need the double-knot!)



Then you're ready to give it a whirl!

Stuck for ideas of what to do with it now? Children are wonderful for coming up with their own ideas (at least at times...) but here are some to get you started:

- Dance with them! Turn on some music or sing a happy tune. Either way, twirl and wave and make those ribbons float in the breeze!
- Spin them! With the stick aimed to the ground, make circular movements. The effect is awesome!
- Write with them! Make letters in the air. The trailing ribbon makes it way more fun than writing with a pen!



# Shell Frames



By Nell Kartychok



## Supplies

- Shells
- Frames (raw wood or finished)
- Sandpaper (if using raw wood)
- Crafting glue (for use with shells & wood)
- Mod Podge and foam brush

Raw wood frames: These will need sanding first. You could paint the frames with a wood sealer or acrylic paint and allow to dry before applying glue and shells if you wish.

Place the glue around the frame - get as creative as you like with a glue pattern or just draw a simple line of glue around the edge of the frame. Invite your child to place the shells wherever they would like on the glue.

After the glue has dried completely, use a foam brush to apply Mod Podge on top of the wood and the shells.

A nice idea is to make handprints to go inside these frames! Paint your child's hand with acrylic paint. Carefully press onto the canvas paper and carefully lift off. Allow the paint to dry, cut to size and place inside the frame. A good trick is to use the insert or backing inside the frame to place over hand print and trace to easily cut to the correct size.

Even young children will find these shell frames easy to craft. When you include your child's handprint, footprint, or artwork they also make a beautiful keepsake gift.



# Sorting Seashells

By Meghan Rabuse



## Supplies

- Assorted shells
- Spray paint (optional)
- Trays or plates for sorting (optional)

Incorporating math into your preschoolers' daily outdoor play is easy. The outside world is full of free math manipulatives! For seashell sorting, if you aren't on a beach vacation or don't already have a shell collection of your own to play with, you can find bags of assorted shells online or at a dollar store. To add additional variation, you can give your shells quick pops of color with spray paint.

Lay out a selection of shells and ask your child to tell you about them: how are they alike? How are they different? They may talk about shape and color. Size and texture are other categories for discussion, and all these categories can be used to sort the shells.

Designate defined areas for sorting. You can use plates, divided dip platters, lines in the sidewalk or even draw borders in the sand on the beach.

Start by sorting by shape – conical vs. fan-shaped shells. Next, sort by color.

Last, sort the shells by size. You can group them or even order them from smallest to largest. For older or more advanced children, sort by more difficult categories, like texture, or once shells are sorted, use the separated groups to build patterns.





# Twig Tree Art



By Emma Craig



## Supplies:

- Sticks
- Cardstock or other heavy paper (the insides of cereal boxes make great sturdy canvases!)
- Tacky glue
- Pom poms or buttons

Nature materials make great craft supplies for a few reasons - they're abundant, they're free, and they're fun to collect! Add more traditional craft supplies and you can make some beautiful creations, like this tree made from...a tree! (Well, sticks, but you get the idea...)

Go for a nature walk or search around your yard for some sticks. The best ones for this project will be the flatter ones, so that they're easier to glue on the paper.

Break up the sticks if they're too long and play around with arranging them as you want them. Try making a tree (as shown) or come up with another creative idea!

Glue the sticks where you want them and let them dry. (If the tacky glue isn't working for your twigs, a glue gun most certainly will!)

Then it's time to add some color! Use pom poms, buttons, or even stickers and markers to decorate your work of art. This would be a fun one to do with seasonal colors - think reds, oranges and yellows for autumn, green and red for the Christmas holidays, or pastels to celebrate spring!



# Walnut Boat

By Jennifer Tammy



## Supplies:

- Walnut shells, cleaned (see below)
- Hot glue gun or sticky putty
- Sticks
- Leaves



To clean a walnut, smash the green nut open outside on top of a hard surface protected with newspaper. Let the walnut sit out in the sun for a couple of days to dry out (or on a window sill if you are worried about squirrel bandits).

Separate the nut shell however you would like - there are lots of good, safe methods to choose from.

Attach a small stick to the inside of the walnut using a dab of glue, or some mac tack. Find a leaf to serve as the walnut boat's sail, and poke the stick through the top and bottom of the leaf, allowing it to billow out.



These walnut boats are actually quite buoyant, and can float in a water table, pond, or even the bath!



# Welcome Wreath for Birds



By Evelyne Nemcsok



## Supplies:

- Pockets / bag / basket
- Long grass
- Leaves
- Flowers
- Twigs
- Pretty much anything with a stem!

Here is a child-made welcome wreath to decorate trees, birdhouses, fences and benches, for the birds! Plan a scavenging expedition to gather materials to decorate for the birds! Search on a path, or in any park or yard where you are allowed to 'scavenge' for natural materials.

Use long grass or a long stem from a spent flower, and form a ring shape (aim for a 5-8 inch diameter). Tie the ends of your ring together to make a wreath.

Use the other things you've found to embellish. Take leaves, place them on the wreath shape, and wrap the stem around the wreath to secure. Add as many embellishments as you wish!

Hang these little wreaths on tree branches and anywhere else you'd like to make your little bird friends feel welcome!

This activity can be done in the snowy winter too! Even the birds would appreciate a little winter pick me up!



# **Trash to Craft**

## **For Kids**



# Bubble Wrap Jellyfish Collage



By Nicola Simpson



## Supplies:

- Bubble wrap
- Googly eyes
- Pipe cleaners
- Blue and green paint
- Glue
- Glitter
- Sticky tape
- Paper

Bubble wrap is perfect for making these jellyfish collages, as the see-through texture mimics the jellyfish's translucent body.

Dilute blue paint with a few splashes of water and paint this over a sheet of white paper. Adding water to the paint helps to recreate the watery sea for the jellyfish to swim in. Use green paint to add some seaweed to the picture.

Whilst the paint is drying make a start on creating the jellyfish. Cut out a semi circle shape out of the bubble wrap. This is best done by an adult as bubble wrap can be tricky to cut with scissors.

Cut a pipe cleaner into four equal sized pieces. Attach them to the back of the bubble wrap using sticky tape.

Turn the jellyfish back over and add two googly eyes. Glue the jellyfish over the deep blue sea.

Finish off the collage by spreading glue along the bottom of the sea and sprinkling glitter over it to create a sparkly sea bed.



# Cardboard Castle 1

By Emma Craig



## Supplies:

- Cardboard
- Paint
- Utility knife
- 2 Cardboard tubes
- Glue gun

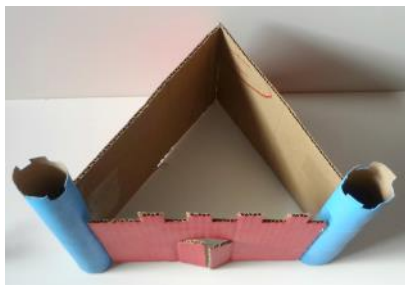


Castles are known for sparking the imagination of young and old alike. Whether inhabited by princesses and kings or wizards or soldiers, there is sure to be lots of pretend play when this craft is finished...because making it is only half the fun!

Start making the walls of your castle by cutting them out with a utility knife. Then carve out the crenellations (those are the notches at the top of the castle wall). Hint: pencil in where you're going to cut first! Don't forget to make the notches in the cardboard tubes as well.

