



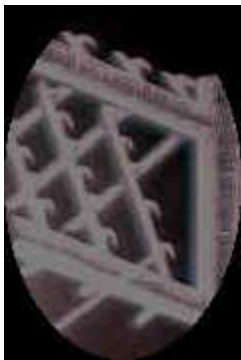
## FEATHERS & CRAFTS

# LEARNING ABOUT EMU FEATHERS

All birds have feathers. There are two types of feathers, contour and down.

**Down** is a small, soft feather found beneath the outer feathers of ducks, geese and other waterfowl. Down has no central shaft. The silky fibers of down grow outward from a common center.

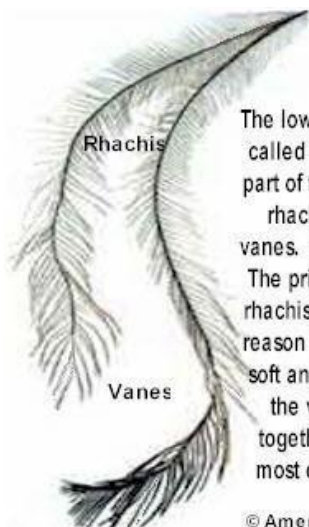
**Contour** feathers are the large feathers that cover the wings, body and tail of birds. There is a strong, flexible center shaft. The lower part of the shaft is called the quill. The upper part of the shaft is called the rachis. It supports the vane. The vane is the flat part of the feather. Most vanes are made up of tiny barbs or hooks which hold the vane together.



If you were to look at a cross section of a duck feather under a microscope, you would see that it has these tiny barbs which interlink and hold the vanes of the feather together, making it stiff and helping to keep its shape. Emu feathers do not have these tiny barbs making them stiff. For this reason, emu feathers are much softer and flexible than most other bird feathers.

Another difference in emu feathers is that all emu feathers have a primary and secondary feather coming out of the same shaft.

Feathers on an emu range greatly in size and texture. The smallest emu feather may only be an inch long and very soft while the longest feathers are 18 inches or more and feel like straw.



Quill

Rachis

Vanes

The lower part of the shaft is called the quill. The upper part of the shaft is called the rachis. It supports the vanes. The quill is very tiny. The primary and secondary rachis comes out of it. The reason the emu feather is so soft and flexible is because the vanes are not held together by barbs like on most other bird feathers.

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They all have the double plume, or two feathers coming out of one shaft.

As you can see from the picture to the left, the quill of an emu feather is very tiny - you would never be able to use it to hold ink the way our ancestors did with goose or ostrich feathers. Even though we cannot use emu feathers to write with, we can use them for other things. Emu feathers are used in fishing lures, clothing accents, fans, wall hangings, flower arrangements, hats and many other things. Use your imagination, what could you do with an 18" emu feather? What about some feathers 6" long? Check out this



page for crafty ideas with emu feathers.

**EMU FEATHER CRAFTS** - These simple emu feather crafts do not require double plumes or even feather tips in order to be beautiful.

**Feather Angel** - Imagine a tree full of these charming little angels! Great to tie on packages too! Uses dyed and natural feathers.



Requires:

- Wooden bead with a face painted on (available at Wal-Mart and craft stores)
- dyed emu feathers
- plain emu feathers
- Ribbon trim
- Pipe cleaner for halo (1/4 of the pipe cleaner per angel)
- thin gold or silver cord for hanger
- Glue

**Directions:** Glue the feathers in the bottom hole of the bead. Glue thin gold or silver cord in top of the head for a hanger. Glue two plain emu feathers or one plumed feather to the back, shaping it to resemble wings. Bend the pipe cleaner to resemble halo and add. Add ribbon trim and your angel is ready to hang on the tree.

**Emu Feather Hair Picks & Pencil Pals** - Great with either dyed or natural emu feathers.



Using hair picks available from craft suppliers, simply insert emu feathers into the hole and glue in place. If you want to make it a bit more complicated, use findings and put a little "swing" in the hair pick. Great in vibrant colors and with long hair.

Pencil Pals (not shown)

Using a bead with a hole large enough to slide over a No. 2 pencil, either glue or paint eyes on the bead. Glue over eraser. Glue brightly dyed feathers in hole to resemble hair.

**Emu Feather Duster - It all started when I found these wonderful old pencil bobbins at Oma's ... Total cost to make - under \$5.00**



It all started when I found these wonderful old bobbins at [Oma's Antik Haus](#). These were originally used in fabric mills in Pennsylvania. The large one at the bottom is called a beehive bobbin because of the shape. The rest are pencil bobbins.

At \$3 each or 2 for \$5, I had to have some to play with!

It actually took less than 30 minutes to make this - the hard part was choosing the feathers I wanted to use! Select feathers that are roughly the same length and of course you want to skip using tail feathers as they will be too coarse.



The number of feathers used will vary depending on the size bobbin opening. Mine took 70 double plumed feathers. It is not necessary to have complete tips or double plumes to make the feather duster.



