

1963

EC63-1180 Christmas Decorations made from Straw

Magdalene Pfister

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CHRISTMAS DECORATIONS MADE FROM STRAW

Magdalene Pfister

Straw from wheat, oats and rye has a naturally shiny surface and a soft yellow color that lends itself to many attractive articles. Scandinavians and Germans have long used this material for Christmas decorations. Among this folk art you will find stars, mobiles and figures.

Gathering

Grain stalks should be gathered at harvest time. Cut the stems near the ground and lay in a dry shady place for a few days.

Preparing for Use

Remove the grain head with scissors. Then cut below and above the joint and slip off the grassy leaves. For many of the decorations the stalks are split with the point of a knife, razor or scissors and flattened with the flat side of the knife or iron. For some decorations the straw is left round.

When making angels or animals the straw is soaked in warm water overnight to make it pliable.

Making Articles

Straw Stars

Straws which have been split are cut into pieces about $2 \frac{3}{4}$ " long. Glue 4 or more of these strips crosswise over each other, pinwheel fashion. A glass may be placed over a pattern and straws glued over the lines.

A more attractive star may be made when the straws are bound together with thread rather than glued. Straw in the natural round form may be used. Notice the thread is doubled and the loop is placed around the center. See figures 1 and 2.

Straw Chains

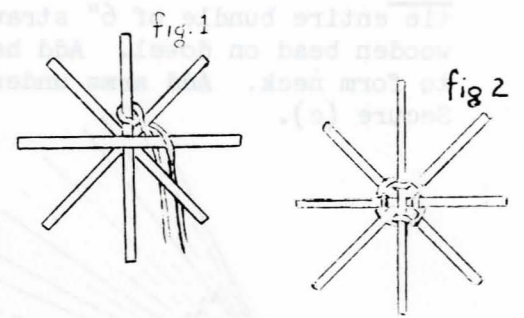
Bend straw in rings and in gluing, link them together so that they form a chain.

Straw Balls

Two or more rings can be fastened together to form a ball. These balls can be joined to chains for tree decorations.

Lanterns

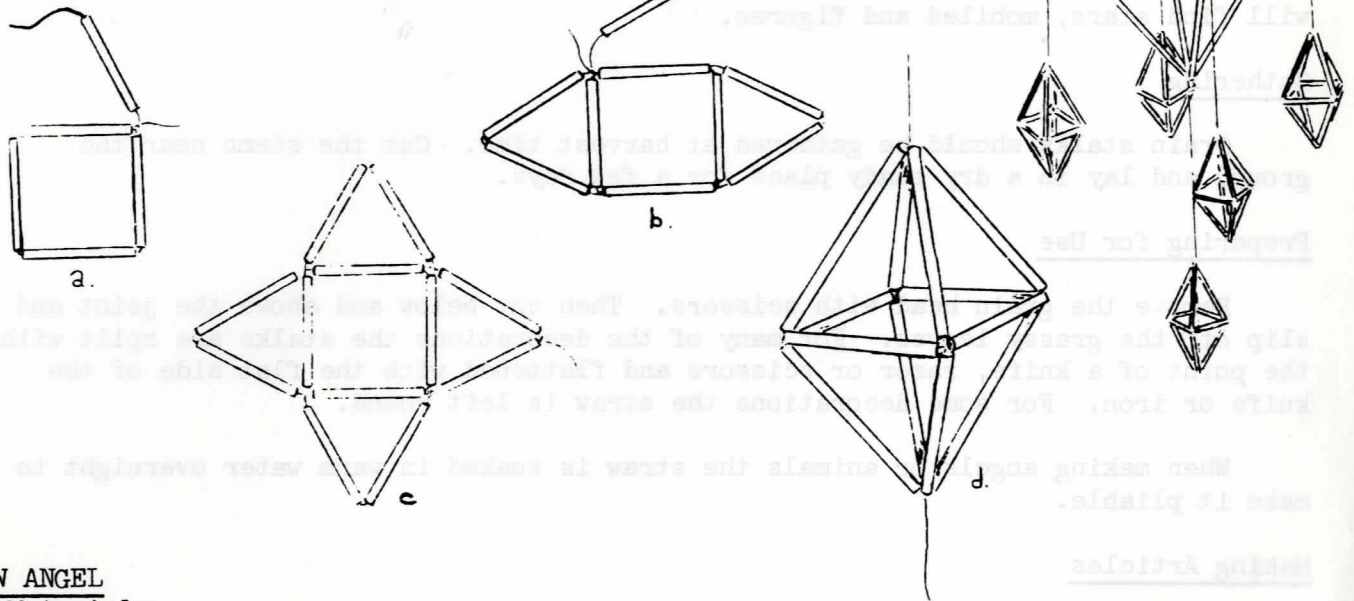
Strips of straw are glued to transparent paper, leaving a space between. Colored tissue paper may be used. The sides of the paper are glued together to form a cylinder. Around the top and bottom a straw strip is glued as reinforcement. To make the bottom, several strips are glued close together on the paper and cut in a circle as large as the cylinder. Then glue this to the bottom of the cylinder.



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STRAW MOBILE

What is more fascinating than a mobile turning back and forth with the air currents? The following illustrations suggest the steps in making one:



STRAW ANGEL

Materials

For Wings: 15 straws 7" long. For Arms: 10 straws 6" long plus 6" florist's wire.
For Dress: 40 straws 7" long. For Halo: 3 straws 7" long. For Face: Wooden bead on dowel crochet cotton.

Method:

Soak straw overnight. Wings - stitch through middle of 15 straws. Tie and spread straws to shape. Form a double loop around straw with crochet cotton (a). Arms - Insert florist's wire down the center of one of the 6" straws and then tie entire bundle of 6" straws 1/2" and 1 1/2" from each end (b). Head - place wooden bead on dowel. Add halo made by braiding 3 straws. Tie straws together to form neck. Add arms under straw at rear. Place wings under 3 straws. Secure (c).

