

## HERBAL CRAFTS FOR THERAPEUTIC GARDENING



Nothing extends the herbal growing season like the sweet scent of herbs! Dried herbs can be used in a number of therapeutic gardening activities year-round and are especially welcome during the winter. Below are directions for shoe savers and dream pillows.

The planning for these projects begins during spring and summer. Choose herbs with a pleasant scent. Sage, rosemary, lavender, mint, lemon geranium, lemon balm or lemon verbena work well, along with artemisia as filler. Rose geranium leaves, rose hips and rose leaves will enhance a more floral-scented potpourri. Harvest herbs when at their peak. Wash herbs, dry them, remove stems from leaves, discard stems and store leaves in covered glass containers.

The herbal crafts program can be enhanced by passing samples of fresh herbs if available, contrasting the fresh and dried plants, using posters, telling herbal stories and legends and serving an herbal flavored snack and/or beverage.



A **dream pillow** is a mini cotton pillow (5"x7" is a good size), filled with herbs known for their calming quality and tucked inside a bed pillowcase to help create "sweet dreams". A recipe for a calming combination of dried herbs might be: 1 cup each of lavender, mint, lemon balm or lemon verbena added to 2 cups of rose-scented geranium and 4 cups of rose petals. You could add ¼ cup of rosemary as well. This would make enough potpourri to fill at least 10 little dream pillows. (For inspiration see Jim Long's book, *Making Herbal Dream Pillows*)

**Shoe savers** are shaped like the toe of a shoe and can be designed to look more masculine or feminine, depending on fabric and trimmings chosen. They perk up that special pair of shoes.



Materials needed:

- Herbs (see above)—an 8-oz cup of dried herb mix will fill a pair of shoe savers or one dream pillow
- Large plastic tub or bowl for mixing herbs
- Small plastic bowls or containers to fill with herbs and pass
- 2-oz paper cups, one cup per participant
- Polyester batting (used in toe of shoe savers and in pillows to add shape)
- Cotton fabric – can be printed or plain; ½ yard should make 10 pairs of shoe savers or 10 pillows
- For shoe savers, small rubber bands to close tops when filled and ribbon cut in two-foot lengths to tie over rubber bands
- For pillows, clothespins or paper clips to temporarily close the filled bags prior to sewing
- Small plastic bags – use to package finished pillows and shoe savers

Harvest and dry herbs in advance and the make bags as follows:

For each 5"x7" pillow, cut a 6"x15" rectangle. Fold in half length-wise and sew long sides with ½ -inch seam, leaving top open. Turn right-side out and press ½ an inch inside on open end.

For each shoe saver, cut two pieces, 4" wide by 7 ½" long, rounded at one long end. Turn under ½ inch at the top of each piece and stitch. Put right sides together and sew, leaving the hemmed top open for stuffing. Clip curve and turn right-side out. You will need four pieces of fabric for one pair of shoe savers.

When doing this project with a group, fill small containers with herbs and pass to group members. Allow each person to feel leaves and sniff to their heart's content to see if they can identify the herbs. Have participants pour herbs into large plastic bowl or tub and mix well.



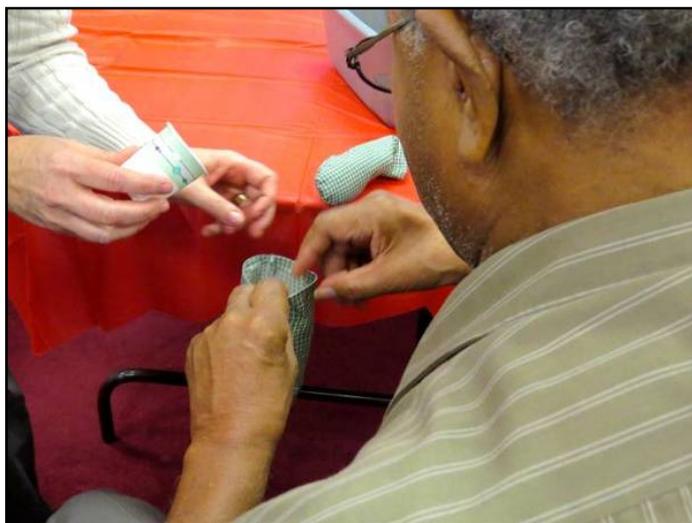
Allow participants to choose their pillow or shoe savers based on fabric color/patterns. Assist them in stuffing a small amount of batting into the empty pillow/shoe saver. Fill cups with dried herb mixture and help participants fill their pillow/shoe saver.

When pillows are plump, close top with clothespin or clip. This end will need to be hand or machine sewn later. Definitely stitch by machine if you are working with the severely memory-impaired to ensure no access to the contents. If you are fortunate enough to find ready-made pillow covers like the heart shown here, just make

slightly smaller muslin bags of the same shape, fill them, sew opening and tuck them inside the outer case.

When shoe savers are full, gather top and wrap rubber band around neck to tighten; tie with ribbon.

Both shoe savers and pillows can be packaged in plastic take-home bags labeled with the participant's name and containing an insert with pillow/shoe saver ingredients and directions for use.



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