Gather the feathers together tightly at the quill end. Either squirt some glue into the center of the quills or dip them to help hold them together. Then tie them or run tape around them. Push the feathers into the bobbin, if the top of the tape is showing, take it out and trim off the end. When you have a good fit, squirt glue into the bobbin, making sure to coat the sides of the opening as well. Push in the feathers. Let dry upright overnight before using.

I keep mine in this cute heart-shaped holder that I also found at Oma's. Perfect for my country kitch



**Feather Fairies in the Microwave - Sounds dangerous doesn't it? Don't worry, anyone can make these cute little ornaments using microwave dough and emu feathers.**

***Feather & Dough Ornaments***

- 4 Cups of Flour
- 1 Cup of Salt
- 1 1/2 Cups of Hot Water
- Angel Cookie Cutters
- Feathers
- Decorations, Glitter, Paint, Beads, Etc.



Knead the dough and roll it out to cut out shapes with cookie cutters or a knife.

If you are using an angel cookie cutter, cut off the wings. Stick the feathers into the dough where you think the wings should be. In these fairies, I used several feathers on each side of the fairy. Don't forget to put a hole in for the hanger! Small holes tend to fill up, so I suggest using a straw to cut the hole. Or you can roll out a piece of dough to use like in the pink fairy shown here.

Place them on a microwave safe plate or wax paper and microwave on high for about 1 minute. They will be very hot as they come out, but will cool quickly.

This is just an idea for something fun to try. If you wanted to do doves or other birds that would work also.

**Cinnamon Monsters** - Whether your little monster has wings or just strange hair, they will still smell delicious. Kids love these, they make a great inter-generational activity.



### *Cinnamon Monsters*

- 1 cup cinnamon
- 1 tablespoon cloves
- 1 tablespoon nutmeg
- 1 cup applesauce
- 2 tablespoons white school glue
- 4 emu body feathers per winged monster
- 1 piece of emu tail feather for funky hair on monster
- White paint or Liquid paper for the eyes

Mix all ingredients except feathers together until you have a dough. It will be wet. Let it sit for 30 minutes. Roll it out between two layers of wax paper until 1/8" thick. Using a gingerbread man cookie cutter or a knife, cut out your figures.

If doing hair for the monster, curve the piece of tail feather around in a circle on top of the head and then press additional dough on top to hold it in place.

Stick the quill end of the feathers into the cinnamon man side for wings.

These can be air-dried for 5 days or you can pop them into a warm (250 degree) oven for 4 to 6 hours, depending on how thick you have made them. If your figure is very large, the legs may curl so you may want to turn it or put something on it to keep it in place.

After they are dry you can paint them or glue on other decorations.

**Altered Cards** - introduce your students or residents to mixed media on a small scale! Using art on a small scale can be an inexpensive way to help children, nursing home residents and others to understand and express their feelings in a healthy way. Uses playing cards, old magazines, scissors, glue and imagination.



**Pop Bottle Angels** - This project uses pop bottles and dyed emu feathers to make charming decorations. Wouldn't dying feathers be a great project for a class or nursing home? Use Rit dye and just follow package directions.

*For this project you will need:*

- 1 individual size plastic pop bottle per angel
- dyed feathers
- Large bead or nut (pecan, hickory)
- Decorative tape or ribbon
- White glue
- Pipe Cleaner or yarn for hanger

Make sure that your bottles are clean and dry. Cut off the bottom half of the pop bottle. I usually cut from where the slant meets the straight area. You will find that some bottles will make a straight skirt while others will make a bit of a curved skirt.

The head of your angel should be large enough to fit on top of the drink opening without falling through. This one is made from a pecan, which gives it a neat shape. Glue the nut or bead to the bottle before painting - it will be easier to handle and you are going to cover the "waist" of the angel anyway, so it won't matter if paint is on the bottle. Paint the head a solid color and after it is dry paint on the face.

This next part is a little messy, but not too bad. Glue the feather tips to the 'screwed' area (our angel's waist) or top of the pop bottle, right below the head. The quills should not protrude over the

nut. Because of the ridges, this will seem difficult, but it does not take much glue on the ridges to 'grab' the feather and hold. This can be done while the head is drying and before the face is painted on.

To make a fuller skirt, glue feathers in two layers. Glue feathers around the skirt first and then add more at the waist as outlined above.

Attach a hanger. If you have used a nut for a head, the angel may need a pipe cleaner hanger to keep it straight. Glue your hanger in place on the back of the waist.

Cover the quills at the waist (and the hanger) with decorative tape (like the kind available for Christmas wrapping) or glue ribbon in place.

Paint the features on whenever the head is dry enough. To make hair, take a piece of feather and drape it over the head, gluing it in place.

For wings, you can use double plumed feathers but it is not necessary. Glue the quill end of a double plumed feather to the back of the waist. After it has dried, \*arch the tips around and glue them in place to make it look like wings. Repeat this with a slightly larger double plumed feather right on top of it to give a fuller look. If you are not working with double plumes, you will just be gluing two quills in place, waiting for them to dry and repeating from the \*.

