

Playful springboards: HAZEL



The ideal time to look to go foraging for hazelnuts, or nutting is September. Once collected arrange the hazelnuts on a baking tray and roast them for 15 minutes at 180°C, 360°F. Place a tea towel in a bowl and pour in the roasted nuts and allow them to cool. Once cool, rub vigorously inside the tea towel to remove the skins. The nuts can then be used in a variety of recipes.

Hazelnut Biscuits

150g hazelnuts, roughly chopped
100g icing sugar, plus extra for dusting
155g butter, softened
200g flour
Zest of ½ an orange
1 egg
Pinch of salt

Heat the oven to 170°C or Gas 3. Beat the butter and sugar together until smooth, add the other ingredients except the egg. Gradually add the beaten egg until incorporated. Roll out the dough to 3mm thickness and cut out the biscuits with a biscuit cutter.

Bake in the oven on a lined baking sheet for 8 minutes. Leave to cool on a wire rack.

Recipes

Coppicing is a means of managing the size of trees and stimulating new growth and involves cutting back the tree at the roots.

Coppicing provides a crop of crafting materials and hazel is particularly useful as it grows in straight lengths that can be used for a variety of projects.

Building a teepee or den building - the lengths of hazel can be used like canes to hold up fabric or tarpaulins. A hazel teepee is also ideal for growing vegetables or flowers such as runner beans or sweet peas. Hazel works especially well for wand making as it is so straight. All you need is a whittling knife or vegetable peeler to strip some or all of the bark off - then decorate to suit.

Practical Uses



Practical Uses

Walking stick / staff

Hazel makes a great walking stick or staff, and can be whittled clean of bark, or markings can be carved out of it.

Staffs were traditionally used by Druids for self-defence.

Forked twigs were often favoured by diviners when looking for water.

Whether a staff, walking stick, divining rod or wand, hazel rods make great springboards for freely chosen, imaginative play ideas and fantasy/ role play.



Story sticks

Chose a straight hazel stick for each person and tie a length of string at one end, or use elastic bands.

Take the stick with you on a walk or trek with some wool. As you go about your walk, be observant and choose things along your walk to remind you of where you were and weave these items on to your stick. By the end you will have a visual memory of your time outdoors that can be used to retell the journey. Young people can also do a larger version of this between trees.

Hazel leaves

Take inspiration from beautiful hazel leaves and make natural artworks.

Sparingly cover the underside of the leaves with a layer of paint and press down onto thick paper to make prints.

Place thin paper over the leaves and rub vigorously with wax crayons to make a relief impression.

In autumn collect dried leaves, crumble them up to create natural 'glitter' for pictures.

Use the leaf shape as a stencil and think about symmetry - hazel leaves are mostly symmetrical when folded.

Look online for more Hazel art inspiration.



Practical Uses



CARVING

Hazel is a useful wood that is often used for carving projects using specialist woodcraft knives and whittlers.

Beginner tutorials are widely available online, along with inspirational projects.

HAZEL 'COOKIES'

Using a hand or electric saw, slice lengths of hazel into thin slices; sand them smooth for use in lots of different projects.

Make buttons or badges by drilling holes through the slices. Decorate the buttons with markers or nail polishes, and string them together with jute string to make jewellery, mobiles or tree decorations.

Make counter games such noughts and crosses, or warm up activities (e.g. writing a name on one side of the cookie and 2 truths and one lie on the back; move around the group talking to others to guess which is the lie).

Make a simple 5- or 6-pointed star shape, using string or wire to join the points together. You could add tissue paper and other objects to make seasonal decorations

Kim's (memory) Game:

Create a large frame on the floor using lengths of hazel and fill with about 15 objects that you find around you.

Ask the group to memorise the objects for a minute and then turn away or close their eyes whilst the leader removes an object. The next person to be leader is the first one who guesses correctly what has been removed from the frame.

Hazel craft ideas

Cover an old bird house with lengths of hazel, gluing them on to transform it to a log cabin.

Make key holders for your home from suitable shaped twigs.

Create a simple wooden frame with lengths of hazel woven or glued together.



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