Painting time. Pick the colors to make your castle unique. Thinking about adding polka dots? Zebra stripes? Splatters? Go for it! Make your fortress one-of-a-kind!

After everything is dry, you'll need a door. (Unless your residents are going to scale the wall every time they want to enter!) Draw lightly with a pencil and then use a utility knife to cut it out.



Finally it's time to assemble. Use a glue gun to put all the pieces together. No glue gun? You can also use packaging tape to stick it all together.

The last - and best step: play with your new creation!

# Cardboard Castle 2



By Meghan Rabuse



## Supplies:

- Large cardboard boxes
- Painter's tape
- Serrated bread knife (adults only)
- Divided platter
- Washable tempura paint
- Foam brushes

To make the castle, tape the four top flaps of the box together at the corners so that they stand up, adding extra height to the box. Then cut crenellations around the top of the box with the bread knife to give it the classic castle look. Cut an arched opening in one side of each box, leaving the flap attached at the bottom to create a door which can be open and shut.

Then take the castles outside for decorating! Set up an 'invitation to paint' tray, also known as a divided dip tray which you can buy from the dollar store.



Setting up this activity outdoors allows a lot of artistic freedom, few limitations, and room for plenty of mess! They can mix colors, splatter paint, and decorate the castle, inside and out. And when your artist is done, all the mess, even on them, can be hosed away.

# Cardboard Tube Bird Feeder

By Karen Creel



## Supplies:

- Empty cardboard tubes
- Peanut butter
- Seeds (buy a good quality seed that has few added fillers)
- String or wire to hang the feeder



Winter is a great time to introduce your kids to winter bird feeding. But bird feeding can also be a year-round activity, and can become something for the whole family to enjoy.



Cover the cardboard tube with peanut butter. Roll the tube in the seeds.

Thread twine or wire through the tube. Hang it high enough off the ground, away from predators such as cats, and near a window where you can see all the antics that go on at the feeder.

*If your kids enjoyed this craft, try these other activities!*

Purchase a guide to bird identification, and a small pair of binoculars to allow a close up view of the birds for easy identification.

Make a visit to a local bird feeding store, or hardware store, and look at all the bird seed available for birds in your area.

In the spring, add birdhouses and a bird bath to your yard for spring bird watching activities.

Keep a journal of all the birds you see in your area.





# Cardboard Tube Farm



By Nicola Simpson



## Supplies for the Pig:

- Cardboard tube
- Pink felt or paper
- Googly eyes
- Pink and brown paint

Paint the tube with pink paint. Cut out one pink circle and two small pink triangles of pink felt or paper. Attach the googly eyes and triangle ears to the face and add on a snout using a black marker. Glue the face onto the tube. Finish off the pig with some muddy brown fingerprint painting.

## Supplies for the Sheep:

- Cardboard tube
- White paint
- Black felt or paper
- Googly eyes
- Cotton wool balls

Paint the tube with white paint. Cut out a circle of black felt or paper for the sheep's face. Attach the googly eyes to the face. Glue the face to the tube. Glue on some cotton wool balls to give the sheep a nice woolly coat.

## Supplies for the Chick:

- Cardboard tube
- Yellow paint
- Yellow and orange felt or paper
- Googly eyes
- Feathers

Paint the tube with yellow paint. Cut out a yellow circle and an orange triangle from the felt or paper. Attach the googly eyes and beak onto the face. Glue the face onto the tube. Glue on lots of feathers.



# Cardboard Tube Houses

By Emma Craig



## Supplies:

- Cardboard tubes
- Paint
- Tacky glue
- Cardstock
- Clothespins
- Permanent marker
- Scissors



Start by painting the cardboard tubes. While the paint dries, fold a piece of cardstock of any color and cut out a trapezoid shape. Trim it to a size you like for a roof.



When the tube is dry, it's time to put the roof together. Push in on two sides of the top of the cardboard tube. Then pinch the opposite sides together. (Don't worry - it's much easier than it sounds!) Add a bit of glue inside to help it keep this shape. Before that glue dries, add some glue to your trapezoid roof. Attach with clothespins to keep the roof in place and let it dry.

Use scissors or markers to make a door and some windows and whatever other decorations your kids would like. Doorbell? Mailbox? A decorative hedge?

Have fun being a house designer and inviting people to live in your new-found village!





# Cardboard Tube Vehicle



By Emma Craig



## Supplies:

- Paper towel roll
- 4 bottle caps
- Paint
- Utility or craft knife
- Permanent marker
- Hot glue gun

The first step is to decide what color to make your awesome vehicle. Blue? Hot pink? Puce? Go for it! When it's all dry, cut out some holes for the seats with a sharp utility or craft knife (this part is for the adults). Be sure your passengers will be able to sit comfortably - you don't want any complaints!

Time to hot-glue the wheels. The bottle caps serve not only as a decoration, but also to keep your train from tipping over and all your passengers from falling out. (Then they'll really complain!)

Finally, decorate with markers as desired. A flame? A name? The possibilities are endless.



Then it's time to take this baby for a test drive. Load in the passengers (hands inside the vehicle at all times) and go for a spin. Vroom!

# Coffee Filter Butterflies

By Jennifer Tammy



## Supplies:

- Coffee filters (two per butterfly)
- Watercolor paint
- Paintbrushes
- Wooden laundry pegs or clothespins

Paint the coffee filters using the watercolor paint, adding lots of water to encourage the watercolor paint to run and mix with the other colors. You can alternatively use markers and then paint overtop with water for an effect somewhat reminiscent of watercolor paint, without the mess.

Let the coffee filters dry completely, which can take up to four hours (if you choose to dry them outside, place a small rock on each filter to prevent them from flying away).

Once they are dry, scrunch up the butterflies by pinching and gathering them in the middle and thread two coffee filters (one at a time) onto each wooden laundry peg.



If you are unable to find split laundry pegs, use hot glue to attach the coffee filters to a wooden clothespin, or twist a pipe cleaner around the coffee filters and tie securely to the clothespin.

# Easter Bonnets



By Jennifer Tammy



## Supplies:

- Leftover paper plates, from entertaining
- Sticks or other adornments
- Washable tempera paint
- Paintbrushes and sponges
- Hole punch
- Yarn

Have your children paint the paper plates using the paintbrushes and sponges. Allow the paint to dry for a couple of hours, so that the adornments can stick to a dry surface.

Decorate the bonnet with flowers, pom poms, stickers - whatever you have on hand.

Use the hole punch to make two even holes 1" from the edge of the plate, on opposite sides of the plate.

Thread the yarn through one side of the plate, using the hole. Tie securely and then measure out how much of a length you will need by placing it on your child's head and stretching the yarn underneath their chin and around their head to the second hole. Cut to a length that firmly keeps the bonnet on your child's head without hurting their neck or chin. Tie securely and cut off the excess yarn.



# Egg Carton Bees

By Evelyn Nemcsok



## Supplies:

- Egg carton
- Scissors
- Black and yellow tempera or acrylic paint
- Googly eyes
- Pipe cleaners (cut to about 3" long)
- Mini pom poms
- Tissue paper (cut in semi circles, approx. the same size as the egg cup)
- Glue
- Paintbrush

Cut the egg carton into individual cups. Poke two small holes in the top of each egg cup. Paint the outside of the egg cups black, and let dry.