## **SIMPLE EMU EGGSHELL CRAFTS**

### **Homemade Emu Eggshell Chalk**

You will need:

1 medium emu eggshell - broken into bits  
1 teaspoon flour  
1 teaspoon very hot tap water  
green food coloring (optional)  
safety mask

#### **Instructions:**

Inhaling eggshell dust can be dangerous, so as a safety precaution, wear a safety mask when grinding the shells. Wash & dry eggshells. Put into bowl and grind into a powder. A mortar and pestle works fine for this. If you don't have a mortar and pestle, try an ice cream scoop and sturdy bowl. Or grind in a blender.

Discard any large pieces.

Place flour and hot water in another bowl and add 1 tablespoon eggshell powder & mix until a paste forms. Add food coloring if desired. Shape & press mixture firmly into the shape of a chalk stick, and roll up tightly in a strip of paper towel. Allow to dry approximately 3 days until hard. Remove paper towel & you've got chalk! Eggshell chalk is for sidewalks only.

## Make an Emu Eggshell Mosaic



Cardboard approximately 4"x6"

Broken emu eggshells

Elmer's Glue

string or yarn, approximately 3" long

Tape

Decide what you want your picture to be. A flower? Arrange the broken pieces of eggshell to look like a flower, palm tree? Glue in place. Tape the string to the back and you have a picture to hang on the wall. For variations, use the eggshell with seeds, shells, noodles or macaroni or other eggshells.

## Make a Emu Eggshell Picture Frame



Cardboard the size you want to use

Photograph

Elmer's Glue

yarn or pull tab from soda can

Decide what size picture frame you are going to make. Glue the photograph to the cardboard. Glue the broken eggshell to the frame, overlapping the photo. When dry, tape the picture in place and tape a pull tab or yarn in place to use as a hanger.

Note: You can purchase ready made cardboard frames from craft supply stores.

## Make an Emu Eggshell Ring Holder

Large piece of emu eggshell  
Small rock  
Glue

This is the simplest project around, you simply glue the eggshell to the rock. The rock base should be large enough to support the shell without tipping over.



## BUILD AN EMU EGG BIRDHOUSE

You will need:

- Sphagnum moss
- River rock or bark for a base
- A pre-cut emu egg with heart opening (you can do this with a dremel tool)
- 2 Mushroom birds (optional)
- Silk flowers (optional)
- Hot glue gun & glue or other fast drying glue

Make sure that your rock or bark is clean. Wash with soap and water, then towel dry. Let dry overnight.

1. Every birdhouse needs a nest, so glue some of the moss inside the egg. Use enough so that when you put your mushroom bird inside it can be seen in the "doorway"
2. Position one mushroom bird (momma) inside the birdhouse like it is sitting on the nest.



3. Glue a long clump of moss to the top of the egg, giving a "hair" effect, having it hang down over the sides is appropriate.

4. Glue some moss to the base, spreading it out a bit, then glue the egg to the base. The reason you do this is so the glue does not show. The moss will hide the "seam" between the base and the egg, giving a finished appearance.





5. Glue the second mushroom bird (daddy) to the egg either on top or to one side. Have the crafter "perch" the bird in several locations before deciding where to attach it.



Here is another variation on the Emu Egg Bird House for more advanced crafters - the base is made from a split log and tree branch. The egg sits on a wood base made from a 2" section of branch which has been drilled to fit the branch. The split log base is also drilled to fit the other end of the branch. Sphagnum moss is used to hide "seams" and silk ivy vines wrap around the branch and over the egg. Note that this branch has a "Y" shape to it and the Daddy bird is perched on it just above the price tag. Silk flowers decorate the log. Many special touches can be done, including adding tiny insects, frogs, lizards, etc. - all available at craft stores.

All the materials used in this project are available from craft or department stores with the exception of the emu egg.



## Lures



### Bringing in Big Bass

by Lewis R. Jones

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Occasionally the need to modify or enhance a lure's appearance arises. A way I like to modify topwater lures is by taking a lighter colored emu feather about an inch and a half long, attaching it to a super sharp #4 or #6 treble hook with light colored thread by winding it around the hook and feather about 12 to 15 times and tie it off, then put a couple of drops of epoxy glue on the threads to make it durable . Take the back hook off of a lure like a Hula

Popper or Pop'R and replace it with the one I have just described and you're in business. You can change feather lengths and colors, hook sizes etc. depending on your needs at the time.

Emu feathers work well because of their long, easy to swallow, slender shape, that alone will trigger strikes from bass because most of their forage minnows are this shape and color. The natural colors of the feathers make them easy to work with also because there is no need to dye them. Most minnows are about the same shades of black/gray/white as the feathers are. Each feather is actually two separate sections going out of that one main stem that opens and closes with every little bit of water movement.



This breathing action is very enticing to the bass. The use of liquid fish attractant/feeding stimulant is easily done with emu feathers also because the feathers soak up and hold the attractant's smell on the bait.

With emu feathers, there really is no wrong color. The various natural feather colors are much like that of the minnows bass feed on. All you have to do is pick out the size and shade you want. Now that you know how to use emu feathers in your bass fishing trips, remember, it's just as much fun to catch them the second time as the first.

Sport fisherman Lewis Jones is a native of Carroll County, Tennessee and participates in several bass tournaments each year.

