

## Candy crafts

With over 35% of all candy being sold on a holiday, candy crafts and gifts have proved to be a billion dollar industry. Handmade candy gifts are especially popular and can be a cost effective craft to create.

According to the National Confectioners Association, over 25 pounds of sweets are consumed per person each year! If music and love are considered part of an international language, I would have to rank chocolate and candy as another enjoyment that knows no boundaries. With over 35% of all candy being sold on a holiday, candy crafts and gifts have proved to be a billion dollar industry. Handmade candy gifts are especially popular and can be a cost effective craft to create. Here are a few idea's you can try making.

### CANDY WREATHS

Choose individually wrapped candies that have twist ties on each end like Tootsie Rolls or Bubble Gum. You will need approximately 3 pounds of candy for a 6-8 inch wreath. Cut a 6 inch piece of wire that is quite heavy and can hold its own form. Using pliers bend both ends of the wire down 1/4 inch to create hooks that can be fastened together to create a circle. Depending on how thick your wire is, you may want to use a paint can or other form to wrap the wire around for a smoothly bent circle. You could also purchase a pre-made circle wire form from a craft supply store but I recommend cutting it in two and adding your own hooks as mentioned above. Why? It is easier to tie on the candy if you are not limited to a tight circle.

Next cut a 2-3 foot strand of curling ribbon. Tie one end of the ribbon to the end of your wire form. Loop your ribbon over your wire to create a small hole where you will add the candy wrapper ends. Without pulling the ribbon tight, use you other hand to loop your ribbon over the bottom end of the first loop to create a tying method that works like a running loop stitch.

Start with one piece of candy wrapper ends put in the loop and pulled tight, then add two at once. Push the pieces tightly against the first candy. The wax

on the curling ribbon will help hold each piece in place so that it is not necessary to tie a complete knot. The candies will automatically spin around the wire for a full 3 dimensional look.

After the candy is tied on you can re-hook your circle and tie a big ribbon to cover up the metal hook closure. Be sure and keep your wreath out of the heat. Candy pieces can be taken off carefully leaving the papers on the wreath to keep it looking nice even when the candy is being eaten.

Try using a mint and chocolate candy that has a green wrapper as the main candy for your wreath. Then add a few round red gumballs in clear wrap to add the hollyballs to your holiday wreath! The tootsie roll wreath is very cute when you add a red, brown and white plaid ribbon to the top. Tie in cinnamon sticks or cookie cutters to create a gingerbread look wreath.

## CANDY GARLAND AND LEI'S

Stringing popcorn has been a traditional activity that children have enjoyed for generations. Making candy garlands can also be a fun decoration kids can make themselves. With a friend holding a large roll of colored plastic wrap, roll out 12 feet. Place unwrapped candy, small toys, gifts or home-made gingerbread men face down about 2-3 inches apart along the length of plastic. Roll the wrap in from both sides to sandwich your candy. Cut several pieces of 1/8" or 1/2" ribbon in approximately 1 foot lengths. Tie a bow in between each candy piece.

If you are using the garland to decorate a fireplace mantel, add a larger more prominent bow in the middle and both ends of the garland to accent your swags in the display.

For a Christmas advent calendar, put the larger ribbon at the top and have 24 pieces of candy in the chain, snip off one piece per day to help kids count down how many more days till Christmas. If you have several children avoid making several chains, just add one candy per child in each ribbon section.

To make a holiday lei, follow the same instructions but loop the plastic into a circle. Avoid adding candy to the last 6 inches of each side so the candy ribbon sections will be in the front of the lei and be more comfortable to wear. This makes a fun craft for kids to make for mothers day. Alternate moms favorite candy with cosmetics or perfumes she has been wanting!

## CANDY CENTERPIECES

For a sweet decoration that is edible, make a candy centerpiece! If your wreath will be used to adorn a pillar candle choose a wreath form that will allow the candle to be placed in the center allowing about 1 inch leeway for candy and other embellishments that will be placed in the inside circle of the wreath. If you choose to use a wire form wreath you can follow the directions above and for a wire wreath or try this alternative. Use a styrofoam wreath by grouping 2-3 candies together and secure with a 2" florist pick. The pick will have an attached wire so it is easy to make many of these candy picks quickly. Insert each pick into the styrofoam form. To make a Christmas wreath alternate the candy with sprigs of boxwood or other evergreens with peppermint candies. For a fun child's birthday gift make the candy wreath using individually wrapped bubblegum pieces, bright ribbons and attach semi-inflated balloon's to the floral picks before adding them to the wreath.

## MUG CANDY ARRANGEMENT

Grocery stores everywhere often sell mugs displaying floral arrangements. Make our own arrangement with candy instead for a unique gift. Fill your mug 3/4 of the way to the top with a piece of floral foam or styrofoam. Purchase strawberry bon-bons or other candy that looks like a flower bud. Group your candy with several silk leaves and attach it to a long floral pick or wire before filling your mug!