



by Cindy Steele

Earth Day 2024

Welcome back to Puddles' Craft Corner!

It's that time of year to celebrate our home – the Earth! We live on this great big,

wonderful planet, so it's time to celebrate our home and think about ways to keep the Earth healthy and happy! Earth Day is celebrated each year in April. This year's

Earth Day celebration will be on Monday, April 22, 2024.

Our planet is a wonderful place to live, but it needs our help to thrive!

That's why each year on April 22, more than a billion people celebrate Earth Day to protect the planet from things like pollution and deforestation. By taking part in activities like picking up litter and planting trees, we're making our world a happier, healthier place to live.



Earth Day is a great time to think about all the ways the Earth takes care of us and think of ways that we can take care of it! From the soil that helps to grow the food we eat to the water and air that give us life, we have so much to thank Mother Earth for. Earth Day is a good opportunity to get back in touch with nature and give back in ways that make the Earth a better place for all of us to live.

Celebrating Earth Day With Kids

Getting kids involved in taking care of the planet when they're young encourages them to continue these habits as they grow older. It's important to teach kids to be good stewards of the Earth and encourages them to love and respect their planet and nature. There are so many fun and engaging ways you can celebrate Earth Day with kids and family while being conscious of taking care of it and making it a safe and wonderful place to live! Here are some great ideas to do with kids and the family!

1. Go On A Nature Scavenger Hunt

It's always fun to go on a nature hike and it's even more fun to make the hike a scavenger hunt! Make a list of natural things that you want to hunt for while going on

your hike. You can find lots of nature scavenger hunt ideas and forms online. There are also fun online nature bingo cards that you can print and use. Come out to Hagerman NWR and take a hike on one of our trails.



2. Neighborhood or Backyard Clean-Up



3.

This is a simple way to help kids realize the importance of keeping our environment clean. Make this a fun activity by grabbing some gloves and garbage bags and spending an afternoon beautifying your neighborhood by removing all the trash humans have tossed around.

4. Make a Terrarium In An Old Jar

Recycle an old jar with a lid to use for a DIY terrarium rather than throwing it away and making more trash on the Earth. You'll need an old jar with a lid like a mayonnaise jar or a jelly jar, some dirt or potting soil, some activated charcoal (*not completely necessary, but acts as a filter to keep the water clean, keep bacteria from forming, etc.), some small rocks, a small plant or a succulent cutting, and some small figurines to make it fun, if you have any).



Next, put in some pebbles to cover the bottom of the jar, scoop a bit of the charcoal, then some soil on top of the charcoal, add some fun figurines, and put your plant down in the soil so the roots are covered. Finally, spray some water in the jar and put the lid on the jar. Put the jar in a warm sunny spot. The moisture inside the jar. A terrarium is a closed environment of living things that can

show us how an ecosystem works. With the right balance, once the jar is closed, the plant uses the water, sunlight, and nutrients from the soil to survive. As the plant loses some leaves, they are broken down and become nutrients in the soil. The plant should grow and survive in this perfect ecosystem for it to be healthy.

5. Make A Bird Feeder



A fantastic way to celebrate Earth Day is to make a bird feeder for the birds in your neighborhood out of recycled materials. There are several different types of bird feeders that can be made from recycled materials like water bottles, plastic milk cartons, toilet paper tubes, pinecones, popsicle sticks, etc.

6. Conserve Energy

Conserving energy is another great way to celebrate Earth Day. You can do this by turning off lights and unplugging appliances when not in use. You can also switch to energy-efficient light bulbs and appliances. Our world is full of things that

plug in and use electricity. Try to think of ways to conserve some energy!



7. Attend A Local Earth Day Event or Celebration



It's fun and educational to attend a local Earth Day Festival. Check to see if your community is having something. The Texoma Earth Day Festival has been held the Saturday before Earth Day since 2016. This year's festival will be held on Saturday, April 20 9am-4pm at the Sherman Municipal Building grounds 405 N. Rusk, Sherman, TX 75090. Attendance is free and open to the public. There will be vendors, food, entertainment at the outdoor stage

on the Municipal Building grounds, workshops, kids' events that are fun and teach about taking care of the Earth, etc. It's a fun day for the whole family that teaches kids about the importance of being aware of taking care of our planet! You can find out more about the Texoma Earth Day Festival at the festival website at:

<https://www.earthdaytexoma.org/>

Puddles, the Blue Goose, is ready to help us make a fun Earth Day craft that is also a recycling activity. Let's learn how to make our own DIY paper using old scraps of paper and construction paper. Hands-on activities are some of the best ways for kids to learn about something. Hands-on activities allow children to use their senses while learning. They see, touch, and move real objects to complete tasks. This means that science, nature, and more are amazingly brought to life! Children begin to understand the meaning behind what they are doing.

