

Activity: Creative Expression/Arts Goal: Social Populations: All

TH Activity Plan – Dried Botanical Mini-Wreaths

Text by Kasia Bilhartz

Photo by K. Bilhartz

Original publication: Bilhartz, K. (2025, July). AHTA Newsletter.



ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION: Participants will make a mini-wreath using dried botanical plant materials.

THERAPEUTIC GOALS:

Cognitive/Intellectual: Strengthen reasoning & visual/spatial skills; acquire a new skill

Physical: Strengthen hand dexterity & manipulation

Psychological/Emotional: Practice self-regulation when selecting materials; enhance mood

Sensory: Expand ability, tolerance & willingness to engage in sensory activities; practice hand-eye motor integration

Social: Participate in group feedback with supportive positive comments

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS:

1. **Pre-Session Preparation:** Grow plants earlier in season, harvest & dry in preparation for this & other activities. Gather other materials. Create a sample mini-wreath.
2. Facilitator begins session by sharing 3 fun facts, or lore, about some of the plant materials. If time allows, ask participants to share a summer flower they love.
3. Once done with the lore, spread out materials along the table on paper plates & distribute the mini-wreath forms. (They are widely available at craft stores, or easily pre-made from grape vines or other soft, pliable branch/vine).
4. Encourage participants to experiment with design layouts before they affix the florals to the wreath. Provide a brief safety reminder to not touch the tip of the hot glue gun to avoid burns. Cold glue guns or floral wire can be substituted.
5. As the final touch, add ribbon or twine to hang the wreath from. Everyone enjoys sharing their finished wreath with the group, & providing feedback to other – these are always kind and supportive.

APPLICATIONS FOR POPULATIONS: “These dainty mini-wreaths are a joy to create and can easily fit into a 60-minute group session. They are appropriate for almost any season since they use dried materials, but

especially wonderful in summer when gardens are bountiful with florals and botanicals that can be dried by hanging upside down for 2 weeks” (Bilhartz, 2025).

Therapeutic goals from across health domains can be incorporated into the TH session. Practicing self-regulation can involve following facilitator’s directions re amount of dried materials to choose, then limiting

Materials

Mini wreath forms

A goodly amount of dried flowers, botanicals, lichens, mosses

Ribbon or twine

Hot-glue gun (dual temp, set on low), cold glue guns, glue gun sticks

Paper plates (to keep dried materials organized)

Gloves, wipes

self to appropriate amount. Cognitive goals can include strengthening reasoning and spatial skills in assessing, then selecting the amount of dried materials appropriate for the wreath size. Each of these skills are inter-related.

SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS: Facilitators are responsible for knowing poisonous and toxic plants and plant parts. Hot glue guns can be a safety concern for some populations. Substitute with floral wire, cold glue guns.

NOTES OR OTHER CONSIDERATIONS: Examples of flower lore:

Lavender: The word lavender comes from Latin “lavare”, which means “to wash”, as it has long been used as an ingredient in toiletry products, going as far back as the ancient Egyptian era.

Rose: One of the world’s original cultivated flowers. The oldest living rose is a vine growing on a cathedral in Germany, and is about 1000 years old!

Rosemary: Research suggests that rosemary can benefit memory, focus, and cognition.

[Different techniques are used to dry flowers](#) for use in bouquets, wreaths and arrangements. This activity would be appropriate as a separate TH session depending on technique used and participants’ abilities or potential safety challenges. These can include air drying, microwaving, using desiccant or silica gel, baking or pressing.

Flowers that work well for drying and used for these creative projects include: flowers with multiple layers, smaller or flatter flowers, sturdy blossoms, with each of these somewhat dependent on the technique for drying and how they will be used. Larger blossoms may not work well for mini-wreaths for example.

[The Chicago Botanic Garden](#) resources offer some suggestions for flowers used in these capacities. Annuals that will be available and bloom throughout the year, perennials that should be harvested as they bloom, and specific flowers like Lady’s mantle (leaves can be left on unlike other flowers to be dried), rudbeckia, coneflowers, sunflowers, iris seed pods, and flowers growing along upright stems like salvia (2022).

REFERENCES/ RESOURCES:

MasterClass. (2021). [How to dry flowers: 5 methods for during flowers](#). *Masterclass.com*.

McCaffrey, J. (2022). [How to dry flowers, from A to Z](#). *Chicago Botanic Garden.org*.

Edits were made for THAD purposes in 2025.

TH Activity Plan form developed by Lesley Fleming, Susan Morgan and Kathy Brechner (2012), revised in 2025.