

## Nature Craft - Pine Cone Flowers

### Materials:

- One small/medium sized pine cone - preferably "round" rather than "long"
- Pruning shears (if making "Zinnia-like" flowers)
- 2 dried Norway Maple or Silver Maple Seeds (Double Samaras) without stems
- 1 small dry straight twig --approx. 8" long

Note: If you know of someone doing an invasive plant removal project which involves oriental bittersweet vine or Russian olive, cuttings from these invasives work great as flower stems.

- One acorn "cap" (In scientific terms, the acorn's "cupule.") Almost any larger acorn cap will work.
- Hot glue gun and glue. Other glues will work but take longer to dry. Check glue package to see if it bonds wood to wood.

Optional: Spray paint for the cone. Is using, look for low VOC spray paints. Krylon definitely makes one. Water based and other craft paints will work, but can be difficult to apply. If using, be patient and use the smallest craft brush to get into all the areas of the cone. Water based paints also have a tendency to make the cones close back up, so paint multiple thin coats rather than thick ones.

### Directions:

- Find naturally dried Norway Maple or Silver Maple Seeds or dry your own. Naturally dried Silver Maple seeds can be found on the ground now. Norway Maple seeds are currently green and mostly still on the trees. You can pick some now and air dry them yourself for use.

To air dry Norway Maple seeds, spread collected seeds out in a single layer on newspaper. Allow to dry in a sunny place indoors (so they don't blow away) for 1-2 weeks. Air drying is recommended. Other methods of drying may work, but have not been tested.

- Use the pine cone whole, or remove the top half of it using pruning shears so that the bottom half of the pine cone resembles a Zinnia. Discard top of cone or save for other craft projects. If making a "Zinnia" flower, you may need to neaten up the cone after removing the top half by trimming some of cone's scales.

Optional: Spray paint the cone before assembling the complete flower. However, we think the cone flowers look great left in their natural color!

- Hot glue the twig to the acorn cap, then glue the acorn cap to the bottom of the pine cone. You may need to hold the twig in place for about a minute to get good attachment of the twig to the acorn cap.
- Hot glue ½ of each dried Norway maple seed (or Silver maple seed) to the twig to represent the cone flower leaves.

Completed dragonflies look great "flying" over your pine cone flower! (See previously posted dragonfly craft.) Just attach your dragonfly to some scrap wire/floral wire and wrap the wire around the pine cone.

