



Crystal Suncatchers

Here's what you need to make one (items in red are not in your kit):

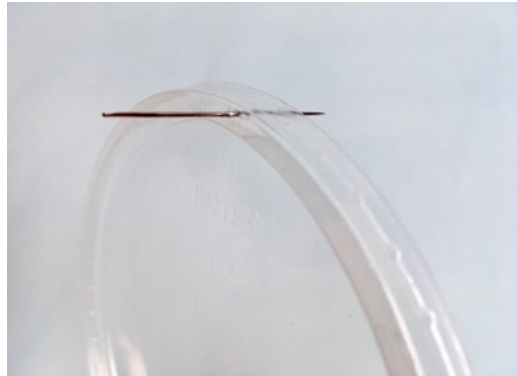
- Plastic lids (2)
- Craft stick
- Epsom Salt
- String
- Glue
- Microwave safe cup
- Water
- Needle
- Dull pen or pencil
- Scissors

Instructions

Carefully cut out the inner circle of one the plastic lids. Cut as close to the rim as possible. Throwaway the rim, but keep the inner circle for later and set aside.



With your second plastic lid, use a needle to carefully poke a hole in the rim. You can use a pencil or dull pen to widen the hole.



Make your salt solution. You will need to use the same amount of water and Epsom salt, for example: use 1 cup of hot water to 1 cup of Epsom salts. To heat the water, you can use a microwave safe cup or bowl. Add salts to the cup and stir for 2 minutes.



When the salt dissolves, place your second lid with the hole in a sunny place where it won't be disturbed (like a windowsill). Pour the salt solution into the cover. Don't overfill! Let the lid sit for approximately 4 days to get the lid full of crystals. You should see crystals forming within a day.



Once your crystals have grown to fill the lid, carefully glue the plastic circle from your first lid, to cover over the crystals. Be careful not to crush the salt crystals, they are fragile.



Lastly, string about 5 inches of string through the hole in the rim and tie the knot. Hang it near a place that will catch the sunlight.



What's going on?

You discovered that Epsom salt creates sparkly crystals as it dries. When you stirred the Epsom salt into the water, the salt didn't disappear. It was just dissolved, or mixed up in the water. Then, as you let your suncatcher sit to dry, the water escaped from the dish into the air. This is called evaporation.

Epsom salt doesn't evaporate, so it got left behind in the dish. As the water started to leave the dish, that left less and less room for the bits of salt to stay dissolved in the remaining water. Little bits of the salt start to fall out of the water -essentially, the salt un-mixed itself from the water! The bits of salt grew together to form the crystals you saw. This is called crystallization.