

# Homestead Notes

Pat Erway, Editor



Mrs. Oberholtzer Demonstrates...

## The Fine Art of Shadow Box Pictures

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Feature Writer



Dried flower pictures can be any size, and the frame

Now that summer is fading, it's time to think of ways to brighten your home when fresh flowers are no longer available.

One lovely way to bring color into a room is with dried flower pictures in shadow box frames. The materials you need are simple, and with just a touch of artistry you can create beautiful color-coordinated effects.

Mrs. Jay Oberholtzer who works in the flower and craft shop at Stauffer's of Kissel Hill and teaches many craft classes, makes the technique seem easy. She has spent two years perfecting the flower pictures, but agreed to share the information she has learned through experience

and background can be any color.

The materials needed are a shadow box frame with a one-half to one inch depth. The frame can be with or without glass, and can be unfinished or finished with a stain or paint. An unfinished one can be done to your liking.

Next select the background which will be used to cover the back of the frame. Mrs. Oberholtzer said she has found, after experimenting with many different fabrics, that velveteen ribbon is the most satisfactory material. Stauffer's get it in 36" width, and they use it in all their boxes. There is no need for ironing or any other preparation with the ribbon.

Rhoda suggests cutting the fabric slightly larger than the backing, then trimming it to fit after it is in place. Fasten the fabric to the back with a narrow ribbon of white glue around the outer edge. This is all that is needed to hold it firmly in place.

Next assemble the dried plant materials you will be using. In the traditional Williamsburg design, Rhoda says, there is a very large variety of dried flowers in a very compact arrangement. "Any dried material can be used, whether it is pressed, air dried or dried with silica gel," she says. The colors used should be selected to harmonize with the frame and the background fabric.

Some of the materials used in Rhoda's arrangements include glycerized cedar, wild yarrow, blue sage, ammobium, straw flowers, button flowers, star flowers, local statice, German statice, celosia, broom corn, sorghum, immortell, black grass, bracken grass, fern, amaranth, pavao and other grasses and ferns. Kits of assorted dried flowers can be purchased there to make the job of assembling the large variety a little easier. Butterflies can also be used for added interest.

Now you're ready to begin the design itself. The first step is to outline the design around the circumference with dried materials to determine the size and shape of the design. After outlining the skeletal design, begin to glue, dipping the ends of the materials into white glue. White glue should be used, and Rhoda says she feels Sobo glue



Tweezers can be used to put the fine pieces of dried materials in place. This is the initial step in actually making the design.

works best.

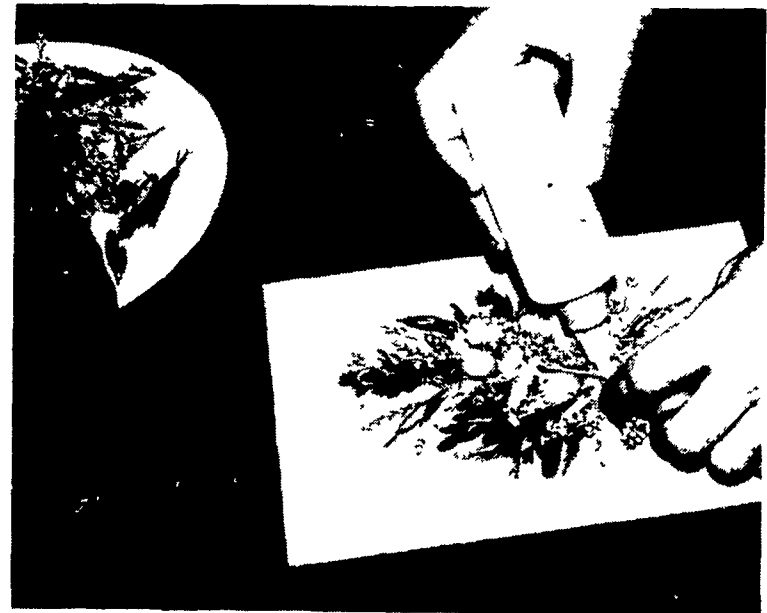
Stems may or may not be added, but Mrs. Oberholtzer said, "I think stems are best." She said she often uses stems of star flowers.

The next step is simply to fill in another layer of material, and continue working toward the center. Rhoda stresses that "the finer the pieces and the larger selection the more desirable the outcome." Rhoda says for the best effect some of the flowers

ones, regular hangers should be used. Rhoda recommends using the saw tooth type so the picture will hang evenly

Rhoda says that the dried plant materials in the frames are permanent and will remain the same if they are not exposed to the sun which will fade them.

Rhoda Oberholtzer, whose father founded Stauffer's says she's been working there "ever since I knew two and two was four." She said, "Even though



More layers of flowers are added, working in toward the center, creating mass and density in the center.

should be in profile and some should be face up. After the entire design is completed to your satisfaction, a very small bow may be added as a finishing touch.

When the design is complete, simply place it on the back of the shadow box and you have a lovely addition to your home. Mrs. Oberholtzer cautions that if using glass in the frame, the glass should be cleaned before the final step.

Decorative hangers can be added, but even with decorative

there were twelve children, my father always enjoyed flowers on the table. He would always notice the arrangement and comment on it, and he would tell us to keep the arrangements simple. I'm surprised he had the time to notice," she added. "I guess I inherited some ability."

She originally took flower arranging lessons "just for my own benefit." Her present "career" got started when an Elizabethtown group asked her to come and demonstrate some of

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A few simple materials are all you need to create lovely dried flower pictures: a shadow box frame, fabric to color the

background, glue, tweezers, star flowers (for stems) and an assortment of flowers.