Paint yellow stripes to resemble a bee. Let the paint dry.

Glue on the googly eyes, or if you have the peel and stick on googly eyes, peel and stick on some eyes! Put them on the side of the egg cup, or right on top! Again, let your little ones use their imaginations!



Fold one end of a piece of pipe cleaner, and push through the holes you made earlier, from the inside. The folded end will keep it from slipping through the egg cup.

Glue a mini pom-pom onto the back of the bee, for the stinger. Glue the straight side of the tissue paper semi circles onto the edges of the cup to make wings.

# Egg Carton Owls



By Evelyne Nemcsok



## Supplies:

- Egg carton
- Scissors
- Construction paper (from the scrap bin if you've got one!)
- Googly eyes
- Glue

This recycled egg carton craft is really cute and really easy! A super fun way to recycle trash to crafts for kids!

Cut the egg carton into individual cups. Pair them up, and glue tops to bottoms.

Cut out some wings and a beak for each owl. For the wings, draw a half circle the diameter being approximately equal to the height of the owl, and include a flap or strip with the half circle.

For the beak, cut out a diamond shape.

Once you have your shapes cut out, glue on the beak and the googly eyes!

Fold the strip that you included with the wings back, and glue that to the side of the owl body.

Fill the top of the egg carton with some paper grass, and you have an owl family nest!



# Egg Carton Pirate Ship

By Emma Craig



## Supplies:

- Egg carton
- 2 wooden skewers
- Construction paper or cardstock
- Stickers or markers



Ahoy, mateys! Ready to build a pirate ship for some fun pretend play? This is a quick craft that's easy to personalize to make it uniquely your own. Raid the recycling bin and you're ready to get started!

To start, cut off the cover and the side flap of the egg carton. Paint the egg carton if your child would like - or leave it au naturel. It's all up to the designer!

Cut the paper into rectangles and decorate with stickers, gems, or markers. Make it unique - so everyone on the ocean will know your pirates when they see them coming!



Poke the skewers through your paper sails and then into the egg carton. (Some will already have a hole - if not, you'll have to poke those through, too). Keeping the skewers standing straight can take some adjusting - a bit of clay underneath can help, or simply use tape to secure them. You don't want any pirates knocked into the icy sea by a falling sail!

Load up the passengers and you're all set to sail the seven seas!



# Food Container Boat



By Georgina Bomer



## Supplies:

- Plastic box with lid
- Plastic cup
- Pouch cap
- Plastic bag
- Craft knife
- Wooden chopstick

- Low temp glue gun and glue\*
- Scissors
- Permanent marker (optional)

\*Children using low temp glue guns must be supervised at all times.

Make sure all the recycled items are clean and dry. Prepare the craft by using the craft knife to cut a hole in the base of the plastic cup so that the chopstick can poke through.

Show your child how to push the chopstick through the hole, and then use the glue gun to stick the cup to the box lid. Then glue the pouch cap onto the side of the cup to look like a ship's wheel.

Cut a triangle from the plastic carrier bag and poke one side of it through the chopstick to form a sail.

Use a permanent marker to add extra detail, if desired. And now your boat is ready to float!





# Junk Robot

By Nicola Simpson



## Supplies

- 1 paper plate
- 3 craft sticks
- 4 cardboard tubes
- 2 small boxes
- 1 egg carton
- 9 plastic bottle tops
- Tin foil
- Bubble wrap



- Silver Paint
- Easel roll
- Mini springs (from broken pens)

Cover all of the tubes, boxes, cartons, paper plate and craft sticks with a thick layer of silver paint and leave to dry.

Cut a large sheet of paper from your easel roll and lay this across the table. Tear a large sheet of tinfoil and glue this into the center of the paper to form the main body of the robot.

Cut a small rectangle of bubble wrap and stick this onto the top part of the tinfoil. Use double-sided tape to attach the egg carton and bottle tops. Glue on the cardboard tube arms and mini springs for fingers. Glue on the box legs and cardboard tube feet.

Moving up to the head, use tape to secure 3 popsicle sticks to the back of the paper plate, before gluing this down onto the paper. Finish off the robot's face with more bottle tops for the eyes and nose. Then add the googly eyes and use a black marker to add on the mouth.

# Learning with Stickers



By Julie Nixon



## Supplies:

- Children's scissors
- Construction paper
- A writing utensil
- Leftover sticker sheet

If your house is littered with the remnants of stickers-long-past, this activity is for you! It's a great way to use up sticker scraps while practicing fine motor skills. No waste here!

Have the child cut up pieces of the leftover sheet. The smaller the better. This will create random assorted shapes and is great for practicing scissor skills. Be sure to supervise!

Draw a hollowed out letter or shape on a sheet of paper. In this example, the letter "T" was drawn.

Next, have the child peel off the sticker shards. This is significantly more challenging now that the sticker is no longer a part of the larger sheet.

Have the child place the stickers *within* the framework of the letter or shape. As the sticker remnants cluster together, the shape will become more obvious and colorful. Fill in as many shapes and letters as the child is interested in. They can even try freestyle shapes, without the outline to contain them.



# Paper Bag Scarecrow

By Evelyn Nemcsok



## Supplies:

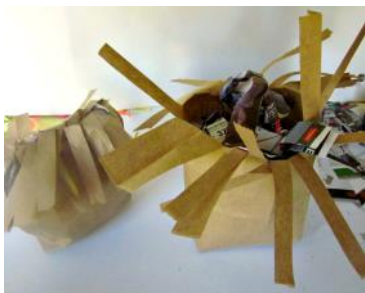
- Used paper bag
- Construction paper and/or previously used wrapping paper
- Stapler
- Glue
- Newspaper / packing paper / stuffing of some sort

Re-use brown paper lunch bags, recycle flyers, and use up paper scraps all at the same time with this very fun, and super cute scarecrow craft.

Cut the top of the paper bag into strips, but do not cut the strips from the bag. Fill the paper bag with newspaper / packing paper / anything really that you have laying around, close the bag just under the hairline and staple to fasten. Flatten the hair down, and curl the front hair up with scissors.

Cut a large circle out of construction paper and some shapes for facial features, and hat embellishments.

Take the hat circle, find its center, and shape it into a cone, stapling the tip of the cone to the centre of the scarecrows hair, at the top of the closed bag.



Now glue the facial features on, and add some decorations to the hat. Make a construction paper braid for a hat band or embellish with more construction paper decorations, such as shredded paper for straw, straws and moons, and maybe even a crow.

# Recycled Lid Animals



By Georgina Bomer



## Supplies:

- Various plastic lids, washed and dried
- Glue
- Googly eyes
- Pom poms
- Yarn, bottle caps, plastic bags
- Permanent marker

Set out a variety of materials in advance. It is useful to have some ideas of animals you can make in advance, but then let your kids take the lead!

Here are three suggestions:

**Lion** – cut yarn into small pieces (great fine motor practice!) and glue them to the edge of the lid. Add googly eyes, a nose, and draw on extra features with a permanent marker.



**Elephant** – cut ears and trunk from a plastic grocery bag and glue onto a lid. Add googly eyes and draw on other details.



