

Making a Lei Kukui

(Making A Lei Series)

O- ‘Ohana goal (Why do the activity?) Family goal

“He lei poina ‘ole ke keiki”

A beloved child is a lei never forgotten.

In this “Making a Lei” series, your ‘ohana will learn how to make various types of lei. In Hawai‘i, a lei or flower garland is gifted from one to another to show love, appreciation, or congratulate someone. However, the lei is not only a floral one but can consist of shells, feathers, seeds, nuts, vines, paper, beads, etc. A lei, in a non-literal sense can also be referred to as a love relationship, a song or even a child. Below is a figurative definition of lei.



“Fig., a beloved child, wife, husband, sweetheart, younger sibling or child, so called because a beloved child was carried on the shoulders, with its legs draped down on both sides of the bearer like a lei.” [Hawaiian Dictionaries](#), [wehewehe.org](#).

Benefits:

- For younger keiki, learning to string a simple flower, bead or nut lei will help develop fine motor skills.
- For older keiki, lei making will support in cultural practices and lessons.
- Making lei as an ‘ohana will strengthen family bonds, give opportunity to “talk story” and listen to family mo‘olelo (stories), as well as create long lasting traditions and memories.

H- Ha‘awina (Let’s do the activity) Lesson, Assignment, Task

In this activity, we’ll learn how to make a Lei Kukui (Kukui Nut Lei).

Materials needed:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 25-30 kukui nuts (whole nuts)• Drill w/ bit size 3-5 (drill size depends on size of string that will be used)• Large sewing/ upholstery needle• String (preferably, a thicker string) | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Scissors• Sandpaper (medium-fine grit)• Oil (*Optional, coconut or kukui or vegetable oil to polish the kukui nuts) |
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Process:

1. Gather kukui nuts.
 - a. It may be more meaningful to gather from a tree or a place that is special to you or your 'ohana.
 - b. Remember to ask permission, physically & spiritually.
 - c. Follow any gathering protocols that you and your 'ohana may have (ex. an oli komo, entering chant or an oli mahalo, appreciation chant)

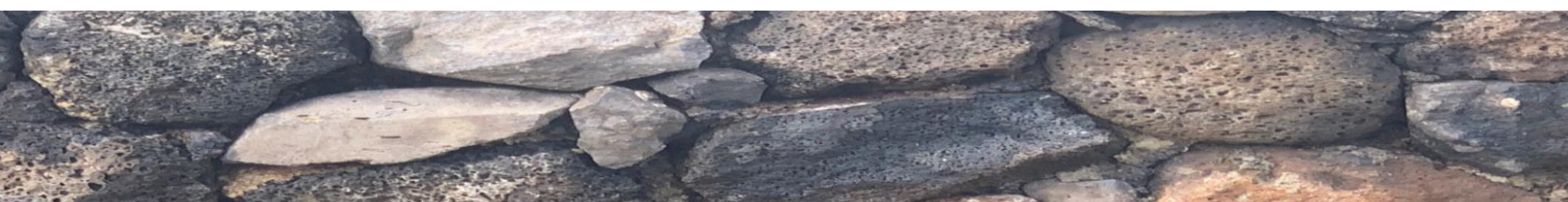


2. Drill holes on both sides of each kukui nut.
3. Bury the kukui nuts in the ground or in a pot and leave buried for 1-2 months, so that the bugs can extract the meat from inside the kukui nuts. **The longer the kukui nuts are buried or left out, the better.*
4. When you are ready to make your lei kukui, unearth the kukui nuts from the ground and or pot and soak the kukui nuts in water over night to ensure a good clean.

5. Use the sandpaper to clean and polish each kukui nut.
6. Then, oil the kukui nuts to add shine. **This step is optional.*
7. Leave kukui nuts out in the sun to dry.
8. Begin to string the kukui nuts until you have a full lei.



Ua pau!



A-Alaka'i (What did you learn? What can you teach?) *To lead, Guide, Direct*

Extension activities:

- Learn how to make a different style lei with the kukui plant.
 - Lei Lau Kukui (Kukui Leaf Lei), as a lei po'o (head garland) or lei 'ā'i (neck garland)
- Try stringing a lei with other materials, ex. flowers, beads, nuts, shells, etc.

Resources:

Checkout these great resources about the history and significance of the lei.

Video with Bill Char, "[Hawai'i's Long Legacy of Lei Making.](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kFcw1nG5djk)" The history and importance of the lei in Hawai'i: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kFcw1nG5djk>

"[The Kukui Nut Lei](http://www.northshoreecotours.com/kukui-nut-lei/)" an article by Keola Ryan on the significance of the Lei Kukui:
<http://www.northshoreecotours.com/kukui-nut-lei/>

