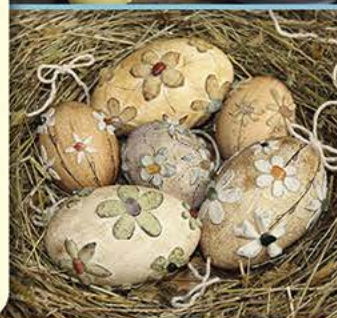




Lucie Dvořáková-Liberdová

Wreaths, Decorations and Easter Eggs

ORIGINAL, UNIQUE AND
CHARMING



SEQUEL TO THE BESTSELLER
ORIGINAL WREATHS AND NATURAL DECORATIONS

I'm grateful to each of you for finding inspiration in my ideas, for your genuine interest, and for your warm and motivating support. Amid countless ways to spend your valuable time, I'm truly touched that you chose to read my books. In return, it would be my privilege to dedicate this book to you. Your continued appreciation means the world to me, and I'm still in awe of it all.

Wreaths, Decorations and Easter Eggs

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INTRODUCTION

The abundance of creative individuals in our world is truly amazing, and that's a fantastic reality.

To truly grasp the exhilarating sensation of crafting something with your own hands, one must experience it firsthand. There's an unmatched delight in feeling enthusiastic and proving to yourself that no store-bought item can ever hold a candle to your handcrafted creation. It's an excellent way to begin, and it becomes even more gratifying when you utilize materials readily available around you or items typically destined for the discard pile. The results often appear almost miraculous, and, what's more, the cost is minimal, only your time.

It's a beautiful occurrence when a blend of circumstances conspires to bring into existence something you might never have dared to plan, dismissing it as silly. That's where the magic truly lies.

Over time, you'll discover that each creation carries its own unique story. As you gaze upon your handiwork, it will rekindle memories of the events and circumstances surrounding its creation. When that happens, and your creation becomes a tangible reminder of the moments you experienced while crafting it, you possess something extraordinary within your home—a piece with its own soul. I firmly believe that it's the memories and associations that accompany you through life that are the most significant and authentic essence of your work.

Not long ago, my father handed me a rusty key he unearthed while harvesting onions and an old teaspoon he stumbled upon by the roadside. He chuckled (or rather, roared with laughter) at my excitement and my immediate vision of an unconventional Christmas ornament. He even went so far as to declare that if such an ornament were ever produced, he'd "eat" his own shoes.

A year has passed, and the "Everything" Christmas ornament is now featured in this book on page

70, gracing its cover as well. And as for my father? He's busy polishing his boots with a smile on his face.

The wreaths crafted from tree roots, featured on pages 17 and 23, serve as a reminder of a willow tree that once graced our garden but had to be removed. I can't help but smile when I recall the memory of wrestling with that stubborn tree (and perhaps, in frustration, muttering about the entire male population and their supposed uselessness) until I finally managed to unearth it.

Another vivid memory resurfaces when I think of the adder that startled me while I was gathering hay for a wreath, an incident chronicled on page 19. I also remember the encounter with the long bladder cherry branches that someone had thrown in a ditch. I hauled them on my bike for two kilometres, panting like a hippo but determined to salvage their beauty.

As I flip through the photos of my mossy creations, I am transported back to the Šumava woods near our cottage, not too far away, where nature's beauty is so breathtaking it can bring tears to your eyes. I'll forever cherish the image of my young children eagerly assisting me in gathering moss. At that time, the bags they used were almost bigger than they were. Meanwhile, their grandpa taught them how to distinguish between various moss species and told them captivating tales of forest gnomes. Later, they built miniature homes for these creatures by an old stump, using cones and twigs. It was a tranquil, warm afternoon, and we all lied down in the soft grass at the edge of a small patch of trees, absorbing the tranquillity that enveloped us. The sun still cast its gentle warmth, the sky resembled a painted canvas, and the scents of nature and the serenity of the moment left us with nothing more to wish for.

