

## TUSSIE MUSSIE

DIFFICULTY 1 MESS FACTOR 0 PREP TIME 10 MINS AGE LEVELS 2-6+

Way back in the days when the smells of urban living could be abhorrent and plague was a threat, people used to make these simple little posies, using fresh herbs and other common flowering plants to give or to hold under their nose when venturing out.

My children love making and giving tussie mussies as an unexpected gift for Grandma, special friends and every now and then their teachers. By using the herbs you have to hand (those with woody stems are easier to arrange), your children can make a sweet-smelling and relatively long-lasting arrangement.

- ▶ **long sprigs of rosemary**
  - ▶ **long stems of lavender**
  - ▶ **long sprigs of a bay, lime, lemon or orange tree**
  - ▶ **long sprigs of sage. (even better if it's flowering)**
  - ▶ **long stems of mint (any kind will do)**
  - ▶ **long stems of curly parsley**
  - ▶ **long stems of tea roses**
  - ▶ **a rubber band**
  - ▶ **some decorative string**
- ▶ Together, combine the flowers and herbs to make a small posy. Have your children write and attach a little note of good wishes and watch as they win the heart of the recipient!

## ROSE PETALS AND PENCIL SHAVINGS

DIFFICULTY 1 MESS FACTOR 3 PREP TIME 10 MINS AGE LEVELS 2-6+

I don't know why they thought of adding pencil shavings to our rose petal potpourri, but I'm glad my children did.

- ▶ **6-8 large handfuls (20 little handfuls) of fresh, colourful and stinky rose petals**
  - ▶ **some rose leaves**
  - ▶ **a handful of tiny rosebuds (optional)**
  - ▶ **1 large handful of lavender flowers**
  - ▶ **1-2 teaspoons of orris root powder**
  - ▶ **10-12 drops of rose oil**
  - ▶ **a selection of coloured pencils**
  - ▶ **a pencil sharpener**
- ▶ With your child, collect roses and lavender. Roses generally bloom in late spring and throughout summer. Lavender is also at its most prolific in summer.
  - ▶ To dry the petals and lavender, place them on a cooling rack and leave in an airy spot until dry (this should take about a week). It's worth moving them about on the tray each day. (You can dry rosebuds in the same way.)
  - ▶ Ask your children to sharpen their coloured pencils and place the shavings in a bowl. Combine with the rest of the dry ingredients.
  - ▶ Now gently transfer the mixture into a large paper bag, add the orris root powder, hold the bag closed and gently toss the ingredients so the powder is evenly distributed. You really should store this bag away for a month or so, but little ones will struggle with waiting that long.
  - ▶ When you're ready, tip the contents of the paper bag back into your bowl and sprinkle with drops of rose oil. You may need to add a few more drops every six months or so.

## EASY LAVENDER BAGS

The smell of lavender is calming and when placed under a child's pillow at night is said to assist restful sleep.

You will need one piece of fabric 25cm long by 8cm wide (or bigger if you want). Simply fold in half and sew down both sides.

With your child, find enough lavender flowers to fill the bag (they are at their best in summer). To dry the lavender, separate the stems as much as possible and place on a cake rack. Put in an airy dark room for around two weeks or until the lavender becomes crisp to the touch. The garage or linen press is a good spot. If your space is limited, tie the lavender into a loose bunch and hang in an airy spot, blooms facing down.

When they are completely dry, with your child, gently shred the flowers off the top of the stems, sprinkle with a little lavender oil and scoop into the bag. Sew it up and tie with ribbon. Place under your child's pillow and enjoy a good night's sleep!

