



Botanical Arts photos by Dodie Goodman, Garden Club of Houston

BUZZING ABOUT BOTANIC ARTS

by Dodie Jackson
Garden Club of Houston

I recently attended the Philadelphia Flower Show, oldest and largest the U.S., and again I was struck by the public's interest in Botanic Arts, the long lines of people waiting to see these creations. Even more recently, while attending a flower show in Natchez, MS, there were so many interested viewers of the displays.

So what are Botanic Arts? It is an art form in which pieces from Nature are cut, manipulated, painted and glued to look like another object.

There are 2 different categories of Botanic Arts:



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- JEWELRY. The designer starts from nothing. All mechanics must be completely covered with plant materials.
- EMBELLISHMENTS. The designer is given an object to embellish and it is not required for the object to be totally covered with plant material. It is vitally important that ALL plant material used be completely dry.

For this art form, be prepared to learn about different types of glues and paints, how plant materials react to glue and paint, how to use a Dremel drill, jeweler's saws, and many more implements.

How do you get started? Take a walk!! Look at shapes of nuts, berries, leaves, mushrooms, twigs, vines, anything in Nature that catches your eye. Pick it up! Take it home! Once you get into this style of walking, an entire new world will open up to you.

Or, go to the grocery store or China Town, any place that sells beans, seeds and nuts in bulk. Pick out shapes that will work in your creation. Here is a list of many commonly used plant materials:

- From your garden or walks:

Acorns, bald cypress, banksia, bamboo, bear grass, beech, bird of paradise, birch bark, boxwood, cactus needles, cedar, corn husks, Cryptomeria, dogwood, epiphytes, eucalyptus, ferns, ginko, grapevine, inland sea oats, ivy, jute, kiwi vine, magnolia, nandina, palmetto, pecans, poke berries, raffia, ting ting, vinca, walnuts, wheat, willow.

- From the Grocery:

Allspice, almond, barley, bayleaf, Brazil nuts, cardamon, celery seeds, cloves, coffee beans, coriander seed, corn, dill seeds, lentils, mung beans, navy beans, peanuts, peas, peppers, pumpkin seeds, sesame seeds, star anise, sunflower seeds.

- More seeds and Pods:

Anthurium, astilbe, baptisia, bayberry, blackberry lily, butterfly weed, cane, hibiscus, hydrangea, gourds, pincushion plant, poppy, roses, sedum, viburnum, yucca.

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- Botanical Arts Supplies:

Paper, Tracing Paper, Pencils, Tape, Ruler, Cutting Board, Card Board, Glues (Aleen's Tacky Glue, Epoxy, E6000 Gorilla Glue), Toothpicks, Straight pins, Paper Clips, Sand paper, Emery Boards (round and straight), Xacto knife, Cotton Swabs, Scissors, Wire, Nail polishes, Acrylic paint, Paint brushes, Spray paint & Clear coat, Gold Leaf, Silver leaf. Assorted dried material, Storage boxes, Foam core



Three Botanical Arts exhibits I took at a past Florescence

101 Sherbrook Circle • Conroe, Texas 77385-7750
(936) 321-6990 Metro • (936) 273-1200 Conroe • Fax (936) 273-1655