**Polar Bear** – cut ears from the plastic bag, glue on googly eyes and a black pom pom nose onto a white lid. Finish by drawing on additional features.

These are just three examples but depending on which recyclables and craft materials you have on hand – you can create almost any animal!

# Shrinky Dink Bugs

By Georgina Bomer



## Supplies:

- #6 plastic clear food containers
- Permanent markers
- Single hole punch
- Baking sheet
- Parchment paper
- Baking pan or other ovenproof weight
- Pipe cleaners
- Wire cutters

Cut out pieces of plastic about 4x6" for each bug. Depending on the age of your child, you may prefer to let them draw the bugs themselves or to draw an outline first for them to color in. *Please note that as this activity involves permanent markers, please supervise your children at all times!*

When they have finished coloring, trim around the outline of the bug and use the hole punch to make three holes in either side of the bug for adding legs at a later stage.

Place the bugs onto a baking sheet, cover with parchment paper and place a baking pan or other weight on top. This is to stop the plastic curling up when it cooks. Place them in a 300F preheated oven for about 4 minutes. The bugs will have reduced down to about 2.5" in length!



Use the wire cutters to cut pipe cleaners into small pieces (do not use scissors!) and twist them into the holes on the bugs to form legs.

# Styrofoam Prints



By Meghan Rabuse



## Supplies:

- Cleaned, Styrofoam takeout box
- Pencil
- Paint
- Foam brush
- Paper

How often do you get takeout in Styrofoam containers? Or bring home leftover food in one? The next time you bring one home, instead of throwing it away, use it to make great, multi-purpose crafting treasure with these Styrofoam prints.

First, you will need to clean and remove all food residues from the box. Next, cut out the flat sections of the box – usually just the top and/or bottom. Using a pencil, press firmly into the Styrofoam to create your print design. A mechanical pencil without the lead extended works well.

Once your design is complete, apply paint to the surface with a foam craft brush. Be sure to put on a relatively thick coat, and cover the surface completely. Now, press the painted side down on a clean sheet of paper. Rub firmly over the back of your Styrofoam to be sure the paint transfers and your complete design is captured. To make more prints or to change print colors, wash and apply a new paint color.

Make the same print in multiple colors to create a series! You can also make prints on cardstock to create custom cards, or use white butcher paper and repeat your print over and over to create graphic wrapping paper!





# Upcycled Astronaut Boots

By Julie Nixon



## Supplies:

- Two rectangular tissue boxes
- White construction paper (enough to cover the two boxes, roughly five sheets)
- Scissors
- Glue
- Glitter or black sand (optional)
- Pipe cleaners or yarn (optional)

Let your child's imagination soar with these easy to make costume boots. Your child will love stomping around and pretending they are nearly weightless after making these simple "shoes".



Using glue, cover the tissue boxes with white construction paper. Trim any overhang or excess. (Be sure to reopen/cut out the opening so your child's foot can eventually fit in the top.)

Next, allow your child to decorate these clunky space shoes. Consider adding glitter around the bottom (with the aid of a glue stick) to represent moon dust. Use pipe cleaners, yarn, or other material to create the illusion of shoe laces.

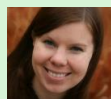
Allow your child to pretend and imagine to their heart's content. And don't forget to join in the fun. They could always use a fellow astronaut, NASA intelligence or even an alien!



# Upcycled Instruments



By Julie Nixon



Instead of going out and buying toys made of cheap plastic, involve your kids in making their own toys! These musical instruments were made from common trash that most people have lying around the house. Your children will be so proud of their creations, they won't even mind having fewer store bought toys.

## Supplies for the drums:

- Large empty canister with lid

The drum is practically made from the very beginning. Make sure the lid is sealed, then invite your child to decorate the outside of the drum in any way they see fit. Once they are pleased with their craft, they can drum using any type of stick or just use their hands like a bongo.

## Supplies for the harp:

- Large empty tissue box
- 4-8 rubber bands

Decorate the outside of the box as desired. Once it is thoroughly adorable, stretch the rubber bands over the outside of the box, evenly spaced. (Adjust the size and tension of the bands if you want each "string" to sound different.) Your child can strum and pluck to their heart's content.

## Supplies for the horn:

- Paper towel tube
- 1 rubber band
- Small square of cling wrap

Decorate the outside of the tube then place the cling wrap tightly over one end, securing with the rubber band. When the child sings or hums into the open end, the cling wrap will make a fun vibrating noise.



# Upcycled Shirt for Toys

By Emma Craig



## Supplies:

- Old shirt (long-sleeved)
- Scissors

When a chill hits the air, it's jacket and sweater time. And even stuffed friends can get chilly, right? (Hey, it could happen!) This little sweatshirt is perfect for those no-blooded friends - and it's even easy enough for the less crafty among us.



There's probably a long-sleeved shirt in your bureau right now that would be perfect for this one - maybe it's a little too ragged, has a few holes? Time to turn it into something useful!

Cut the sleeve from the long-sleeved shirt, the approximate length that you'll want it. (Grab the nearest chilly stuffed toy for reference.)

On one side, make two holes for the legs. (Aim for circles, but perfection isn't necessary.)

Try it on your model of choice to make sure it fits and that the leg holes are in the right place. Made a mistake? No worries - it's a good thing that old shirt has two sleeves!



# Uses for a Cardboard Box



By Nicola Simpson



The humble cardboard box is so useful! We receive parcels inside them, use them for storage and load our groceries into them. Once you have finished with them, you could just throw them out into the recycling bin or you could hang onto them and use them in a fun activity with your kids.

## Here are 10 crafty ideas to ignite your imagination:

1. Big strong boxes are ideal to turn into castles or forts for some imaginary play time
2. Tape a lot of boxes together to form a fun maze to keep your kids entertained on a wet day
3. Line a box with white paper and load it up with small balls and splodges of paint and enjoy a messy painting session
4. Turn boxes into little cars and invite your kids' friends over for a "Drive in Movie"
5. Get the marker pens and draw your own town inside a large box and drive your toy cars around the road
6. Take an old shoe box and upcycle it into a cute little doll's house
7. If you are lucky enough to have a very large box, then cut out a hole in the centre of it, add on some bottle top buttons and you have a pretend laundry day set up to play with
8. Turn it into a rocket or airplane for some pretend flying fun
9. Get out the toy cars and give them a "wash" in a pretend car wash
10. Make a cardboard TV and put on your own shows for family and friends to watch



# Eco-Friendly Family Tips



# All Natural Sanitizer



By Julie Nixon



Even if you're not germaphobic, some of the things your children put their mouths on can make your stomach churn, *sometimes literally*. While washing your hands with soap is certainly the best way to rid little hands of germs, sometimes it's just not an option.

When out and about, hand sanitizer is a decent choice. But concerns have been raised about the active ingredients in antibacterial products (namely Triclosan). This all-natural hand sanitizer is a great alternative! Talk about simple!

## Ingredients:

(These measurements are just for reference. They don't have to be exact.)

- 8 oz of Aloe Vera Gel (not medicated, colored or anything else weird)
- 2 tbsp of Witch Hazel (if you'd like the sanitizer to dry more quickly, try adding even more Witch Hazel)
- 20 drops of Tea Tree Essential Oil
- 10 drops of your favorite Essential Oil (lemon is a great choice - the smell is refreshing and it's full of anti-microbial properties)

Mix it all together and put it in a container. Try using an old travel hand sanitizer bottle that can hook onto your purse or diaper bag.

