



Big Green Idea Sheet Getting Crafty

Getting Crafty Out and About!

Some make and do ideas using recycled materials and natural things collected from outside.

Safety Tips

Before you start, always get permission to do these from the landowner if in any doubt! Make sure children are well supervised and don't collect anything poisonous. Only collect loose, dead or fallen material from the ground. Don't pull bits from living plants or trees. Only take items if there are plenty, and always leave some for the habitat or food source that they may provide. Don't touch bracken between July and September – the spores are hazardous. Supervise children using sharp tools such as scissors, knives, needles, skewers etc.

Make a Mobile

Collect cones, leaves, seeds, nuts, feathers, sticks etc.

Find a stick you like.

Tie or thread the collected treasures on to long pieces of string (if you want to thread them get an adult to help make the holes).

Tie the top end of the string to the stick.

Continue making more strings of treasures (using different length strings can look good), and tie them along the stick until you are happy with the effect.

Then make a loop from string and tie this at the centre of the stick to hang it up with and you have made a natural mobile!

Make a Wild Crown or Bracelet

Take a piece of thinnish card (cereal box card is good) and cut it into strips about 5cm wide by 50cm long approx. (for a crown) or shorter for a bracelet. You can adjust size to fit and then fix the ends of the card together with glue or tape.

Put a long strip of double-sided sticky tape all the way around the outside of the card strip. Make sure it's completely covered so that your treasures will stick well.

Now, go for a walk, gathering any nice natural materials that you find and sticking them on the tape as you go. Remember to press them firmly onto the sticky tape on the bracelet or crown so that they don't fall off easily.

If you prefer, you can go collecting first and then this activity can be done back at home later with all the treasures you have gathered.

Wild Masks

A similar idea to the crowns can be used to make masks – cut out a card mask shape (get an adult to help you if you need it), and use glue or double-sided sticky tape to stick your collected items onto it – this works especially well with autumn leaves! Add some string or elastic if you want to wear it.

Colours from the Wild

Cut some stiff cardboard into squares or rectangles (approx. 10x10cm or 8x10cm) and cover one surface with double-sided sticky tape. Collect **small** pieces of natural materials to make a textured mosaic on the surface each one. The finished effect can look really beautiful, so why not make them into a collage, or frame them? Or use them to make birthday cards?

Corn (or Grass or Lavender) Dollies

Gather a bunch of grass, corn or lavender with good long stalks.

Tie the stems firmly together just under the heads and trim the bottom ends of the stalks with scissors so that they are all level.

About mid way down from the heads tie the bundle again. This is to make the body. Then below this divide the bundle in two these will be the legs of the dolly. Secure them just a little back from the very ends with string, leaving a short piece that you can bend up for the feet. Now take a smaller bundle of stems and cut off any flower heads and fasten each end. This will be for the dolly's arms. Using a pencil or a small stick, carefully ease the stalks apart just underneath the 'head' of the dolly so that you can push the arms through (you might want to get an adult to help you). Now tie across and around the body and arms of the dolly, to secure them. Your dolly is now finished! Decorate with flowers, leaves or whatever else you fancy. Similar dollies can also be made using thick string or raffia.

Make a Nest

Large or small! Collect twigs, leaves, wool, feathers, grass etc. and make a nest on the ground. Decide what sort of bird might like to use your nest. See if anyone else can guess which bird you chose.

To find out more about the big green idea, and to share your ideas and experiences, why not visit www.itsnoteasybeinggreen.org

Corn (or Grass or Lavender) Plaits

Tie 3 stems of corn (or grass or lavender) just below the heads.

Plait the stems until you are happy with the length of your plait.

Tie the ends of the stems with string or ribbon and trim.

To make a hoop, bend the head end of the plait round so it is overlapping the stems and the top of the head is just below the ends of the stems. Then tie them together with string or ribbon and make a loop for hanging.

Twig Stars

Take a flexible twig and bend it in 4 places so that the twig is now divided up into 5 equal lengths. Take care that the twig doesn't snap while you work.

Fold at each bend to make a 5 pointed star.

Tie the ends with twine or very fine wire. If you can find a really long straight stick, make the star at the thinner end and you will have made yourself a star wand!

Bark Rubbing

Place a sheet of paper on an interesting tree and rub over the paper with a wax crayon. Find as many different textures as you can and use lots of different colours. Use them to make a picture or collage, then stand back and admire the result!

Feeding the Birds

Collect large open pine cones and/or washed and dried yoghurt cartons.

Tie a length of string around the cone so that you can hang it from a branch or bird table. Smear bird food mixture (see the 'recipe' below) into the cracks in the cones (warning – this gets messy!).

Make a hole in the bottom of the yoghurt carton.

Tie a knot in a length of string and thread it through the hole with the knot inside, so the pot hangs upside down. Make sure the knot won't pull through. Now fill up the yoghurt pot with the bird food mixture and leave to set (right way up) in a cool place.

Hang your feeders out in the garden and watch the birds enjoy their treat!

Bird Food Recipe Mix

Check no one is allergic to any ingredient before you start! Make sure you have put plenty of old newspapers down, and have old clothes or an apron on (and don't forget to roll up your sleeves!).

For your special birdseed recipe mix you will need: birdseed, raisins, grated cheese, and a selection of other suitable seeds if you like, such as pumpkin or sunflower which are both good. Take 100g of

softened vegetable fat or lard (put it somewhere warm for about an hour) and cut it into small pieces. Put all the ingredients in a mixing bowl and squash together with your hands (messy!).

You can now shape it into balls around twigs, squish it into pine cones, or fill up yoghurt pots.

Leave everything in the 'fridge to set, and when they're firm hang them outside for the birds to enjoy.

Don't forget to wash your hands when you've finished!

Making Homes for Minibeasts

Help minibeasts survive in your garden by making them houses!

Ladybirds, beetles and minibeasts of all sorts.

These little creatures like little places to roost. Tie bundles of twigs (hollow ones are even better!) tightly together with string. Wedge the bundle in a place on the ground, in the fork of a tree, beneath a hedge or anywhere out of the way in your garden where it won't be disturbed. Minibeasts will hopefully find it an ideal home over the winter. Red mason bees will particularly like bamboo bundles done like this.

Bumblebees. Take a medium-sized plant pot with just one hole in the bottom and loosely pack it with dry shredded paper, straw or grass. Dig a hole big enough to bury it completely in the ground, ideally in a sunny place in some undisturbed corner with long grass. Bury the plant pot **upside down** in the earth so that the hole in the bottom is level with the surface of the ground. Carefully fill in around the edges with soil. You can re-cover the top with turf, just as long as the hole is still clear of dirt so that the bees can find it.

Slugs, snails, woodlice. Make a big pile of leaves in a shady and quiet corner of your garden, and watch all the little wigglers move in!

Beetles, centipedes, millipedes. Make a nice mixed pile of logs and twigs in a shady corner. (You might want to ask an adult for help with carrying and positioning bigger pieces.). You could put your pile of leaves next to it!