

Facts and Folklore

The oak is a common symbol of strength and endurance and has been chosen as the national tree of many countries. The iconic shape of the leaves of the oak and the wonderful acorns lead to the appeal of the tree and inspire many creative endeavours!

Some oak trees can survive for a great many years, some are over 300 years old and are called Ancient trees. It is possible to identify these ancient trees by a number of characteristics, as they are far fatter than usual with a very wide trunk and they have a squat or dumpy appearance. Sometimes the tree can be quite gnarled and have some decay, the tree may be hollow inside and might look a little unhealthy but is probably doing quite well. The Woodland Trust has a useful tool to help approximate the age of an oak tree:

[Download a guide from the Pappus website](http://www.once-upon-a-pefestal.blogspot.com)

Oak trees have a long-standing connection with druids: the name 'druid' means 'oak wisdom'. In the past, carrying an oak branch was believed to give you magical powers, and placing an acorn on your windowsill gave the house protection from lightning and carried on a person gave long life.

Recipes Using Oak

Warning: Inedible!

The main use of the oak trees was in pig fattening, since acorns are very nutritious for pigs. For humans, the acorn is not edible! The fruits of the acorns serve as food for many wild animals, which in return ensure the spread of the seeds. The sawdust was (and still is) used for smoking food for humans. However even though the oak is inedible, the acorn is such an inspiring symbol that it can inspire fun recipes such as these delightful sweet treats.

Recipes

Ingredients:

Soft Toffees

M&Ms or other chocolate covered nuts

Instructions:

To make these, use either chocolate covered raisins or nuts such as M and Ms. To add the topping use a soft toffee or fudge that you have bought and can be moulded and shaped into acorn caps. Add this to the tops of the M and Ms. They can also be added to the tops of cakes as decoration.



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The wood of oak trees was mainly used for shipbuilding. Furthermore, the bark of the oak trees was often used for tanning leather.

Today, oak wood is used in hydraulic engineering, as construction timber and for masts. But also, stairs and floors are made of this wood. In the furniture industry the high-quality oak wood is employed in veneer production.

The humble acorn can be used for a wide variety of art and craft projects.

Acorn Figures

Equipment:

Acorns
Matches, toothpicks or twigs
Glue and a glue gun
Leaves and other natural materials

Instructions:

Collect some acorn and make figures from them. The only thing you need are some matches and or twigs to connect the acorns together. Use the glue gun to secure the matches. You can also add in other materials if you wanted to try to make animals or fairies.

Acorn Drawings

Equipment:

Lots of acorns

Instructions:

Split into 2-3 person groups. Each group arranges the collected acorns into the silhouette of the selected animal. People from the other groups try to recognize what the picture shows.

Variants: other themes of the picture.



Acorn Wreath

Equipment:

Card, glue, acorns

Instructions:

Create a festive wreath for the autumn by taking a wreath cut out from card and painted a dark colour. Use a glue gun to attach the acorns to the paper wreath.

Playful springboards: OAK

Acorn Napkin Rings

Equipment:

Cardboard tube, Card, Paint, Glue, Acorns, Scissors, Glossy finishing product, Ribbons

<https://www.cindyderosier.com/2011/09/fall-napkin-rings.html>



Acorn Napkin Rings

Instructions:

Make the napkin rings by cutting a cardboard tube, such as the inside of a kitchen roll. Paint the card with autumn colours. Add oak leaf shaped designs to the painting. Cut out the oak leaves, then coat them and the acorns with a glue/gloss finishing product such as Modge Podge.

When everything is dry, use ribbon around the rings and use a glue gun to attach the leaves and the acorns.

<https://www.cindyderosier.com/2011/09/fall-napkin-rings.html>

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Bug Village Equipment:

Acorns, pebbles, glue and glue gun, twigs, a wooden base, stick-on eyes

Instructions:

Create a village of bugs using foraged acorns, pebbles twigs and glue gun.

Glue the twigs to the wooden base and attach the other elements carefully to your own design.



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Oak Leaves

Equipment

Oak leaf (or a photograph of it)
Watercolour paper
Watercolour paints in autumn colours
Brush

Paper and pen

Instructions:

On watercolour paper, use the wet-on-wet technique (using a wet paint brush on wet paper) paint yellow, brown, red stains. Allow the paint to dissolve and combine, and then dry. Once dry, draw lots of oak leaf silhouettes – why not try to make a repeating pattern that could be printed onto fabric or wallpaper?



Month of Oak

Equipment:

Oak leaves, acorns, general craft materials,

Instructions:

Choose a month of the year to become your Oak Month – during the month, everyone should have an acorn - either a real one, or a drawn one, or some other element connected with oak, e.g. coins with oak leaves etc.) with them at all times.

Work together to create an Oak Note to collate Oak information e.g. biological, cultural significance, trace oak motifs in coats of arms, logos, coins, badges, orders, buttons – anything that catches your eye. Take notes of words and drawings, including collages.

At the end of the month share the Oak Notes – everyone chooses 3-5 most interesting things and passes them on to others.

Finally: design, prepare and award Oak Medals and Badges.

Acorn Jewellery

Equipment:

Acorns, Glue, Paint, Glitter, Varnish, String/ leather to attach to the acorn, Pens

Instructions:

The acorn can be painted and decorated in a variety of ways to create necklace or bracelets that can be worn or decorations for the home.



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Arts and Crafts: Acorn Buddies

Equipment:

Acorns, wooden kebab skewers, glue, paint, modelling clay, stick-on eyes

Instructions:

Secure the acorn to the sharp end of a wooden BBQ skewer. Use paint, modelling clay and stick on eyes to create acorn buddies. Secure your buddy upright in a lump of modelling clay.



Leaf Garlands

Instructions:

Draw the oakleaf template and cut this out from a number of different coloured card, ensure there is a space at the top that can be hole punched or cut out for the garland string to be pushed through. Add details with the pen to the leaves. String all the leaves on to the length of garland and secure in place.

Leaf Garlands

Equipment:

String or craft raffia
Scissors
Different coloured card
Pens