

A close-up photograph of a child's hand pouring sand from a yellow shovel into a green toy dump truck. The truck is filled with sand and is sitting on a sandy surface. The background is slightly blurred, showing more sand and the child's hand.

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NATURE'S
TOY-SHOP***

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Mother Nature's Toy-Shop

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

PART I WILD FLOWERS

CHAPTER I DAISIES

What You Can Do with Them

Daisy Crown

CHAPTER II JACK-IN-THE-PULPIT

CHAPTER III RED AND WHITE CLOVERS

Clover Wreath

Clover Bracelet

Clover Earrings

Clover Ring

A Necklace of Clover

Other Things of Clover

CHAPTER IV CLOVER DESIGNS

CHAPTER V OTHER WILD-FLOWER DESIGNS

Daisy Fleabane Design

Wild Mustard Design

Buttercups—a Design

CHAPTER VI PUSSY-WILLOWS

Pussy-Willow Rabbits

A Pussy-Willow Squirrel

Pussy-Willow Bumblebee

Pussy-Willow Mouse

Jumping Pussy-Willows—a Game

Pussy-Willow Bouquet

CHAPTER VII ARRANGEMENT OF FLOWERS

The Wild Morning-Glory

[The Wild Balsam-Apple](#)

[Wild Clematis](#)

[Bittersweet](#)

[Snapdragon and Wild Carrot](#)

[Wild Roses](#)

[Daisies and Buttercups](#)

[The Wild Flag, or Iris](#)

[Clover Bouquets](#)

[Green Bouquets](#)

[PART II GRASSES](#)

[CHAPTER VIII FAIRY-TREES MADE OF GRASSES](#)

[CHAPTER IX A HOUSE MADE OF GRASS](#)

[The Floor](#)

[The Walls](#)

[The Roof](#)

[The Porch](#)

[Thatching](#)

[The Ladder](#)

[A Doll Filipino Woman](#)

[CHAPTER X GRASS DRESS AND GRASS HEAD-DRESS](#)

[Grass Head-Dress](#)

[PART III GREEN LEAVES](#)

[CHAPTER XI OAK-LEAVES](#)

[Robinson Crusoe Hat](#)

[Oak-Leaf Mask](#)

[The Little Oak-Leaf Dog](#)

[CHAPTER XII GRAPE-LEAF DRINKING-CUP](#)

[CHAPTER XIII GREEN-LEAF DESIGNS](#)

[Beech-Leaves](#)

[Violet-Leaves](#)

[Ground-Pine](#)

[PART IV CULTIVATED FLOWERS](#)

[CHAPTER XIV PHLOX](#)

[Phlox Tower and Phlox Design](#)

[Phlox Tower](#)

[Phlox Design](#)

[The Tiger-Lily Leopard](#)

[CHAPTER XV CULTIVATED FOXGLOVE](#)

[Fairy-Caps](#)

[Sweet Pea—the Peacock](#)

[Snapdragon—Lady's Head and Lion's Head](#)

[CHAPTER XVI MISS HOLLYHOCK'S GARDEN-PARTY](#)

[A Tea-Table](#)

[Teapot and Cups](#)

[CHAPTER XVII DAFFODILS](#)

[Dancing Flowers and Whirligigs](#)

[Daffodil Dancers](#)

[A Daffodil Animal](#)

[The Whirligig](#)

[PART V SEED-VESSELS](#)

[CHAPTER XVIII SEED-VESSEL PLAYTHINGS](#)

[The Doll's Fruit Piece](#)

[Rose-Haw Necklace](#)

[Seed-Pod Earrings](#)

[Necklace of Barberries and Plantain-Stalk](#)

[Plantain-Stalk and Barberry Earrings](#)

[Birds of Maple-Tree Seed-Vessels](#)

[CHAPTER XIX BUCKEYE HORSE AND BUCKEYE RIDER](#)

[The Buckeye Horse](#)

[The Buckeye Man](#)

[Pine-Cones. Pine-Cone Forest](#)

[A Fruit-and-Vegetable Market](#)

[Cone Card-Rack](#)

[Christmas-Tree Ornaments](#)

[CHAPTER XX BURDOCK-BURRS](#)