DIY Seed Paper



Materials:

1. Blender
2. Copy paper and construction paper scraps
3. Water and tub
4. Splatter screens (I got mine at the Dollar Tree)
5. Packages of flower seeds
6. Dried flower petals (*optional)
7. Scissors, hole punch, cookie cutters or whatever you want to use for patterns

Directions:

1. Gather materials.



2. Tear the paper into pieces and soak in water for a couple of hours or overnight. You can use a shredder to cut the paper into small pieces or tear it as in the picture. I used white copy paper and pieces of pink construction paper.



3. Put some of the pieces of paper and plenty of water in a blender. Be sure to add enough water so the paper doesn't get stuck in the blender. Blend the water and paper until it is completely blended and looks mushy.

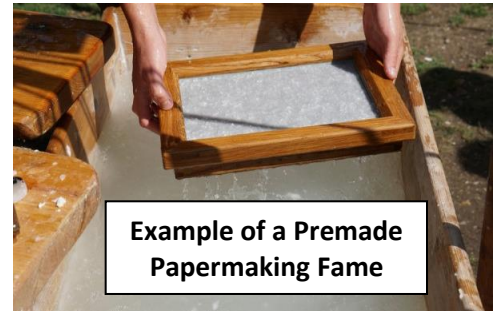


4. Pour the paper pulp into a flat tub and make sure it is mixed well and you have plenty of water.



5. Your pulp is ready for you to make your own paper! You can add flower seeds to the water, and you can add dried flower petals, also. There are many different types of screens you can use. You can purchase professional screens specifically for papermaking. You can also find inexpensive screens online. You can even make your own using two old picture frames and a piece of screen wire. I chose to use cheap kitchen splatter screens that I purchased at the Dollar Tree.

Mix the water and pulp well and put your screen down into the water. Swoosh it around to get a good coat of pulp on top of the screen and lift it out of the water. Let it drip through the screen until water isn't coming out. Place the screen on a towel to let the paper pulp dry.



6. Let your paper dry overnight. You can let the paper dry on the screen or you can turn it out onto a towel to dry overnight. If you let it dry on the screen, loosen it carefully and it will easily peel off the screen. I was able to make four pieces of paper. I added flower seeds and a few pieces of dried flowers. That's what you see in the paper.



7. Now, it's time to get creative! You can cut your paper into sheets for writing letters on. You can cut your paper into all different shapes. You can make gift tags, bookmarks, stationery, greeting cards, even seed paper to plant in soil for growing flowers! Uses for this paper are only limited by your creativity! My colored pulp dried lighter. If you want to color your paper in other colors, you can add a few drops of food coloring to the pulp and water. I colored a couple of mine with pink watercolor paint and pink chalk.



If you would like to take this one step further and learn more about Earth Day and taking care of our while reading a charming children’s book, here are some terrific fiction and fun nonfiction books with beautiful artwork:

Oil Spill!

by Melvin Berger

The Lorax

by Dr. Seuss

Miss Rumphius

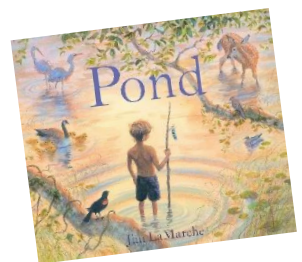
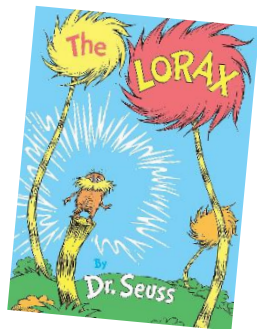
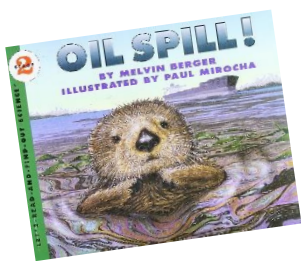
by Barbara Cooney

Once There Was a Tree

by Natalia Romanova

Pond

by Jim LaMarche



Puddles is excited for next month at Hagerman National Wildlife Refuge. Check out the May Newsletter for a fun pressed flower craft!

Photos courtesy of CanvaPro and Cindy Steele
All Books Listed on Amazon.com