

GRAFT A CORNHUSK WREATH

MAKE THIS DECORATIVE SYMBOL OF FALL IN ONE FUN EVENING

Dried cornhusks are part of the mellow look of fall, along with pumpkins, gourds, autumn leaves, and Indian corn. Wreaths made out of cornhusks look great on doors or walls, either indoors or out, and they're lightweight and long lasting. Here's how to make one that will give you years of pleasure.

MATERIALS

Dried husks from 10 to 12 large ears of corn

If you don't have a nearby cornfield where you can gather husks, look for them at craft shops or in a Spanish or Mexican grocery store.

Damp towel or water basin

Wire coat hanger

Large, strong safety pin

String

TOOLS

Scissors

Wire cutter

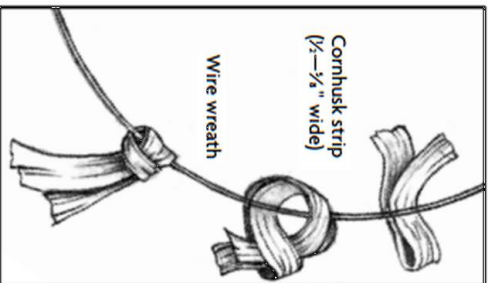
Pliers

DIRECTIONS

1. Using the scissors, cut the stem end from each husk, so that the individual "leaves" of the husk are separated and flat. Then, wrap the husks in a damp towel or soak them in a basin of lukewarm water for 20 to 30 minutes so they'll be more pliable and easier to work with.

2. Pull the wire coat hanger open and bend it into a circle. You can leave the hook on to act as a hanger, camouflaging it later with a large bow. For a neater appearance, cut off the hook and rejoin the cut ends. Crimp the joined ends with the pliers so they'll stay together.

3. Tear the wet cornhusks into strips about $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{8}$ inch wide. Most cornhusks are about 8 to 9 inches long. Small variations in length don't matter.



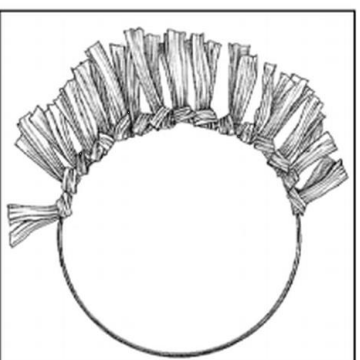
4. Working with one strip at a time, bend the strip into a U shape. Lay the strip under the wire hoop, so that you can see the U shape and the two loose ends face the center of the hoop. Bring both the bent end and the loose ends up and over the wire hoop, insert both loose ends through the bent end, and then pull the two loose ends tightly to fasten the strip firmly to the wire.

5. Continue to add cornhusk strips until the wire circle is entirely covered with them. Push the looped husks together as you work, cramming as many husks as possible onto the wire for maximum fullness.

Bend a thin strip of cornhusk into a U shape and place it under the wire with loose ends facing the wreath center. Bring both ends up and over the wire, inserting loose ends through the loop. Pull the ends outward firmly until the knot is tight.

6. When the wire is completely covered with looped husks and you can't fit any more on, fringe the husks, one husk strip at a time. To do this, grasp the safety pin at its joint. Poke the point of the pin into each husk near the loop, and draw the pin out to the loose end of the husk.

7. To complete the wreath, tie a short loop of string to the back of the wire for a hanger. If you wish, you can add a bow made of checked or calico fabric, raffia, burlap, or rope, and even a couple of miniature ears of corn, some dried flowers, or a few tendrils of bittersweet.



Add strips, pushing them together tightly as you work. The more strips you use, the fuller the wreath will look.