[The Little House of Burrs](#)

[Pond, with Water-Lilies, in the Garden](#)

[A Pea-Pod Canoe](#)

[The Trees](#)

[Burdock-Burr Game](#)

[CHAPTER XXI THINGS TO MAKE OF ENGLISH-WALNUT SHELLS](#)

[To Open an English Walnut](#)

[The Professor](#)

[The Professor's Robe](#)

[English-Walnut Shell Mouse](#)

[English-Walnut Shell Thimble-Box](#)

[PART VI VEGETABLES](#)

[CHAPTER XXII THINGS YOU CAN MAKE OF LIMA BEANS](#)

[Swimming Fish Made of a Lima-Bean Pod](#)

[Lima-Bean Man](#)

[A Lima-Bean Pig](#)

[CHAPTER XXIII SWEET-POTATO ALLIGATOR AND WHAT TO MAKE OF A RADISH](#)

[What to Make of a Radish](#)

[The Radish Imp](#)

[A White Mouse](#)

[CHAPTER XXIV GREEN-PEA TOYS AND A GREEN-PEA DESIGN](#)

[The Greeny Girl](#)

[The Greeny Men](#)

[Pea-Pod Tents](#)

[The Green-Pea House](#)

[The Fence](#)

[The Tropical Plant](#)

[A Pretty Design of Green Peas](#)

[CHAPTER XXV CORN-HUSKS AND CORN-COBS](#)

[How to Make American History Seem Real—Our First Thanksgiving](#)

[PART VII FRUIT](#)

[CHAPTER XXVI THE FUNNY ORANGE HEAD](#)

[Things You Can Make of Orange-Skins](#)

[Other Things Made of Orange-Skins](#)

[CHAPTER XXVII APPLES AND APPLE FUN](#)

[Apple-Blossom in Apple](#)

[Apple Candle in its Candlestick](#)

[A Roasted Apple](#)

[The Spice Apple](#)

[Other Things to Make of an Apple](#)

PART I

WILD FLOWERS

[Table of Contents](#)

CHAPTER I

DAISIES

[Table of Contents](#)

What You Can Do with Them

[Table of Contents](#)

WILD flowers, like children, are up early. *They* don't want to lie abed after their long winter's sleep; they want to be awake and see what is going on in the world. While you think it is still winter there is a stirring going on under the blankets of brown earth, and sometimes before the snow is off the ground you may find the little things working up through the stiff soil and opening their eyes to the gentle spring sunshine.

It is remarkable the way the soft, tender sprouts force their way through hard ground that we would have to take a knife or trowel to dig into. But they do it. Not all at once with a great, blustering rush, but gently, steadily, and quietly they push and keep on pushing until their heads are above ground; then they begin to grow in good earnest, and pretty soon they laugh right out into blossom.

The pleasure these earliest wild flowers give us is in going out to look for them and in gathering handfuls to carry home and put into little glass bowls to be "Oh'd" over and wondered at, to be admired and loved because they are lovely, and because they bring some of the sweet outdoors of spring into the furnace-heated house.

They are too delicate and fragile, these anemones, hepaticas, and bloodroots, to be handled and played with,

but later come the stronger, sturdier flowers and with many of these you can do all sorts of entertaining things. You don't have to look very far for them either. They are in the fields, by the roadsides, and even along the edges of the streets of a village or small town. You won't find them in the city.

To begin with, there are the daisies. How white the fields are with them! If they are fine, large daisies on tall, strong stems they will reach up to your waist—that is, if you are a little girl. If you are bigger they will come well above your knees. There are a number of things that you can do with them. First, you can make a really beautiful

Daisy Crown

[Table of Contents](#)

for a May queen, or to wear yourself just for the fun of it.