You'll have plenty left over, so leave the rest of the mixture in the fridge until you need a refill.





# Backporch Worm Bin

By Wendy Marcum



## Supplies:

- Two 18 gallon totes
- Drill
- 4 Aluminum Siding Vents
- Hole Saw (the size of your siding vents)
- Newspaper, leaves, kitchen scraps
- Worms (Red Wigglers recommended)

Remove the lids from the totes. In the first tote, drill 3/16 inch holes through the lowest part of the bottom of the tote. These holes allow any liquid to drain to the outer tote. (This liquid makes good organic fertilizer!)

Next, using the Hole saw or utility knife, cut holes the same size as your siding vents. You will have two vents each on the long side of your tote. Install vents for increased ventilation and to allow heat generated by the compost to escape.

Lower the first tote (with the holes and vents) into the second tote. Fill the inner tote with shredded newspaper, (avoid waxy print with a lot of ink) dirt and leaves. Next, place the worms into their new home. Add food scraps to the bin. Bury non acidic food scraps such as lettuce and carrot peels in the compost. Avoid acidic foods such as tomatoes and oranges.

Continue to add food scraps to the bin and monitor the amount of compost in the bin. When it's time to remove the compost from the bin you can sort out the worms and start the process again!

The Worm Bin can be kept outside during warm weather and moved indoors (in a garage or basement) during cooler weather.

# Bird Seed Wreath



By Jennifer Tammy



## Supplies:

- 1/3 cup fresh cranberries
  - 1/3 cup pumpkin seeds
  - 1/3 cup almonds
  - 4 cup bird seed
  - 1/2 cup gelatin mixed with 1/4 cup warm water
  - 1/2 cup light corn syrup
- 1/4 cup flour mixed with 1/3 cup water
  - Bundt pan
  - Ribbon or twine for hanging
- The day before making your bird feeder wreath, grease your Bundt pan and allow to dry.
- Mix the water, flour, and corn syrup together to form a natural glue. Add bird seed mix and stir well.

Arrange the pumpkin seeds, almonds, and cranberries in the Bundt pan, then pour over the gelatin and water mixture. Scoop the bird seed mixture over the top and press firmly to compact the wreath.

Allow it to set in the fridge overnight, then carefully remove it from the pan. Tie the ribbon or twine around the wreath and hang.

If you're worried about the fragility of your bird feeder wreath, you can place it on a platter for the birds instead.



# Calendula Boo Boo Salve

By Karen Creel



Whether you are a kid or grown up, cuts, scrapes, and scratches are inevitable. You can purchase a first aid salve at the store, or the treatment may be just out your back door. If you have an herb garden, you don't have to look very far to discover that nature has provided us with many natural remedies.



One herb, easy to grow, and with so many uses, is Calendula. It is a great skin care herb, with many healing qualities and can be safely used by children and adults.

In most areas, calendula is considered an annual. You can plant seeds after all danger of frost has passed, but buying plants will give you a head start on your herb garden. Plant in full sun with at least six hours of sun each day. You can harvest the flowers when they are large enough, and dry to make a healing herbal balm that is all natural.

Calendula salve is easy to make. Take the dried petals, (1/2 cup) place in a mason jar, and cover with 6 ounces olive oil. Place a cap on top and be sure to keep the petals covered with the oil. Allow to sit in a warm window for at least a week. (If you are in a hurry, you can put in a crock pot on low heat overnight.) Strain out the flowers and add to the compost pile. This makes an infused oil.

To make the salve, warm 6oz of calendula infused olive oil, add 1 oz melted beeswax and pour into small jars or tins. Allow to harden overnight.

Use it on minor skin irritations, scrapes and cuts. It's also good for chapped hands, lips, and cheeks.

# Caring for the Earth



By Nell Kartychok



There are many ways to teach children to care for the Earth. Here are 12 simple ways to help your family live in a greener world now, and in the future.

***"Treat the earth well: it was not given to you by your parents, it was loaned to you by your children. We do not inherit the Earth from our Ancestors, we borrow it from our Children."***

-Ancient Indian Proverb

## 1. Be a Model Citizen

The most important way to help a child care for the Earth is by modeling it yourself. Children will do what they see the adults around them doing. If you want your children to care about the Earth, they need to see you caring for it.

## 2. Tread Lightly & Speak Positively

Tread lightly on the earth; take only pictures, leave only footprints. Reduce your personal impact on the environment in any and all possible ways. Please don't litter. What you say in front of children matters. *A lot!* What you say about the Earth will be what your children say about the Earth.

## 3. Make Your Own Cleaning Products

Cleaning products contain chemicals and toxins that are harmful to the environment. These toxins are even more dangerous for children because they touch and taste everything. To avoid these toxins make your own cleaning products.

## 4. Grow Your Own Organic Food

If it is not possible to have a garden where you live consider, container gardening, or renting a plot in your city's community garden. If your kids enjoy gardening they may well have their own garden some day. Growing your own food helps to reduce toxins and fossil fuels in the environment.

## 5. Shop Local & Organic

If you can't grow your own food do your best to buy organic local seasonal

produce. There are farmer's markets and natural foods stores in most areas that carry foods grown near your city or town. Stay away from processed foods as much as possible.

#### **6. Vote with Your Dollars & Sense**

Vote with your dollars and common sense when you need to buy things. Support shops and companies that are doing their best to do the right thing for the environment. Do your best to buy things made in the city, state, or country that you live in.

#### **7. Get Outside & Connect**

If we want our children to care for the Earth, they must get out and experience nature every day. How can someone care for something they have little experience of? Get outside with your children every day.

#### **8. Go Green**

Make your commute (whether it's to work, school, or the grocery store) green. When you ride your bike more often than not, your children are more than likely to do the same. Bring your own bag to any and all stores, not just the grocery store. Use reusable water bottles, coffee cups, insulated lunch sacks, and reusable lunch containers. Stay away from plastics if you can.

#### **9. Reduce**

Power down, turn off, and unplug electrical items in your home when you leave the house or go to sleep at night. Use energy efficient appliances. Turn off lights when you leave rooms. Turn off the water when you are washing your hands, dishes, showering, or brushing your teeth. Only run a full dishwasher. There are many ways to reduce waste. The best way to look at it is to use less of everything as much as possible. Pay attention to the waste that most people tend not to notice. For example, if you don't need 30 paper napkins and 20 packets of ketchup, don't take them.

#### **10. Reuse**

Use re-useable bottles and coffee cups. Shop garage sales, thrift stores and Craigslist. Give and accept hand-me-downs. Save recyclables and DIY scraps for crafts and projects if you have an organized space to do so.

#### **11. Recycle or Upcycle**

Recycle everything you can all the time. If it's not already a habit, make it one. Make green living fun and your children will retain it for life. Have your children collect, take out, and sort the recyclables in your home to redeem for cash. Keep an upcycle bin in your house filled with items that would work for upcycled crafts, games, etc. This book contains some wonderful examples of what you can repurpose with trash.

