

Make Corn Husk Flowers

There's more to corn on the cob than yellow kernels and mouthwatering juice. They can also be the makings of a beautiful flower. With a few corn husks, some wire, and tape, your fourth grader can create a lasting piece of art while getting in touch with his roots. Just like early American settlers, kids can use corn husks for everything from decorations to making baskets. Why not start with a simple flower?

What You Need:

- Package of corn husks (get these at the grocery store or dry your own by placing them in the sun for a day)
- Fabric dye (optional)
- Spool of flexible green florist wire (available at craft stores)
- Stiff florist wire for the stem (you can also use the wire from a coat hanger)
- Floral tape



What You Do:

1. Natural corn husks are durable and attractive (like a fancy coat for corn) but once they're stripped away, they're usually forgotten about. Why not get in touch with your child's roots (and the natural world) by putting corn husks to good use? What use you ask? Decorating the home!
2. Have your child decide if he wants his corn husk flowers to be different colors or if he wants to use the natural tan color of the husks. If bright color is what he's after, simply soak your husks in regular fabric dye overnight and then let them dry in the sun. When choosing fabric dye, have him think about what colors he wants the petals to be and what color he wants the center of the flower(s) to be.
3. Tear the husks lengthwise into strips about 3/4 to 1 inch wide. You'll probably have few that look raggedy. You'll want to use a raggedy one for the center of your flower. Have your child roll it into a tight bundle and then tie it up with green florist wire.
4. It's all in the fold. Choose one of your nicest looking husks and fold it in half, horizontally. Place one end of it against the center roll. Wrap a piece of wire around the end of your husk and the center bundle, in order to hold the two together. Now twist the wire and trim it. (Your child may need an "extra hand" doing this.)
5. Now attach four more "husk petals" by repeating the step above. When you're finished you should have a five-petaled corn husk flower. Trim off any ragged edges at the ends of the petals, so that you have a nice point to the flower.
6. To make the stem, take a piece of heavy wire (about 12" long) and use needle-nosed pliers to bend the top into a "u" hook shape. Now push the straight end of the wire through the middle of the flower, pulling it through until the hook end is buried in the center of the flower.
7. Go green! Use the green floral tape wrapping around the wire stem. Careful here . . . this stuff is sticky!
8. Repeat for as many flowers as your child likes. Using different colors it's easy to make a bouquet . . . and the perfect gift for mom!

While you're at it: Talk to your child about other things he could make using corn husks. Discuss the way Native Americans and early American settlers used nature to create useful items like bowls, baskets and even shelters. What else could he make using nature? What else could a corn husk be used for?