The very next day, as I covered old rubber boots with the moss, naming them 'Moss Boots' (found on page 38), I joked they belonged to an ever-persistent

visitor who simply refused to bid adieu. After all, a touch of humour never harmed anyone.

The branches for the wreath on page 21 were a hard-won prize from a long, arduous walk, carried in a plastic bag. The journey back was a struggle, for I had strained my back while reaching to pluck an exceptionally beautiful branch from an aspen tree.

The 'Snow Heart' (page 35) will always remind me of my cherished winter jacket, and every glance at the 'Black Nut Horseshoe' (page 64) evokes vivid images of my hometown and my grandmother's home, where the nut tree still stands tall to this day.

A mere glimpse of the 'Cobweb Eggs' (page 94) floods my mind with memories of patiently awaiting the perfect light, having dedicated a good thirty minutes meticulously arranging them on the well. The gentle breeze toyed with the ribbons, unwittingly enticing our playful cat into action. Luckily, they were sturdy goose eggs and survived.

When I lay eyes on the 'Paper Roll Garland' (page 72), I smile at the memory of a rather unconventional nocturnal escapade. Wearing pyjamas and clutching a flashlight, I found myself racing through the garden in the middle of the night, determined to rescue the two-meter-long paper tablecloth roll from an impending rainstorm.

Then there was the day I climbed the flat-bed truck in the cowshed, complete with its pungent load of manure, to capture a photo of the finished garland. It's a memory that's hard to erase from my mind. The pursuit of the perfect photo often leads to some rather peculiar situations, but what wouldn't I do for the sake of capturing a memorable image?

From the very first moment I started working on this book, my vision was crystal clear. The paramount goal was to craft projects accessible even to those who might consider themselves less skilled, enabling them to fashion something truly unique for

their homes—handcrafted creations, for there lies the essence of true beauty, as one treasures their own work most dearly.

I aspire for my books to transcend mere visual inspiration and become a wellspring of creativity for all. Even if you don't feel confident enough, start with a positive outlook. Convince yourself that the creation you're about to undertake will be magnificent. Begin your endeavour with the firm belief that everything will unfold precisely as intended, or perhaps, even better.

Frequently, I encounter raised eyebrows and bewildered expressions, people pondering the peculiarity of my ideas. To this, I simply offer a knowing smile, for such reactions often signal that they've never encountered anything quite like it before.

When you want to create something, you must believe in success; otherwise, it's best not to begin at all. Enthusiasm is the compass guiding you toward your aspirations. Believe that nothing is beyond your reach, and you can achieve anything you set your heart on. You'll soon realize that you don't need to worry about unusual combinations of material, for creativity knows no bounds. Moreover, make a conscious effort to break free from routine and expectations. Following established templates will only stifle your uniqueness and originality. Ultimately, these are the qualities that truly matter. I believe that you have the ability to craft extraordinary and distinctive creations, ones that others will admire and that will become defining features of your home, and perhaps even a lasting legacy for your children.

May your creative journey be filled with moments of beauty, joy of crafting and decorating. May it bring you a sense of satisfaction, much like it has for me, with a plethora of inspiring ideas and experiences, and above all, a belief that there's nothing you cannot do.

Author Lucie Dvořáková

MATERIALS

These are photographs of some material I used when making this book. You can see they are everyday objects, sometimes no longer of use or intended for disposal and easy to come by. Such things are the best – they don't cost anything and yet have a great potential to be reused.

I believe you'll find a lot of such things in your home or you'll be able to get them easily. Just look outside – nature offers tremendous amounts of such treasures and actually, we are surrounded with material that can be turned into various decorations. Just look around...