#### **12. Use the Power of Habit**

If many of these tips seem daunting just try one thing at a time. Use the amazing power of habit to make positive lasting change second nature. Your kids will follow your example: make it a good one.

# Composting Recipe



By Karen Creel



Have you ever noticed how much food is thrown away while preparing a meal? The peel from an apple, outside leaves of the lettuce, or eggshells. It really adds up over time, and one visit to the local landfill shows you how this looks when multiplied over all the households in your area.

According to Mrs. Greenthumb, who was not only a comedian, but a great gardener, composting can be simple. It may not be fast like some of the “hot composting” recipes, but uses most of our household waste, as well as waste from our garden and yard.

Mrs. Greenthumbs’ Composting Recipe:

- Start with alternating layers of brown and green matter
- Top it off with brown matter and a little soil. This will help decrease odor
- Water until it is saturated all the way through from top to bottom
- Leave it to rot



Green Matter includes leftover green plant material from the kitchen such as celery and lettuce, green grass and plant material. Weeds are acceptable but without seeds. Be sure your grass is untreated.

Brown Matter includes coffee grounds, eggshells, dried garden matter, tea leaves, and small twigs. Be sure you have broken everything into small pieces. Do not include any diseased or treated plants, meat or dairy.

If you like, you can turn your compost pile. Once every week or two should be sufficient in the summer.



# Detoxify Your Home

By Nell Kartychok



The average house may contain as many as 400 chemicals and most of them are toxic. There are many ways to detoxify your home. Here are 20 tips to get you off to a good start. You don't have to tackle this in a day, or even do everything listed here.

1. Leave your shoes at the door
2. Dust often
3. Clean mold the second you see it
4. Replace toxic cleaning products with non-toxic versions
5. Replace toxic cosmetics, shampoo and skin care products with natural alternatives
6. Avoid toxic pest control and replace harmful pet care products
7. Keep air fresh and clean
8. Use low VOC latex water-based paints
9. Keep plastics out of your home (help save the oceans!)
10. Invest in a quality home water filter
11. Get rid of your microwave
12. Beware of EMFs and other micro-waves
13. Test for Radon
14. Get rid of non-stick pans and bakeware
15. Avoid stain guard carpets and clothing items
16. Avoid and replace particle board
17. Avoid and replace toxic lawn and garden products
18. Purchase and/or grow organic foods
19. Use a vacuum cleaner with a HEPA filter
20. Keep your home happy!

Some of these are simple ideas that you are probably well aware of and already doing, while others may be new information. Do what works for you and your family in whatever ways you can. Every little bit helps both your family and the environment.

# DIY Laundry Soap



By Jennifer Tammy



## Supplies:

- 1 bar castille soap (2 cups if using liquid castille soap)
- 1 cup washing soda (if you can't find washing soda, you can make your own from baking soda)
- 1 cup Borax
- 6 cups water, or 5 gallons if making all at once
- Essential oils, optional
- Large plastic tub, at least 6 gallons

Grate the bar of soap (or have the kids do it!) and add it to a big saucepan on the stove with four cups of water. Heat gently over a medium heat until everything has dissolved.

Fill the plastic tub with 4.5 gallons of hot tap water, then add the melted soap mixture, borax, and washing soda. Stir and leave overnight before using or portioning out.

Add the essential oils to each laundry container to control the amount each one receives.



# DIY Pumpkin Puree

By Evelyne Nemcsok



## Supplies:

- Pumpkin or squash
- Baking tray
- Oven
- Oil / cooking spray
- Scoop
- Containers for storing with good fitting lids / or freezer bags

Cut the pumpkin in half. If you are dealing with a really large pumpkin, you may want to quarter it to get small enough pieces that will fit into your oven on a cookie sheet. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Put the pumpkin halves, quarters, etc, flesh side down, on a lightly oiled cookie sheet.

Put the pieces in the oven and check back on them every 15 minutes or so, depending on the size of the pumpkin. The pumpkin will get very soft.

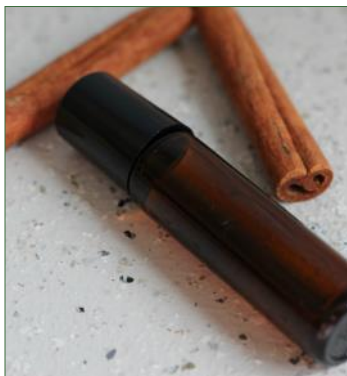
Touch test: Touch the pumpkin (use an oven mitt) in the oven. If you leave an indentation in the shell of the pumpkin, it is ready.



Take the soft pumpkin out of the oven, turn it over and scoop the flesh with an ice cream scooper into freezer containers. Seal and freeze.

You may find it useful to keep the pumpkin in pre-measured packages for certain favorite recipes.

# Essential Oils for Sore Muscles



By Julie Nixon



## Supplies:

- 10-20 drops of Clove Essential Oil
- 10-20 drops of Peppermint Essential Oil
- Dime sized dab of Coconut Oil

Do you often wake up with an extremely sore neck? People have had some *incredible* success with this DIY essential oils blend for sore muscles. Even those who tend to be suspicious of the "placebo effect", have used this blend multiple times and can't believe how well it works!

Mix the essential oils with coconut oil and apply it generously. Within a minute or two, the sensation will become intense. Clove oil is warming and peppermint oil is cooling. It's quite lovely, but be careful not to put the blend on sensitive skin areas, ESPECIALLY the eyes!

Wash your hands after applying, so you don't have any mishaps. Remember, it takes a couple minutes to be able to feel the effects, so take things slowly the first time you try this blend.

One of the best things about this blend is that even after the tingling goes away, the pain usually doesn't come back! Likely, the increased blood flow to the area promotes healing.

*Please be aware that the author is not a medical professional. She is just sharing her experience in the hopes of helping you make an informed decision. Your health is your responsibility.*



# Foraging for Wild Berries

By Meghan Rabuse



## Supplies:

- Local foraging resources
- Trail map

What child doesn't like to play in the great outdoors? Nature offers an endless supply of adventure, even its own edible, treasure hunt. Foraging is the act of searching for food in the wild. You can forage on local nature trails, or depending where you live, even around your neighborhood or in your own backyard.

A few words of caution. Not everything that grows is safe for consumption. You should always consult references for your specific area to learn what edible plants are common to your region, and which plants are not only unsafe for consumption, but may contaminate ground water and neighboring edible plants as well. A great online resource is [FallingFruit.org](http://FallingFruit.org), a crowdsourced interactive map of edible plants globally. Also, if foraging along local nature trails, be sure to take a trail map!



Equipped with a foraging guide and trail map, begin your treasure hunt. Many regions grow native greens and herbs, but a personal family favorite is berries. Wild blueberries and blackberries are rampant in summer in our backyard, and an endless source of snack and amusement! Start a foraging journal, and document what you discover, where you find it and when, so you can revisit each growing season. What will you find growing in your own backyard?

# Fruit Fly Trap



By Evelyne Nemcsok



## Supplies:

- Glass jar – re-use any jar with a screw top lid
- Smallish screw
- Hammer
- Apple cider vinegar
- Board or work bench

Fruit flies quickly take over your kitchen when you're not looking. But you can win this battle – in fact, you probably already have all of the things you need to make your own fruit fly trap. Make a few of these traps, and in no time at all you will see them filling up with little fruit flies.

