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Natural decorations

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Pomander – a traditional decoration for warding away disease

Traditionally a pomander was worn or carried as a protection against infection in times of disease or merely to hide bad smells associated with disease. It is not useful against Covid -19 but can make a lovely festive decoration.



This 17th century pomander is from the V&A collection and was hung at the waist or neck. The hinged compartments, which open like segments of an orange, contained different scents such as cloves.

Cloves and orange

Cloves are the aromatic flower buds of a tree in the family Myrtaceae, *Syzygium aromaticum*. They are native to Indonesia, and are commonly used as a spice or essential oil.

Cloves were thought to bring protection from disease because of their strong scent.



To make a pomander

Pomanders have always been seen as a symbol of good luck and health. We all need some of that this year!

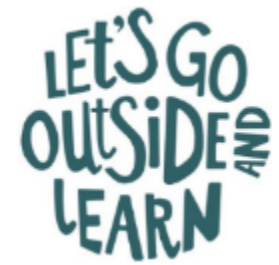


- Take firm oranges and stud them with whole cloves in interesting patterns or designs.
- You can also use a toothpick to make holes first.
- For a stronger aroma, cover the entire orange with cloves,
- Roll it in a mixture of spices such as:
 - 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon,
 - 1 teaspoon ground cloves,
 - 1 tablespoon ground nutmeg,
 - 1 tablespoon allspice,
 - $\frac{1}{4}$ cup powdered orris root.
- Leave the orange in the mix for a week, turning once a day.

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Be creative with cloves



To hang your pomander, run a long wire through the orange; make a knot at the bottom and a loop at the top for hanging.

Or, you can tie ribbon around your pomander for a festive look!

To make a pomander last store in a paper bag in a dry place for a few weeks. Use lots of cloves which are a natural preserving agent. The cloves will draw out the juices and they'll shrink in size. Dusting with cinnamon helps, too, as cinnamon functions as an anti-fungal ingredient.



Natural decorations

Go for a walk and collect some things that you could use to make natural decorations. It doesn't need to be Christmas to celebrate the outside inside!

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Here's some we made earlier!



Last year we decorated a tree in Heston park with bits and pieces that we had found while we were walking there.

