

GRAPEVINE WREATH FOR THE BIRDS

Give a gift to your feathered friends and dress up your backyard with this easy to make, inexpensive grapevine birdseed wreath. Grab the kids, a wreath (available at craft stores), a jar of peanut butter, a bag of birdseed and some raffia or ribbon and dip into this fun, family project. Attach a loop with raffia or ribbon to the wreath top, spread peanut butter on the vines, sprinkle with bird seed and hang wherever the birds fly. Dress it up with crabapples, berries, evergreen sprigs or pine cones to give it a seasonal look. A little tip? Melt the peanut butter in the microwave and apply with a small paint brush to simplify and expedite the task. Total cost: under \$15.



Backlight Your Photos

Give your favorite photos some lasting warmth by creating simple photo candle shades. Find clear glass candle holders—either circular- or square-shaped—and make prints to fit. Trim to the same size as the candle holder, roll around the holder and affix with clear tape.

The candle will backlight the image and give it a fresh look. Experiment with landscapes, wildflowers, fall color photos and your family in the out-of-doors.

For safety, use solid glass candle holders, avoiding those with open holes to prevent paper from getting too hot.

Write Like Our Forefathers

Since the sixth century, the quill pen was the writing tool until replaced by the steel pen point in the 1800s, and later by fountain and ball point pens. In today's age of texting and typing, penmanship has nearly vanished.

Kids and art-minded adults can craft easy-to-make homemade quill pens using turkey or goose feathers to revive this art.



SUPPLIES

Flight (larger wing or tail) feather from goose or turkey.

NOTE: *Plumage from any legally harvested game can be used for ornamental and decorative uses, but songbird and endangered or threatened species feathers cannot be possessed for any reason or use. While feathers from legally harvested upland birds can be bought and sold, migratory game bird feathers cannot under the Lacey Act.*

- 1) Strip feathers from end of shaft to make room for your hand to grasp the quill.
- 2) Clean and harden the tip to stiffen the nib by leaving feather in a sunny window for a week, or fill an empty soup can with clean sand and heat on stovetop. Stick feather tip into sand and let cool.
- 3) Use a sharp, small knife or X-acto knife to cut off a ¼ inch from the quill end.

MAKE YOUR POINT

- 4) With a sharp knife, cut the end at a 45° angle, down and away from the top.
- 5) Cut a short slit along the top center of the tip to help draw inkflow.
- 6) Cut away the front of the quill to form the scoop.
- 7) Slice a scoop from the underside of the nib, centered under the slit.
- 8) With tweezers, scrape out membrane from inside of tube to increase ink-holding.
- 9) Make the point by cutting slivers on both sides of the slit to make a fountain pen shaped nib.

10) If the slit is overly long, the tip will be too soft. If the slit is too short, the pen tip will be too hard. Trim as needed.

Buy India ink from a craft store and dip the pen into the ink. With practice, you can create unique lettering for special occasions.

