

JEWELRY MAKING

Humans have decorated their bodies with the beauty of natural jewelry for thousands of years. Most botanical jewelry is made from seeds which are drilled and strung into necklaces and bracelets. Usually the most durable and colorful seeds are used, but in Central America necklaces are still made from ordinary beans, corn grains, acorns and a common grass called Job's tears.

Job's tears are easy to grow and make an attractive annual in summer gardens. They are probably the oldest beads known, dating to at least 2000 BC. The seed is shaped like a teardrop; legend has it that no one shed more tears than the biblical Job, and so this is the name by which it is most widely known. When dried, the seed has a hard outer shell, but a very soft inside. It also has a tiny natural hole, which makes it perfect for stringing as jewelry.

The beads can be dyed and strung into all sorts of creations – worn as necklaces, or fashioned into bead curtains or colorful wall decorations. Their natural color is an off-white, but they can be dyed any color you choose. In Central America, strings of colorful Job's tears are commonly used for the arms and legs of traditional little seed dolls.

For step-by-step instructions on how to make botanical jewelry with Job's tears and other natural seeds, visit the Dig Art! website: www.hort.cornell.edu/gbl/digart



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