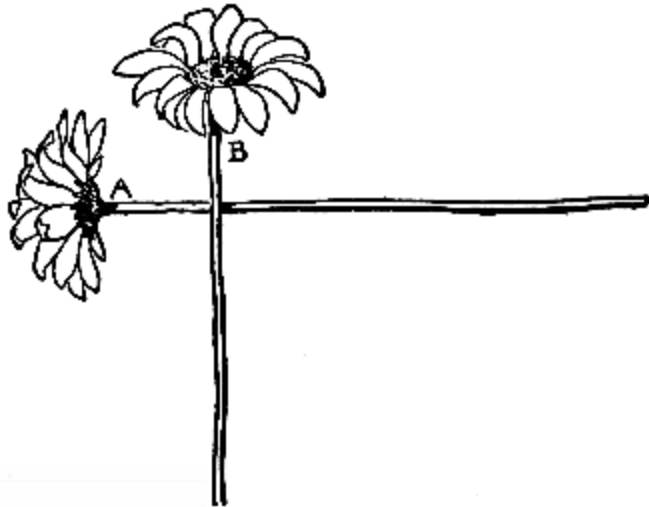


Fig.1 - Begin the wreath in this way.

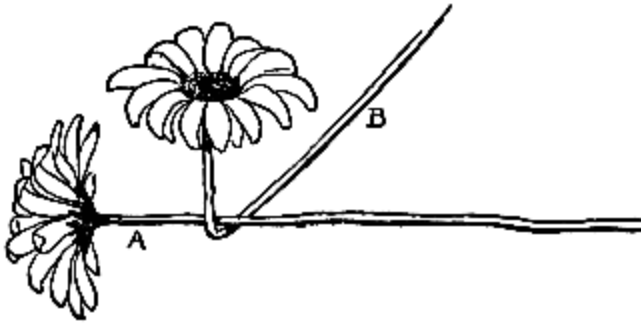


Fig.2 - Turn the stem of B under the stem of A

Gather a whole lot of daisies with rather long stems. They will stay fresh longer if you put them into a pail of cool water and let them drink a little before using them; and if they have wilted while you carried them, the water will bring them up again as fresh as—why, as fresh as a daisy to be sure. This is the way to make the crown. It is a new way and a good way.

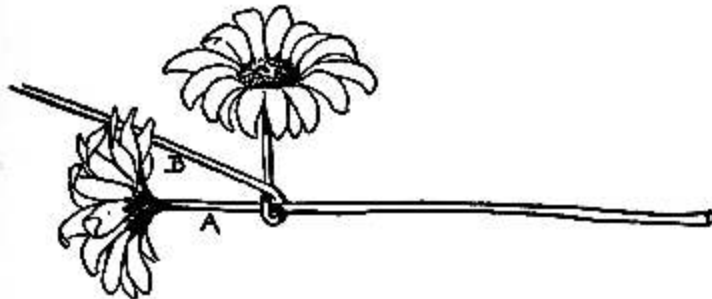


Fig.3 - Bring B around and in front of it's own upright.

Take one daisy in your left hand and hold it, not upright but in what is called a horizontal position like the one marked A in [Fig. 1](#), then with your right hand hold another daisy upright and place its stem in front of and across the stem of the first, as you see it in [Fig. 1](#).

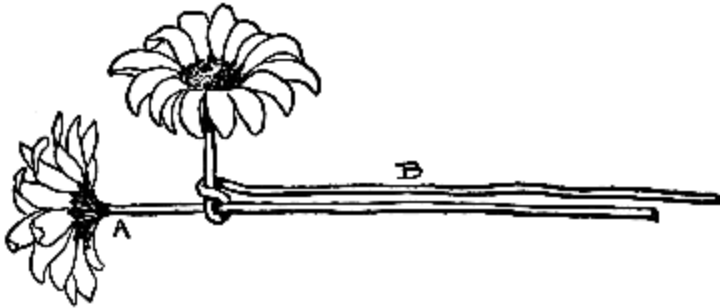


Fig.4 - Let the stem of B rest on the stem of A

This second daisy we will call B. Now turn the stem of B under the stem of A and up at the back as it is in Fig. 2. Bring this same stem, B, around and in front of its own upright part like Fig. 3. Turn it all the way around the upright part and let the stem of B rest on top of the stem of A. Fig. 4 shows this, but in the drawing the stems are separated a little so that you may see each one plainly. It is something like weaving, you see. And it is weaving of a sort.

