

## Corn Dolls: A Tutorial by Susy P. Goins

Corn dolls have a long history in agricultural societies. “Corn,” in European terms, refers to grain. In an American context, “corn” is what we know as maize. When the last of the crop is cut, the harvester weaves the last sheaf into a corn dolly, to hold the spirit of the corn until the next planting time during which it is tilled into the soil as a blessing. Also, called a Corn Mother, the corn dolly was thought to house the Spirit of the corn which became homeless with the harvest. The corn dolly was cared for during the winter. Some dolls are wheat sheaves braided into amazing shapes - hearts, spinners, amulets. Corn husk dolls usually take a more human form. Some are simple, as what we will make today. Some have elaborate clothing added - hats, coats, dresses, brooms.



This could be a great kids' activity. When I tried it with a 4-year-old, though, he wasn't able to tie the knots. Therefore, I would recommend this for school age children. A pre-schooler could be let loose with makers or clothing and dress them up.



These are simple and require a minimal amount of materials and time.

What you need:

Corn husks, as used for making tamales, readily available

Bowl with water

Twine, yarn or string

Scissors

Soak the corn husks in water for about 30 minutes prior to starting. As you work, be prepared for a drippy site.