Popsticks : new handicraft pastime

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EVEN in the highly specialised and industrial world of today, people still find relaxation by knitting, crocheting or sewing while viewing their favourite T.V. programme or listening to their current serial on the radio.

Just as science has progressed during the last few decades, so has the leisure time occupation of handicrafts. Many novel and interesting ideas have been introduced into this field and nowadays many people are using their spare time to make useful yet inexpensive items for their homes.

One of the latest ideas that has developed is POPSTICKS. These small sticks or pieces of wood which are used in ice blocks and ice cream can be made into a great variety of articles which are useful in the home. It only requires a minimum of effort, very little expenditure and a short time to produce some attractive articles.

Popsticks may be purchased at any handicraft centre in Perth. They are sold in bundles of about 200, averaging 3s. 6d. a packet. Different sizes are obtainable. Glue is used to hold the sticks in position, and although any glue can be used, a glue recommended for use on wood is the most efficient and best to use.
GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

Five basic arrangements are used in POPSTICK constructions. These can be used separately or in combination. These are shown in the diagram below.

After the articles have been completed, paint over with two or three coats of lacquer or thin varnish. This improves the appearance by high-lighting the patterns in the wood, giving them a similar appearance to the contemporary wooden articles which have now become so fashionable.

After having discussed the processes used in the making of articles it is now possible to describe and illustrate a few articles made from popsticks.

TRINKET BOX

Apply glue liberally to one side of two popsticks (A) and press firmly onto the 13 popsticks. Straighten and allow to set. Place two more as shown at B. Using method 1B continue building up on these four sticks until the sides are 14 popsticks high.

LID: Place 13 popsticks together and glue as before. Using method 1A form a handle by glueing six sticks one on top of the other as seen in diagram 2.

Varnish and lacquer when glue is dry, with two or three coats of thin lacquer.
POT PLANT HOLDERS

These are very useful for indoor plants and enhance the appearance of any room. Cut two strips of plastic foam each 2" wide. Fold double and then glue around the top and the bottom of a large jam tin, the edges just meeting as seen in Fig. 3. The holder is completed by gluing a single row of popsticks lengthwise to the foam, around the container.

Another method to produce a holder which is shaped, is done by increasing the layers of foam around the top of the tin, thereby causing the popsticks to be shaped instead of upright. Different shaped containers such as the square one in Fig. 6—can also be used to vary the shape and size of holders. The holders may be completed by varnishing. Another attractive finish may be produced by painting the individual popsticks with contrasting bright colours using a paint with a gloss finish. It is surprising to discover how attractive these containers are, and how they increase the beauty of indoor plants!
LETTER RACK

This useful article is the answer to the problem of untidy letters which so often upset the tidiness of your drawer or desk. It is easy to make, attractive and inexpensive into the bargain. Glue popsticks together, form a block (fig. 7.). Repeat procedure, to produce another block. Sit these aside to dry.

Using figs. 7 and 8 as guides, make the three divisions. The smallest shaped row is obtained by spreading the sticks as seen in the diagrams and then holding these in position by gluing another stick across them. When dry, cut off surplus ends of sticks with a large pair of scissors. The longest stick should be about 2 in. and the shortest 1½ in. high. Assemble as seen in the diagram. Finish by varnishing. A small picture may be glued to the front and lacquered.

FRUIT DISH

This light, attractive dish is a handy container for fruit or other food.

Make a base by placing 13 popsticks together and gluing into position by use of two transverse popsticks. Turn over and glue three popsticks in positions C as seen in diagram, then three in position D. Continue building upwards and outwards on the side sticks using Method 2 until 12 popsticks high or the required height. Paste a picture on the inside of bowl and finish by lacquering.

Although only four articles have been detailed, it is possible to make many more by applying the suggested methods and using a little ingenuity as well. By these means useful, distinctive, interesting and inexpensive articles may be produced. In addition this creativeness has an interesting appeal as a leisurely occupation for those who desire some mode of relaxation after the busy hours of the day.
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