Paper lace doilies



Black nuts



Red apples



Hawthorns



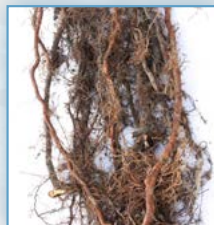
Chestnuts



Buttons



Corks



Tree roots



Cardboard



Chicken wire



Crêpe paper



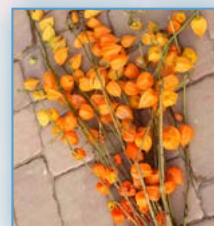
Bark



Poppy pods



Moss



Bladder cherry



Egg trays and cartons



Cardboard tubes



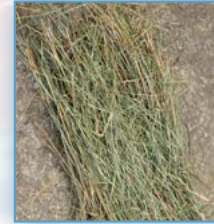
Tracing paper



Foam trays



Burlap sack



Hay



Strawflowers or other dried flowers



Old lace curtain



Old cake, pie and other baking tins



Old rain boots



Dry grass



Dried roses



Rosehips



Snail shells



Blackthorn berries



Wadding



Branches



Empty eggshells



Glass jars



Candle scraps



Acorns

WREATHS



1 Crêpe Paper Wreath



2 Tracing Paper Wreath



3 Wreath with Red Eggs



4 Wreath with Tree Roots



5 Wreath with Hay and Bladder Cherry



6 Wreath with Three Types of Branches



7 Romantic Wreath with Roots



8 Moss Wreath 'Sweet Harmony'



9 Heart Full of Nature



10 Button Heart for Luck



11 Wire Heart



12 Snow Heart

Crêpe Paper Wreath

You will need:

polystyrene wreath ring

white crêpe paper

scissors

universal glue

wider flat brush

bowl

white and brown acrylic paint

paper (leaflets or newspaper)

skewer

hot glue gun

thin dark wire

paper flowers





1 Cut the crêpe paper with scissors. Adjust the strip width to the wreath size. Strips with a width of 7–10 cm are enough for the standard size – the wider they are, the more they crease when wrapped around the ring, creating a more interesting look.



2 Unfold the strips and slowly wrap them around the wreath ring. The crêpe paper is flexible and elastic, perfect for wrapping the ring; it does not tear when tightened slightly.



3 Wrap more crêpe paper for added strength. Ruffle the crêpe paper slightly but avoid over-tightening. Use universal glue to secure the ends.



4 Strengthen the ring for further decorating with the universal glue. If the glue is too thick, dilute it with water in a bowl, mix well and apply to the crêpe paper using a wide, flat brush. Avoid excessive soaking; aim to saturate the paper. Let it dry completely – you can also use a hair dryer. Once the paper hardens, proceed to the next step.



5 Apply the white acrylic paint to the crêpe paper – it partially conceals its texture and softens the edges for easier shaping.



6 Use your fingers to fold the edges of the crêpe paper along the entire ring and allow it to dry.



7 Create a brown patina on the surface by applying a small amount of paint with a brush, delicately spreading it across the crêpe paper base. Avoid pressing too hard; focus on painting the raised areas, creases and paper texture. Let it dry. It will give the wreath base an antique impression.



8 Enhance the coloured paper flowers by applying the white paint, allowing their original hues to show through slightly. If you don't have pre-cut paper flowers, you can easily cut them out of paper.



9 Craft the flower centres by taking a skewer and tightly rolling any type of paper (such as leaflets or newspaper) around it. Glue the ends together to hold the shape. Remove the skewer, paint the rolls brown and let them dry.



10 Compress the brown paper rolls, wrap them around the skewer to form spirals – glue their ends with the hot glue gun and trim them to size.



11 Attach the created spirals into the flower centres using the hot glue gun.



12 Add more patina on the flowers to enhance their charm. Use a brush and brown paint as described in step 7 – lightly touch the flowers with paint to maintain their original colours and the white paint.



13 Affix the completed flowers onto the wreath as desired, using the hot glue gun.



14 Finally, wrap a thin, dark wire around the wreath and create a loop for hanging in the back.

Tip: To enhance the wreath's durability and protect it from handling and dust, consider applying a layer of spray varnish.