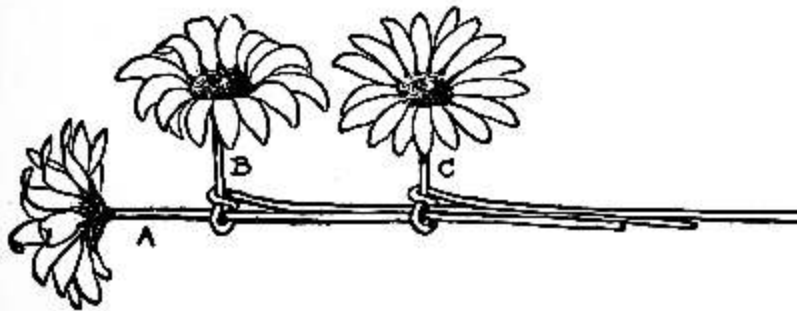


Fig.5 - Weave another daisy, C, on the first two stems.

Across the stems of the daisies A and B, two stems this time, place the stem of another daisy that we will call C, and weave it on the first two stems exactly as you wove B onto A (Fig. 5). The stem of the fourth daisy will have to cross three stems, A, B, and C. The fifth daisy-stem will cross four stems, but after that the end of the daisy-stem A will probably have been passed and you will be weaving on the others. It depends upon the length of the stems how many are woven over; sometimes there may be five. It is not well

to have more than that number. You can cut a stem off when it seems to be going too far around the crown.



Fig.6 - A new way to make a Daisy Wreath.

Place the daisies close enough together to have their petals touch, or even crowd a trifle, because when the crown is curved and the ends brought together the flowers will separate and leave wider spaces. When you have woven enough daisies to make your crown the proper size to fit your head, cut the last stems off about two inches from the last flower and, with a strong blade of grass or piece of string, tie them to the stem of the daisy A, just back of the flower. [Fig. 6](#) shows what the daisy crown looks like when finished.

CHAPTER II

JACK-IN-THE-PULPIT

Table of Contents

ONE of the earliest wild flowers to show its head above ground is Jack-in-the-pulpit. It is an odd plant and what we call the flower is not the blossom at all, but a protecting leaf called a spathe which surrounds the tiny flowers growing on the club-shaped spike (or spadix) standing upright inside.

That is a good thing to know and remember, but what concerns us now is that there is a pulpit with its curved sounding-board—or perhaps it is a striped awning—overhead, and that in the pulpit is Jack.

He is a cheerful little preacher and his pulpit is somewhat gayer than we usually see, but no one ever told Jack that to be good he must be solemn and that to preach he must have a pulpit rich and sombre. The good God who made him gave him his pretty, striped pulpit with its striped awning to shelter it, and Jack goes on preaching his cheerful sermons from this as long as he lives. Hear what some one has said of him:

"Jack-in-the-Pulpit preaches to-day,
Under the green trees, just over the way;
Squirrel and Song-Sparrow high on their perch,
Hear the sweet lily-bells ringing to church.

"Come, hear what his reverence rises to say,
In his low, painted pulpit, this calm Sabbath day.

Fair is the canopy over him seen
Pencilled by Nature's hand, black, brown, and green."

