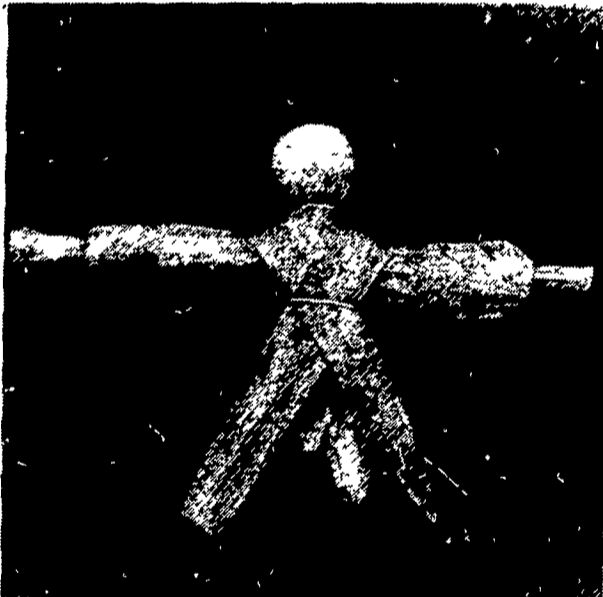


The necessary materials for making cornhusk dolls are thread, scissors, wire, cornhusk, and a styrofoam ball.



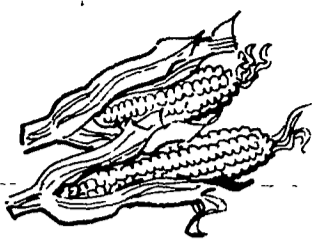
Before the pieces of the doll are put together, the head and arms look like this. To add fullness to the sleeve, an extra piece of cornhusk is added to each end, also, before the arms are attached to the head.



At this point in the doll's construction, the arms and head have been connected and the shoulder bands have been tied into place.



To connect the skirt to the bodice the head is held upside down and cornhusk is tied in place and then turned inside out.



By JOANNE SPAHR
NEFFSVILLE, Pa. - When Jeannette Dillman, 1014 Hunsicker Road, Lancaster, looks at a cornfield, she doesn't see the many hours of slow, tedious labor that will go into picking it, or the profits that will come from the many head of cattle it will feed. Instead she says with a laugh and a sparkle in her outstanding blue eyes, "When I drive past a cornfield all I can think of is how many cornhusk wreaths there are to be made from it."

After two years of making corn husk dolls, flowers, and wreaths, you could say Jeannette has a one-track mind when it comes to cornfields. Or, you could say that, like any true craftsperson, she is just always alert for sources of materials.

And, she really is a craftsperson. She has handsomely decorated her home with cornhusk art, ceramics, and Christmas ornaments which she made herself. Amazingly, she squeezes it all in between 16 to 21 hours, combined, of working at Landis Homes Retirement Center, Lititz R3, and as a nurse on other private duty cases. She is also a wife, and a mother of two active sons - Bradley, age six, and Gregory, age eight.

In Jeannette's case, she manages to do all her hobbies because she enjoys working with her hands and finds it relaxing, but she also notes that the cornhusk crafts don't take much time out of her day.

"Cornhusk crafts are easy," she assures, "and they really don't take that long to do," she adds.

According to Jeannette, many people shy away from this hobby simply because they think it is a difficult process.

"If they'd try it, they'd be amazed," she notes. On the average, it takes only about an hour to construct a doll, and as long as six hours to make a cornhusk wreath. But, the skill required for the wreath is minimal, so it can be done while watching television or chatting with a friend. Therefore, the time can pass quickly.

Jeannette began working with corn husk about two years ago when a Mothers' Club she belonged to taught this hobby along with several crafts.

"I enjoy any craft that comes along," she admits, so trying out the corn husk was a natural for her. Since that time she has been perfecting her technique and has even taught a workshop or two on the subject.

CORNHUSK WREATHS
The cornhusk wreaths are probably the simplest to construct. The only materials needed are approximately two large grocery bags of corn husk, a styrofoam ring, sturdy picks, and wire. Both the styrofoam and the picks can be purchased at any craft store.

Procedure
The first step in creating the wreaths is to shred the corn husk into strips about one to one-and-a-half inches

Cornhusk crafts are easier than they look



When Mrs. Jeannette Dillman looks at fields of corn, she sees cornhusk wreaths to be made, and when she looks at her wall she sees those she

has already completed. This cornhusk wreath is her favorite because she decorated it with straw flowers and a three-toned bow.

in width. Then, you fold the strip exactly in half, and wire the ends to the middle of the pick. This places the "fold" about 1/2 inch above the top pointed end of the stick. For a good amount of fullness, wire as many as four strips of corn husk to each pick, and then push the completed unit into the styrofoam ring. To complete the entire wreath, add as many toothpicks as required to cover the styrofoam.

For this particular project, the husk does not need to be soaked as it does for the cornhusk dolls.

"And, if you are fortunate enough to get it before it becomes mildewy, you won't have to bleach the husk at all," says Jeannette. The mildew depends on the weather and the time of year that you get the husk. If it does become mildewy, soak it in chlorine bleach. Then, let it dry.

Of course, after all the husk is covering the styrofoam form, the wreath will need a few embellishments to really make it attractive.

"That's where the fun comes in," says Jeannette. "Each person can add his or her own special touch with different bows and dried flowers throughout the wreath."

CORNHUSK FLOWERS
The cornhusk flowers are made in the same way as the wreaths, except on a smaller scale. The strips of cornhusk are shredded into 1/2 inch widths and wired onto heavy wire, instead of picks. Then, once the cornhusk is wired, it is taped on with florist's tape - just like a boutonniere. To make the husk look like a flower, a purchased leaf can be added when the florist's tape is being applied, and tiny dried flowers can be glued to the center of each cornhusk flower to simulate the stamen.



Jeannette Dillman displays an almost completed cornhusk doll.

CORNHUSK DOLLS

The most complicated of the cornhusk crafts is the creation of a doll. And, yet, it is not a difficult craft once it has been tackled.

Materials

The materials needed are 50 corn husks, a 1/2 inch styrofoam ball, string or strong thread, flexible wire about seven-and-a-half-inches long, all purpose glue, and corn silk for the hair.

Procedure

Before making the dolls, dampen the husks so that they are flexible and easy to work with, and blot off the excess water.

If there are any stains on the husk, apply chlorine bleach to remove them.

The assembly of the doll begins with the head. This is the point at which the 1/2 inch

styrofoam ball comes into focus. To make this part of the body, cross two strips of long corn husk perpendicularly over the top of a styrofoam ball, tying them together at the bottom of the "head" - forming the neck.

The second step in making this portion of the doll is to cover the neck string with 1/4 inch husk, tying it in the back. At this point, the neck extension, or the length of the husk below where the neck is tied, should be at least three inches long.

To make the arms of the doll, cut a piece of wire seven-and-a-half inches long. Around this, wrap several husks. This forms a tube. Tie at the center and 1/2 inch from each end.

[Continued on Page 65]