Wash the jar and lid. Set the jar aside. Place the lid on a board, or workbench. Do NOT do this right on your kitchen counter.

Carefully hold the screw (you could use a nail, but the screw gives a better hole) over the lid, and hammer it through the lid, and pull it back out.

Repeat until you have made several holes in the lid. Don't make the holes too close together, or you'll just mangle the lid.

Put about an inch of apple cider vinegar in the jar, twist the lid back on, and place the jar in areas where you have these pests.

The fruit flies are attracted to the smell of the apple cider vinegar, and will go through the holes in the lid, and become trapped.





# Green Art and Craft Box

By Nicola Simpson



Keeping a well-stocked making box is a must for anybody with arts and crafts mad kids. It is all ready then to be pulled out when you need a quick and easy activity to set up for your kids.



Doing arts and crafts with your kids doesn't have to mean using lots of expensive products from the art and hobby store. It is amazing what you can do with the junk that you would normally throw into the recycling trash can. So instead of throwing all of your recyclables out, save some to upcycle into arts and crafts projects.

Get started with these essential items:

- Cardboard Tubes – Turn them into superhero cuffs, make them into animal puppets or paint some circle art with them.
- Milk Cartons – Use them to grow seeds in, turn them into Elmer or turn them into sensory shakers.
- Bottle Tops – Excellent for counters in games, buttons on robots or adding to a collage.
- Tin Foil – Paint on it, scrunch it up in a sensory bin or craft with it.
- Bubble Wrap – Never throw away bubble wrap. It is perfect to paint on, print with and use for crafts.
- Popsicle Sticks – Turn them into puppets, fairy doors or puzzles.
- Cereal Boxes – Use them to build a castle, create a robot or make a diorama.
- Soda Bottles – Fill them up and use them as sensory bottles, print flowers with the base of them or save them up for a water wall.
- Paper Bags – Perfect for collages, to make into puppets or just to draw on.
- Fabric Scraps – Add decoration to a project, use in a collage or make bunting.

## Growing Green Kids



By Karen Creel



Ask your children where their food comes from. What is their answer? The refrigerator, a box, or maybe a drive through window. Most children today have never visited a farmer's market, much less a farm.

Do they know that most of our food travels around 1500 miles from farm to plate? Sometimes a food grown in your own state travels to another to be processed and packaged before returning. Many companies have found that it is more profitable even to buy produce from another country, pick it before it is anywhere near ripe, and ship it hundreds of miles where it is stored before reaching you.

In the last few years there has been a resurgence of farmer's markets, but even when food is within driving distance, most people continue to purchase food that was grown with questionable practices.

If you want to teach your kids where their food comes from, support family farms, and appreciate fresh food, here are some things you can do.

Visit a local farm where food is grown with organic methods, animals are treated humanely, and raised free range. Free range, or pastured chickens, are not only happier, they are healthier.

Introducing your kids to animals on a farm may lead to many questions about where meat comes from, and could be distressing. When talking to them, don't over explain, or try to talk them out of being upset. Answer truthfully, that yes the animal dies, but it happens quickly, and it isn't afraid.

Do you know a local beekeeper? Ask if you can watch (at a safe distance), when he inspects his hive. Seeing hundreds of bees working to make honey is a great experience for kids.

# Herb Cubes

By Wendy Marcum



## Supplies:

- Approximately 2 cups of herbs, eg basil, oregano, parsley, sage.
- ½ cup Olive Oil
- Food Processor/Blender
- Ice Cube Trays
- Freezer Storage Bag

Making herb cubes is an easy way to store herbs, it takes just a few minutes to do and the best part is the way your kitchen will smell while working with the herbs!

From your herb garden gather about 2 cups of herbs in a bowl. In the sink, give them a quick rinse in cold water, and then set the herbs out to dry on paper towels. You can give them a gentle pat with another paper towel to help them dry more quickly.

Put the herbs in the blender and add ½ cup olive oil. Give them a quick blend until all the herbs are mixed well with the oil.

Fill the compartments of your ice cube tray with the herb/oil blend. This will yield 6 or 7 herb cubes depending on the size of the ice cube tray.



Place ice cube tray in the freezer and leave until completely frozen. Once they are frozen, the cubes will pop right out of the ice cube tray and can be stored in a storage bag in the freezer.

Herb cubes make a wonderfully flavorful addition to spaghetti sauce or tomato soup!

# Hummingbird Feeder



By Karen Creel



## Supplies:

- Soda, wine, or beer bottles
- An old bed spring\*
- Wire for hanger
- Feeding tube (found easily online or from your local bird feeding specialty store)

\*If you don't have a bed spring, you can wrap wire around the bottle instead

Hummingbirds can fly up to 500 miles during their spring and fall migration across the Gulf of Mexico. The most common in the United States is the Ruby Throated Hummingbird, and has an average weight of 3 grams. Compare this to a nickel which weighs about 4.5 grams! Hummingbirds must consume up to one half their weight in sugar daily, and feed 5 to 8 times an hour.

To make your hummingbird feeder, wash the bottle thoroughly. The tube cork then fits perfectly into the bottle. Drop the bottle, neck down, into the bedspring. Wrap the wire around the top of the ring, forming a handle.

Hang the feeder off your porch, deck, or tree. Hang it where you can see it, so you can watch and enjoy your hummingbirds.

You can purchase ready-made hummingbird nectar or make your own. There's no need to add food coloring to your solution. Change the water and clean out the feeder at least weekly to prevent mold.



# No More Monster Spray

By Karen Creel



## Supplies:

- Spray bottle
- Distilled water or bottled water
- Lavender essential oil
- Sweet orange essential oil
- Witch hazel (optional)

Both Lavender and Sweet Orange essential oils can easily be found at health food stores and major natural grocery stores. Do not use fragrance oils; only use essential oils.

Fear of the dark, monsters under the bed, and things that go bump in the night, are all common occurrences in young children. Nighttime fears can wreak havoc on bedtime, not only for kids, but for their parents as well.

Children feel they have no control over their fears. A fun way to give them some power is to allow them to spray away their fears with No More Monster Spray. This spray is easy to make using two essential oils that are known to have calming properties, promote sleep, provide sweet dreams - and it smells great!

Fill a 4oz spray bottle with water. Add 25 drops of lavender essential oil and 20 drops of sweet orange oil. Add 2 tablespoons of witch hazel if you are using it. Shake well.

Spray this sweet smelling spray into the air, and lightly on linens, avoiding the pillow case. You can also spray all the areas where fear lurks, under the bed and in closets, explaining they can spray away their fears.

Do not allow your child to do this alone. Keep the bottle and all essential oils out of your child's reach, and do not take internally.

# Pineapple Plant



By Evelyne Nemcsok



## Supplies:

- Fresh Pineapple (off the shelf from the grocery store is fresh enough!)
- Sharp knife
- Cutting board / work surface
- Large drinking glass

Houseplants are good for you, and good for your house by improving air quality and providing green space. What can be more exciting than an exotic pineapple plant adorning your living space? Why, growing it yourself, of course! Using a knife is the only skill you'll need to convert that yummy supermarket fruit into a décor item that will last years.