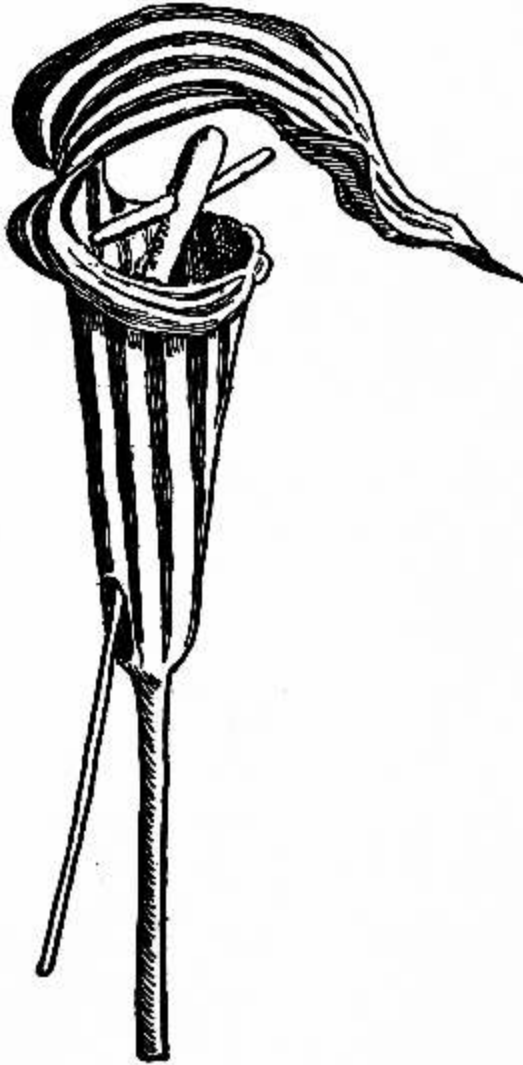


Fig.7 - Cut a hole at the back of the Pulpit.

Some people who love the woods and the wild flowers can understand Jack's wild-wood language. They will tell you that over and over again he is saying: "Come into the clean, shady woods and learn to love all the wonderful living, growing things to be found here. Come into the green woods and hear what we can tell you of beauty and love and kindness; of courage and perseverance and strength, for

plants must have courage and perseverance as well as strength in order to live."

All the time these plants are working in the ground and above it to make their flowers perfect and their seeds fruitful. Sometimes it is difficult work, too, if the soil does not give them enough food, or a dry summer chokes them with thirst. Sometimes they must struggle hard to gain a footing between the rocks where they were told to grow, or to keep from being crowded out by stronger, coarser plants that are called weeds.

But they keep on trying to do their part and to do it well; they work and love, and their children, the blossoms, laugh, laugh, laugh with the happiness of it all.

Now if Jack seems to you to stand too still in his pulpit while he preaches all this, why you can make him move around. He can turn first to one side then to the other, and he can lean forward over the front with extended arms as some preachers do when they are very much in earnest.

For this you will first have to cut a hole at the back of the pulpit near the bottom, as is shown in [Fig. 7](#), then, slipping your knife inside, cut Jack loose from the flower and drop him out from the top by turning the pulpit upside down.

Cut off the lower, thin part of the spike to which the arrow points in [Fig. 8](#) and, after puncturing a deep hole in the end, push in a very slender twig or grass-stem. [Fig. 9](#) shows how this is done. For arms that will make Jack seem more like a little man, push a short piece of grass-stem through the spike near the top where you see it in [Fig. 9](#). Make a hole all the way through the spike with a pin so that the arms will slip in easily.



Fig.8 - The Spike.

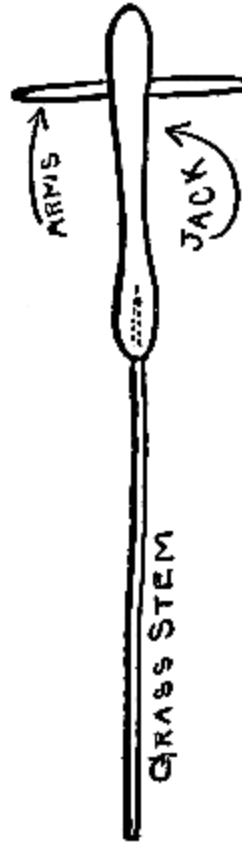


Fig.9 - This is Jack.

When you are ready for Jack to preach put him in his pulpit, sliding the grass-stem through the hole at the back. While you hold the stem of the pulpit in one hand take the grass-stem in the other and, by moving it up and down, twisting it one way, then the other, and tipping it up, you can make him rise up tall and straight, then sink down; you can make him turn to the right and to the left and lean forward. That is being active enough in such a small pulpit, isn't it?



CHAPTER III

RED AND WHITE CLOVERS

[Table of Contents](#)

By the roadside, through the meadows, on the farm, at the cottage door, and in your own yard those dear, familiar little friends, the clover-blossoms, come to greet you. Even in city parks you may find them, and always they are ready and glad to help you have a good time. Gather a lot of these flowers and sit in the shade under a tree with your lap filled with them while I tell you how to make a

Clover Wreath

[Table of Contents](#)

Select some long-stemmed blossoms and leaves, bunch them and bind their stems together their full length with strong grass or string. Wind the grass around and around the stems, tucking the ends securely in under the last wind. You may need several long blades of grass for binding one bunch.

