Helping your children choose books they will love

I reading

Lovereading4kids.co.uk is a book website created for parents and children to make choosing books easy and fun

opening extract from

Make It Wild!

written by

Fiona Danks and Jo Schofield

published by

Frances Lincoln Publishers Ltd

All Text is Copyright © of the Author and/or Illustrator

please print off and read at your leisure.

Lovereading4kids.co.uk

CRICKET AND ROUNDERS BATS



On holiday in Cornwall, Jake, Dan and Lucas were kicking around on the beach wondering what to do when they came across bits and pieces of driftwood along the high-tide line. A rounded piece of wood soon became a rounders bat, while from an old plank they fashioned a cricket bat, tying some string around the handle to improve the grip.

They even improvised their own ball by wrapping string and bits of old rubber tyre round and round a small chunk of driftwood. They spent the rest of the afternoon playing games on the beach. It's amazing how much fun you can have when you thought there was absolutely nothing to play with!

On another occasion, not to be outdone, Edward and Tom tried to make a superior cricket bat in the garden. They cut a large piece of willow from a fallen branch near our house, and then spent a very happy afternoon working with potentially dangerous tools.



MAKING A CRICKET BAT

- Find a length of living wood (preferably willow, from which cricket bats are traditionally made) about 20–25cm/8–10in in diameter.
- Look at the wood and decide which end will be the handle.
- Start by cutting off the bark, and then cut away slowly and carefully at the wood to make the rough shape of a cricket bat. Edward and Tom used an axe to do this.
- As the shape begins to emerge, use smaller tools to finish it off before sanding it down.
- Wind some twine very tightly and neatly around the handle and brush with glue to fix it in place.
- Your finished bat will be fine for knocking around with but wouldn't do for a serious game of cricket!



Safety tips

- **Only use sharp tools when adults are around.**
- **Follow the tool safety guidelines on page 156.**









DECORATIVE CLAY TILES

Some years ago our local primary school embarked on a project to make a three-dimensional mural of clay tiles. Each class contributed to a panel depicting a different aspect of school life. It was a wonderful way to involve everyone in a communal art project.

To make your own three-dimensional tiles:

- Find two pieces of wooden baton about 1cm/1/2in thick and at least 30cm/12in long.
- Place them in parallel and about 15cm/6in apart on an old piece of sheet laid on a flat surface. Then roll out the clay between them to an even thickness.
- Cut out a square tile from the clay and allow it to become leather hard.
- The fun comes in decorating the tile by scratching the surface or roughening an area, and then using slip to stick on three-dimensional details made in moulded clay. If you wish, draw out a design for your tile and cut out pieces of the design to use as templates to cut around to make your 3-D clay details.
- Try rolling clay over textured fabrics such as hessian or old lace and then cutting out the textured pieces to stick on to your tile. Clay pushed through an old sieve makes excellent trees or hedges or even woolly sheep. Stick all the pieces down very carefully so that no air is trapped underneath them.
- Fired tiles can be painted with model paints. A tile is only decorative, so doesn't need to be glazed.

Safety tips

- **Never collect clay near polluted water courses or from contaminated land.**
- **Always wash hands well after working with clay.**



PLASTER OF PARIS TILES

Raw clay can be used to make textured tile moulds imprinted with images of natural objects. From these you can make quick-setting plaster of Paris tiles.

You will need

- Natural clay
- Small plastic containers
- Natural objects such as shells, cones, leaves with prominent veins – anything that might leave a three-dimensional imprint when pushed into clay
- Plaster of Paris, water and a stick for mixing
- String
- An old toothbrush and a cocktail stick

MAKING THE TILES

- Flatten well-worked clay into a plastic tray to make a smooth layer at least 1.5cm/3/4in deep. Leave it to dry a little while you collect some natural materials.
- Press the objects into the clay to make imprints.
- Sprinkle plaster of Paris into a container of water, mixing it with a stick until it reaches the consistency of porridge. Don't let it get too thick. Pour the prepared plaster of Paris over the clay mould to a thickness of at least 1.5cm/1/4in.
- Use a stick to push a loop of string into the top of the plaster so that you can hang the finished tile up.
- When the plaster has set hard, turn the plastic container upside down and press to push the clay and plaster of Paris out.
- Separate the clay and plaster. Clean the tile with a toothbrush and cocktail stick. When it has dried completely, paint and varnish it.