Lay the pineapple lengthwise on the cutting board. Using the sharp knife, cut the top from the pineapple approximately an inch below the green leaves. Set aside the edible part, and refrigerate.

Peel down all of the little brown leaves, exposing more of the core. Place the top of the pineapple in a large glass, and fill with clean water.

Place the glass on a window ledge where it will be exposed to sunlight. Every few days top up the water in the glass, and freshen up the water should it become discoloured.

After a few days, you will start to see roots develop, and after a few weeks there will be many roots, and it will be time to transplant your pineapple plant to a pot.

Using regular potting soil, fill a planter pot about 3/4 full and leave a well to put the plant in. Pack the plant in firmly adding more soil if necessary. Water often and enjoy!



# Plant a Pizza Garden

By Karen Creel



Getting kids to eat their veggies is not always easy. But, by getting them involved in the growing, caring for, and reaping of the benefits of their work, you may cultivate a lifelong love of gardening.

Every kid knows what a pizza is, and growing a pizza garden may be the perfect way to introduce them to gardening.

You don't need a large garden plot to grow your pizza garden. All the plants that you need can easily be grown in containers or in a small area.

Basil is an annual plant that grows well in containers and is a great choice for your pizza garden. Oregano can be dried and added to your homemade pizza sauce or fresh on your pizza.

There are a few requirements for your pizza garden. You will need:

- Good garden soil, either in an existing garden, or purchased
- Organic all-purpose vegetable fertilizer or compost
- Plants. Children can be impatient, and with plants they can see immediate results. Tomatoes, onions, basil, oregano, and peppers are good choices and all belong on a pizza. But use seeds if you would like!
- Water. Plants in containers will require extra water. Check daily as they could need watering every day
- Mulch to keep weeds at a minimum and conserve water
- Tomato cage or a way to stake your tomatoes
- Child friendly garden tools will encourage participation in planting and maintaining the garden. Include child size gloves, hoe, and shovel

After planting, create a garden journal with your child, taking pictures of the plants as they grow, find recipes for pizza dough, sauce etc., and place in the journal.

## Uses for Plastic Bags



By Georgina Bomer



If you go to the food store the most eco-friendly idea is to bring your own bags and reuse them every time. But sometimes you need extra or don't have your own ones with you. So here are some ideas for ways you can reuse them!

- Plastic bags can be very useful on vacations for wrapping dirty shoes, wet swimwear, and clothes that need to be laundered. It is also a great idea to wrap toiletries inside a bag in case of leakages and spills
- Use bags as small trash can liners
- Keep a plastic bag in your diaper bag or car in case your child has an accident and you need somewhere to put soiled clothing
- Place frozen ice packs in a bag first before putting them in a lunch box – the condensation on the ice pack can make everything wet as it starts to melt
- Use grocery bags as poop bags for your dog, cat, or pet bird! Better than buying new ones just for this task
- Cut up plastic bags to make into “plarn” – plastic yarn!
- Use scrunched up plastic bags as packing material – perhaps for mailing gifts or for packing away Christmas ornaments
- Plastic bags are great for temporarily storing wet umbrellas
- Store paint brushes or rollers in a plastic bag, twist tie the top of the bag. The paint won't dry out on the brushes so you can go back to them the next day
- Take bags to the gym to place sweaty clothes in after a workout
- Going on a picnic, a hike or to a concert? Take a plastic bag to collect the trash
- Protect plants from frost by covering them in a plastic bag at night
- Don't forget crafts! Make a plastic bag kite or use part of a bag as a sail for a boat as on [page 42](#)

# T-shirt Bags

By Julie Nixon



## Supplies:

- Old T-shirt
- Sharp scissors
- Sewing machine and thread



Do you have a million T-shirts filling your drawers? Do you cringe at how many plastic bags you go through in a month? These T-shirt bags are incredibly strong, washable, and are great conversation starters with the baggers at check-out!

Cut the sleeves off the shirt. If possible, try to leave the shoulder seams intact so that they become part of the bag. This will give the bag extra strength and should help the bag not to fray.

Cut a larger hole for the neck so that the bag will have a bigger opening for books, groceries etc. Don't waste time making it symmetrical. Just eyeball it!

Flip the shirt inside out. Sew along the bottom edge. Make one or two passes across the bottom. Be sure to reinforce the corners/edges by going back and forth across them a couple times for strength.



Cut any loose threads. Flip the shirt right side out. The whole process probably only takes three minutes!

Your bag is ready to take whatever you throw at it! These shirts have held 20 library books or a bulging pile of groceries without any problem. And they're quite washable should anything be spilled on them!

## About The Authors

Georgina Bomer - [Craftulate](#)

Georgina writes the blog Craftulate, which features a wide range of art, and crafts for young children. She has recently moved to a forest location and is loving being able to reconnect with nature. She is the author of the book 50 Animal Crafts for Little Kids.



Emma Craig - [P is for Preschooler](#)



Emma is a stay-at-home mom to a 6 year old daughter and a spoiled chihuahua. She loves to share fun and interactive learning activities and simple play ideas through her blog P is for Preschooler. She is also a co-author of 99 Fine Motor Ideas.

Karen Creel - [Gardenchick](#)

Karen is an ICU nurse by profession and her love of gardening, repurposing her junking finds, and DIY projects has resulted in the creation of her blog Gardenchick. She has a large garden of flowers, herbs, fruits, vegetables, and a beehive!



Nell Kartychok - [Rhythms of Play](#)



Nell believes in the magic of childhood, the power of our dreams, spending more time outside than inside, and making this world a greener place to live. She is the creator of Rhythms of Play - a green living family lifestyle blog.

Wendy Marcum - [10 Acres and 6 Chicks](#)

Wendy blogs about her homesteading adventures with her husband on their 10 acres. They started out with six chicks but now have 12 hens, a rooster, 2 rabbits and 3 dogs. They see homesteading as an extension of the attitude of being prepared and self-reliant.



Evelyne Nemcsok - [Nemcsok Farms](#)

Evelyne lives on a large hobby farm with her husband and three Little Helpers. She grows flowers and vegetables, is always on the lookout for ways to make the world more beautiful without spending a fortune, and has a weird fascination with soil.



Julie Nixon - [My Mundane and Miraculous Life](#)



Julie is a frazzled mom of three tornadoes, at least one of which has special needs. As a dorky second-generation homeschooler, she writes about learning and play, natural living and matters of the heart. She serves an astounding God that radically saved her.

Meghan Rabuse - [Playground Parkbench](#)

Meghan is a former hedge fund professional turned SAHM to Big M (4), Lil' M (2), and M3, the family's first boy! She writes at Playground Parkbench, where she shares at-home activities for kids, parenting tips and financial savvy for the household CEO.



Nicola Simpson - [Crafty Kids at Home](#)



Nicola's blog, Crafty Kids at Home, is full of arts, crafts and messy play activities for children of all ages to enjoy doing together. Before having kids, she worked as a Librarian in the media and legal sectors. Now she is a SAHM to her three children aged 3, 6 and 8.

Jennifer Tammy - [Study at Home Mama](#)

Jennifer Tammy is a trained psychologist and single mom who runs a Montessori preschool from her home in order to stay home full-time with her daughter, Miss G. Every day, she shares easy recipes, parenting inspiration, and hands-on learning ideas on her blog, Study at Home Mama.



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