

Reuse Empty Bottles*

Every winter when my brother and his wife come to Texas to escape the cold and snow in Wisconsin, we women typically do several craft projects. When there is a large enough supply of empty aromatic scent bottles (typically Wallflowers from Body and Bath), we make “crystal” hangers to give away.

My sister-in-law Suzy Coose is the talented person. She is in charge of painting dragonflies, birds, flowers, and butterflies on the empty bottles. My grandkids and I usually are her helpers for everything else. This winter Phyllis Shuffield had collected many, many bottles for us, so we got to work getting them ready for 2019 Earth Day give-aways.

The following are instructions in case you would like to make your own hanging “crystals”. (Since I can’t find my pictures I took this year, I have included some from past years.)

Instructions for reusing scent bottles:

1. Remove the cap and set it aside. You will eventually want to make a hanger for the bottle and it is easiest to use the cap that has had a ribbon strung through it. If you no longer have a cap, make a string or wire hanger for the bottle.
2. Assuming that you still have the cap, drill a hole in the cap. Later you will choose ribbons to string through each hole for a hanger. Below our grandson uses a template for which to drill cap holes in exactly the right place (Figure 1).

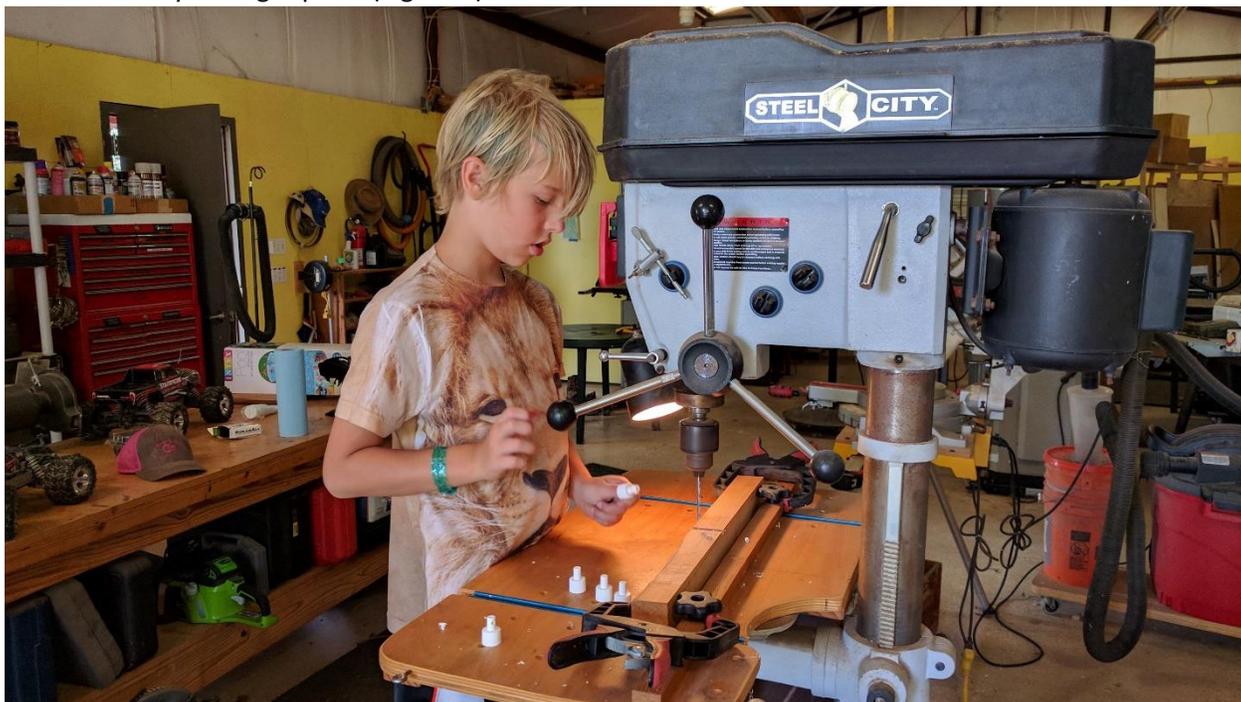


Figure 1: Drilling cap holes.

3. On the empty bottle, remove any wick with a pair of pliers (Figures 2 & 3 show removal of empty Wallflower bottle wicks).

*This idea was entirely conceived and designed by Joyce Conner, member of the Texas Master Naturalist program. She has given these “crystals” away at nature events and classes since 2013.



Figure 2: Removal of any wick.



Figure 3: Wallflower bottles have a plastic sleeve. This also needs to be removed.

4. Make sure no oil remains (Figure 4) inside the bottle.



Figure 4: Emptying the bottle

5. In hot soapy water thoroughly wash and rinse the bottle. (I even use a tiny brush to thoroughly clean the interior.) Dry the bottle upside down. The drying process can take several days. Mike made drying blocks for us on which to place bottles upside down on old pencils (see Figure 5).
6. Draw pictures on the glass exteriors with fine tip permanent markers (Figures 5 & 6).



Figure 5: Drawing pictures on bottles that are held on pencils stuck in wood blocks.



Figure 6: Marker painted bottles drying on racks.

7. When pictures are dry, thin some white glue with water and then paint the glue on top of the entire exterior of the bottle (but not on the threads for the cap). Children can help with all parts of this process, as shown by our granddaughter in Figure 7.



Figure 7: Children can help with the entire project.



Figure 8: Fine glitter.

8. While each bottle is still wet, sprinkle fine glitter over the wet glue and then place on a drying rack. Figure 9 shows a rack of bottles waiting for the glue and glitter process while finished ones are on another rack.



Figure 9: Racks of bottles in the middle of the process.

- Place wet glittered bottles on racks to dry overnight. Hint: Lately, I find that gluing and glittering these small bottles is easiest if I hold each on top of its pencil while I work.



Figure 10: Gluing and glittering is just my speed!

- Wrap “crystals” in tissue paper. Then display the options on a rack so that children can choose the one they want to take home.



Figure 11: Children choosing “crystals” to take home to remind them of their water conservation pledges (Cameron, TX, Summer Library Program).

The following are some of the bottles given away at events.