Safety tip

- **Plaster of Paris becomes very hot when mixed with water: do not let anyone put their fingers or anything else into the liquid plaster and always use a stick or spoon for mixing.**







RUSTIC FURNITURE

We thought the course on making rustic garden chairs in the woods would probably involve using large dangerous tools, so it might appeal to our fifteen-year-old sons. But of course, when the day arrived they weren't at all keen on the idea. It was the middle of their precious summer holidays and if we hadn't been photographing for this book we would probably have gone for an easy life and let them stay in bed. However, after a very slow start they threw themselves into the task in hand and by the end of an absorbing day they had produced two distinctive chairs.

Making these chairs requires some competence in dealing with sharp tools; this isn't an activity for young children. Freshly cut green wood is better than older wood, as it's less likely to split when nailed.

Rustic furniture is eco-friendly and cheap, but don't expect it to last all that long. Each piece will be different, and you could be really creative and incorporate quirky design features. Have a go too at making other pieces of rustic furniture. For example, join together a series of straight thin logs by binding with rope or nailing into place, and then add some legs to make a raft-type bench or table.



You will need

- 2 long back legs (approximately 1–1.5m/3–5ft × 7cm/3in)
- 2 short front legs (approximately 45cm/18in × 7cm/3in)
- 8 rungs (approximately 45cm/18in × 5cm/2in)
- A variety of thinner branches for the seat, back and arms
- 30–40 long nails, minimum 7cm/3in (depending on the thickness of your wood)
- Loppers, bow saw, hammer and some imagination!



MAKING THE CHAIR

- Place the two long back legs on the ground parallel to each other and about 35cm/14in apart. Join the legs together by nailing a rung at the height you want the seat. Nail another one below this to form a square.
- Place the two short front legs on the ground parallel to each other and join with two rungs as above. Make sure the rungs are at the same height on both pairs of legs.









TWIG SCULPTURE

Blending traditional basketry skills with a freer, more random approach to weaving, this is something anyone can do. There are a few basic pointers and the rest is up to you, as our teenage sons found out when they had a go. Although any bendy twigs can be used, willow is perhaps the most suitable because it is particularly flexible. Use it for weaving any sculptural form, from animals and birds to flowing shapes and architectural structures.

We attended a workshop run by willow weaver David Gosling. We used 2m/6ft dried willow rods soaked in water. Freshly cut willow, hazel or other pliable twigs are also suitable, but make sure you weave them as tightly as you can, because fresh materials will shrink as they dry.

Always use very bendy twigs – they have to put up with lots of pushing and squashing into shape. The only other thing you need is a pair of secateurs. Willow sculptures will last for only a couple of years unless you coat them in wood preservative.













WILLOW SCULPTING BASICS

- **A sphere:** The basic building block. Make a circle from one length of willow by bending it around and then weaving the ends up and around each other until they are fixed in place. Make two more circles the same size. Then push one circle inside another one at right angles and pull the third one over the top to produce a basic sphere. This can be squashed into an oval – perhaps the start of an animal's body. Or fill in the gaps by adding more willow circles to make a more complete ball.
- **Plaiting:** Push three or four willow rods into the ground and plait them together.
- **Binding:** Hold several rods together in one hand, and then wind another rod around and around them to bind them together. Make the binding tight and neat, and thread the end down through the middle to complete.
- **Weaving:** We made this goose tail by taking three short straight thick lengths of willow, holding them at an angle and then weaving thinner willow up and around them. The supports should be about twice the thickness of the weaving rods.

Safety tip

- **Use secateurs with care.**