In the same way make a second bunch and fit the flowers up close against the first bunch of blossoms, with their stems lying along the side of the first stems. Do not lap the flowers of one bunch over the flowers of another. Fasten the second bunch in place by binding the stems to those of the first bunch; then make a third bunch and bind it on next to the second bunch. Continue making these clover bunches and binding their stems to the stems of those already a part of the wreath until the strip is long enough to fit around your

head. Try it on and, if it is the proper length, join the two ends by binding the last stems to the stems of the first bunches. [Fig. 10](#) shows the clover wreath complete.



Fig.10 - Wreath of freshly picked Clover.
You should also have a

Clover Bracelet

[Table of Contents](#)

to wear with the wreath. Make this as you did the wreath but with much smaller bunches. Keep binding the bunches together until the strip for the bracelet fits your arm ([Fig. 11](#)), then join the two ends, and slip the pretty thing on your wrist. Of course, you will want

Clover Earrings

Table of Contents

to match, and those two plump, full, fresh blossoms lying at the top of the others on your lap are exactly what you need.



Fig.11 - Clover bracelet.



Fig.12 -
Clover
earring.



Fig.13 -
Clover
Blossom
ring.



Fig.14 - Clover
Blossom pendant on
Clover necklace.

Take one of these clovers and fit it in tight between your cheek and the lobe of your ear ([Fig. 12](#)). Be careful not to break the long stem, for you must bring it up snugly just

back of your ear along the line where the ear joins your head, and when this is done, bend the end of the stem down gently over the top of your ear. The stem will hold your earring in place. Make the other earring in the same way. The two clover-blossoms used for the earrings should be as much alike as possible both in size and shape. They should be matched carefully, as pearls and diamonds are matched in a pair of real earrings.

Now for a "solitaire"

Clover Ring

[Table of Contents](#)

Choose the finest clover for the jewel, and hold it against the back of your left forefinger while you wrap the stem once around the finger, loop it over the blossom and draw the loop tight. Fasten the end by tucking it under and over, and again under the stem ring on your finger. This clover ring is really very effective, and can be made of any colored clover. [Fig. 13](#) gives an idea of how it looks.

A Necklace of Clover

[Table of Contents](#)

will complete your beautiful set of flower jewelry. Make the necklace as you made the bracelet and fasten three pendant blossoms at the centre, allowing the middle clover to hang down a little below those on either side ([Fig. 14](#)).

Now you are ready, with the addition of a long, straight twig, at the top of which you have fastened a bouquet of clover, to play that you are queen of all the clover fairies, and that your clover-tipped twig is your magic wand.

Other Things of Clover

[Table of Contents](#)

The running, vinelike clovers are fine to use for climbing-roses on outdoor doll-houses. They can also be trained over the doll garden-frames and arches.

CHAPTER IV

CLOVER DESIGNS

[Table of Contents](#)

HAVE you ever admired the pretty patterns on wallpaper of flowers and green leaves? Have you ever embroidered dainty designs in colors on white linen, and do you love it all? If you do, you will like to make some designs yourself in a new way, and with real flowers and real leaves.

You don't have to know how to draw or to paint in this designing, for the flowers are there ready for you to use, more exquisitely drawn and colored than the greatest artist could do them. Your part is to group and arrange them on a sheet of paper so that they will form beautiful designs; designs that will not only delight you, but that may be copied in embroidery or in other ways.

Merely to place the flowers on the paper in some sort of a pattern is interesting, but the design won't last because the flowers won't stay in place. Your sleeve may wipe them all off, or a puff of air blow them away, so a method has been invented especially for you that will keep them where you want them to stay, and that method is simply to *paste* them there.

You can make designs of almost any kind of flowers, the common pink-and-white clover that grows underfoot nearly everywhere makes a particularly pretty one. This is the long-stemmed, viny kind, and its name is alsike clover. [Fig. 15](#) shows what the alsike clover looks like, and you will see that its leaves are rather pointed at the tip, and shaped more like