

Apple Cores, Seeds, Nuts All Used in Doll Making

By Margaret Koch

Got any old apple cores, avocado seeds or turkey neck bones around the house?

Don't throw them away—you can make dolls out of them.

Lest you think I've skipped my trolley with that rash statement, I will add hastily: Mrs. Marion L. Farley of Ben Lomond DOES just that. She has more than 3000 "dolls" at her home on Glen Arbor road. They are made out of everything from nuts (pecan) to seaweed (kelp). And the backyard "doll house," built specially to house the collection, is an "oh" and "ah" house for little girls (big ones too).

In the midst of all the "odd-ball" dolls, a lovely German bisque doll has the place of honor.

"She's the first doll I ever had," Mrs. Farley said proudly. Her pioneer grandmother, the late Mrs. Julia Coon of Boulder Creek, was the person who got Marion Farley interested in dolls and taught her a lot about making them.

She started back in the 1930's by designing and making a complete set of Boob McNutt animals modeled after the comic strip characters. But Mrs. Farley didn't stick to the prosaic cloth, cotton, felt and yarn for very long. The end result?

"Dolls can be created from almost anything," she claims — and proves it.

Beach combing trips have resulted in kelp dolls, starfish dolls, shell dolls and sea urchin homes and cradles for the tiniest ones.

Seeds, roots, driftwood, "used"

cherry pits, peanut shells, gourds — she has used them all. She even has several real insects dressed in frilly miniature skirts, one—a big June bug, the other a dragonfly complete with wings intact.

There is a glass case filled with delicate egg shell dolls — especially popular at Easter time. The "Three Little Pigs" are made from tiny parakeet eggs, and their house is a hen's egg. Wish bones and turkey neck bones are used for dolls' arms and legs. Mrs. Farley has used pheasant, seagull, peahen and duck eggs in creating fairytale scenes and characters.

Neighborhood children collect and save all sorts of things for her and she occasionally takes them on field trips into the woods for materials. Several years back she also donated her "know-how" in doll making to an art class at San Lorenzo Valley elementary school. She will give one of her creations away once in awhile; she seldom sells them.

"I get so attached to them that I don't want to part with them," she admitted.

When no new ideas come to her busy brain, Mrs. Farley sits down and does tatting with different colored threads — with tatted dolls as the result. Strings of them are draped around the doll house like frosting on a cake.

But she is particularly fond of her "Seven Dwarf" apple core dolls with their little wizened, wrinkled faces.

"I hate to eat an apple anymore," she chuckled. "I keep thinking about how I could make a doll out of it instead."

Hobbies
Dolls Of All Types

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Give her an old apple core or a piece of kelp and see what she can do with it! Such discarded odds and ends turn into dolls in the clever hands of Mrs. Marion L. Farley of Ben Lomond. She is holding one she made from kelp picked up along the Santa Cruz beach. On the shelves are the "Seven Dwarfs" — their heads and hands made of dried apple cores. She will show her work at Wee Kirk of Ben Lomond on April 14 — with a special display of Easter egg dolls.