

You TOO Can Make a Fairy House - by Ashley Rooney



You may have heard talk about the Fairy Homes & Gardens Event, which has just been enthusiastically endorsed by Lexington MA Tourism Committee and the Chamber of Commerce. It is a free family-friendly cross-town celebration and an invitation to come enjoy Lexington the weekend of May 27-29 and admire those magical fairy homes.

Many organizations including Chamber of Commerce, Munroe Center for the Arts, Recreation and Community Programs, Cary Library, SNAP, CAAL, Cotting School, preschools, Girl Scouts, and individuals have joined in and are making their fairy houses. You can too. And they are great fun to do with a friend or a grandchild - especially during the cold days of January.



As Cristina Burwell of Munroe Center for the Arts says, "the first step in building a fairy house is to collect natural materials." You may have a collection of shells from your various trips gathering dust. They offer great opportunities. Don't forget to check out your jewelry box or dresser drawers for other interesting bits such as that one earring, the broken bead necklace, the European coins that are no longer any good, or those holiday ornaments. Take a walk in your neighborhood or around your yard. All those interesting rocks, pinecones, twisted twigs, lichen and bark offer fun opportunities.

Now you need to build your structure using twine and a glue gun unless you are planning to use a conch shell or a dried squash. You can use a milk carton, a birdhouse, cardboard, wood, or twigs to make the house structure. Give it a firm base.

Once the overall structure is built and secure, it's time to decorate with all your findings. Fairies are attracted to shiny objects so decorate the inside with sparkly stickers or foil for a shimmering glow. Some extra birch bark can make a tiny chair, table, and steps for the entrance. Or you can use that collection of shells. What you can make from natural materials is almost as limitless as your imagination, especially if you make it in miniature.



When you make your house, shrink down to the size of a fairy or at least a small child and imagine the spaces you would like to inhabit. How would you spend your day and create the objects necessary? Sure, you have wings, but after

a long day you might want the assistance of a tiny ladder, a twisty staircase, or even a rope to help you get from one level to the next.

To be sure it is rain proof, you can weatherproof your creation by spraying it with a clear coat of polyurethane from a craft or hardware store. Wrap your fairy house with battery-powered fairy lights for nighttime enchantment.

Fairy houses are made from your imagination. Start with a tree stump, an old teapot, and add twigs, bark, flowers, rocks, shells, pods, nuts, feathers, beads, buttons and bows, etc.

Let yourself go!



Imagine a colorful leaf as a snuggly blanket. Use little bits of cloth, buttons, marbles, beads, or nuts. Almost anything can be something else with a little imagination and careful manipulation. For more information, visit Cary Library's books on fairy houses. To participate in this event, visit our website, www.munroecenter.org/fairyhouses

Images 2-4 are from C. Argus, T. Stevens and Jessica Marro, who are designers in Fairy Homes & Gardens 2 (In press)