

Earth Day Plastic Bag Weaving

Reuse your plastic bags and cardboard boxes, and turn them into a fun woven craft.

The History Behind Earth Day

On April 22, 1970, U.S. Senator Gaylord Nelson proposed a national environmental education forum that would raise climate concerns to the public eye. Denis Hayes, an environmental activist appointed as the national coordinator for this event, brought together 20 million Americans to protest environmental ignorance.

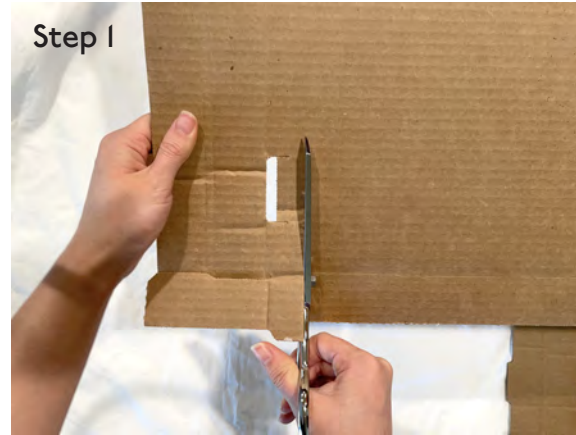
This day would come to be known as Earth Day. In 1990, Denis Hayes spread Earth Day globally and has since organized multiple events in over 100 countries. This year marks the 51st anniversary. This event has helped push positive changes such as the formation of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and the Paris Agreement signed by over 120 countries in 2016 to slow the effects of climate change.

Why Plastic Bags?

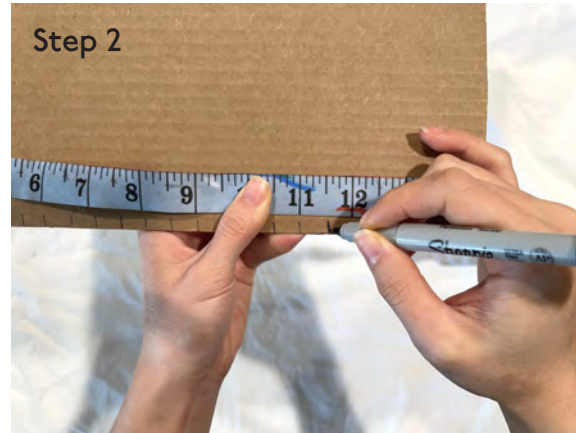
Did you know that in the U.S. alone, over 100 billion plastic bags are used in a year? Plastic has already polluted our food chain and is slowly being spread due to bio-accumulation. This craft aims to divert some of that waste by making sturdy woven bags and mats in less than ten simple steps.

Cardboard Weaving Loom

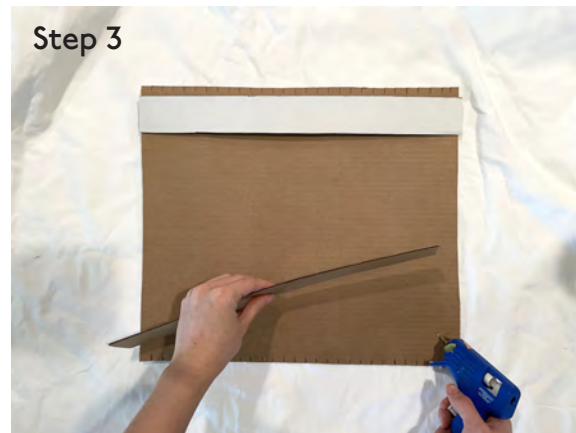
Step 1 - Take a piece of cardboard and cut it into a size you want. You will need to cut off two 1" wide pieces that are the same length as one of the sides. This will be used to make space for the warp threads when attached later.



Step 2 - Mark both warp ends of the loom with lines spaced apart to your liking. Here I spaced them 1/2" apart. Cut into the cardboard at each mark at least 1/2" in so your warp "plarns" (plastic yarn) don't fall out when weaving.



Step 3 - Glue or tape the rectangular pieces to the warp ends just below the marks you cut in step 2.



Woven Plastic Bags/Mats

Step 1 - Fold the plastic bags into a flat roll, then cut into 1/2" wide strips.



Step 2 - Place the warp strips into the loom, tying the pieces into longer strips if needed. Tie the ends together in pairs so they don't move when weaving.



Step 3 - Tie the remaining strips into one long strip and cut off the excess at each knot. Take care to not stretch the plastic too much when tightening the knots.



Step 4 - Start at the top left corner of your loom and start weaving over and under the warp strips until you reach the bottom. Tighten in between weft strips when necessary.



Step 5 - Tie a knot at the top and bottom once you reach the end. You can stop here if you want it to be a mat, or continue on to step 6 if you plan to make it into a bag.



Step 6 - Take the weave out of the loom and fold in half. Sew the sides together, then flip inside out so the seams are on the inside. Cut off any excess thread or plastic strips.



Enjoy your final woven piece! You can add a handle by making a long braid and sewing it to the sides of your piece.

