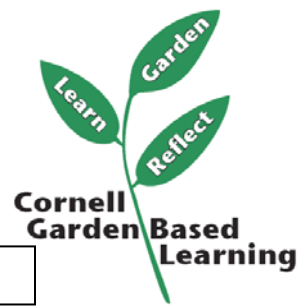




Cornell University
Department of
Horticulture

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Making Rose Petal Beads

This activity allows youth to make home-made beads from flower petals.



Before You Begin:

Safety

The blender can be a potential hazard if not used appropriately. Teach students how to turn on and off a blender, show them where the blade is located, and tell them to unplug the cord from the electrical outlet if they are putting their hand inside. For younger children, electrical outlet safety may also need to be discussed.

Stains

The flower petals can stain. In order to avoid stains, instruct youth to wear old clothing if possible. Also, in order to avoid stains on skin, youth may wear latex gloves.

Materials

Flower petals:

- Estimate using the example of six roses making 20 marble sized beads.
- Roses work well but others will suffice.
- Dried flower petals create more natural looking beads.

Blender, pot for simmering, or mortar and pestle

- Reminder: Blenders need an electrical outlet.
- The pot would need access to a stove for at least three days.

Strainer or cheese cloth.

- The strainer may stain and the cheese cloth may be difficult to use afterwards.

Several bowls large enough to hold a bag of cooked popcorn

Pins (enough for two to three beads to dry on each pin.

Corkboard

Bead wire (usually copper)

Newspaper or other item to cover working surface

Pre-made beads or buttons

Water

Day One:

Go Over Background Information and Directions

1. Let the youth talk about ideas and discuss their thoughts.
2. Skim over the directions and tentative plan with the youth.
3. Cover the working surface with newspaper, distribute smocks and gloves if necessary.

Making the Beads

1. The clay-paste from the petals can be made several ways. Petals can be mixed to create new colors and can be separated. The easiest and quickest is by using a blender. Simply toss a few handfuls of petals into the blender with two cups of water. Blend until a paste the consistency of watery jelly is formed. While kids experiment with the blender, others can use a mortar and pestle or rocks to crush the petals into a paste. Another option includes simmering in a pot on a stove. This takes at least three days of simmering.
2. Gather the paste and pour into bowls. Squeeze the goop so excess water is removed. Pouring the goop through a strainer or cheese cloth will also remove the water.
3. Once the paste is free of excess water and is the consistency of coleslaw, roll or shape into beads.



Photo courtesy K. Skowron

Drying the Beads

1. Stick a pin or needle through the beads so a hole will be in them for beading onto wire. Depending on the size of the beads, usually more than one can fit on a pin.
2. Put the pinned beads somewhere where they can dry untouched. Sticking them onto a corkboard works well.
3. Let dry for at least 24 hours.

Day Two:

What To Do With the Beads After They Dry

1. When beads are dry, remove them from the pins and needles.
2. Now is the time to get really creative. Let youth thread the beads onto beading wire, (usually thin copper wire). Youth can make necklaces, bracelets, ornaments, etc. and use other beads, buttons, seeds, or nuts. The sky's the limit!
3. Show them off!

