

# Wild



# Jack-o-Lanterns



*Photo credit: flannelandflame.com*

Looking for a creative twist on pumpkin carving this Halloween season? Turn to the wild squirrels and birds in your area for help! Making Wild Jack-o-Lanterns is a fun way for children to creatively “carve” pumpkins while learning about the anatomy of these vegetables and the wildlife in their neighborhoods!

Traditionally, Jack-o-Lanterns are created by cutting a hole in the top of a pumpkin, scooping out all the seeds, and using a knife to carve a face into it.

**A Wild Jack-o-Lantern is “carved” by animals!**

### MATERIALS

- Pumpkins
- Forks, Knives, or Skewers
- Bird Seed
- Coconut Oil
- *Optional: Journal & Pencil*

### STEPS

- 1) Sketch a draft of what you want your jack-o-lantern face to look like.
- 2) Use a fork, knife, skewer, or similarly sharp, pointed device to begin lightly scratching your design into the skin of the pumpkin, being careful to not actually carve it and cut through the thick layer of flesh. The goal is to lightly disrupt the thick, dark orange outer skin so that the moist yellow underlayer is exposed, but not to cut any deeper.
- 3) Use your fingers to rub coconut oil onto the exposed, moist flesh of the pumpkin where you scratched your design.
- 4) Use your hands to press bird seed into the areas with coconut oil, making sure it is as firmly packed into the pumpkin flesh as possible.
- 5) Place your pumpkin outside, preferable somewhere you frequently see activity from animals such as birds and squirrels.
- 6) Observe your pumpkin! Check on it each day to see if any critters have stopped by for a nibble! Animals will be attracted to the bird seed and exposed pumpkin flesh that covers your desired design, and should begin to nibble at those areas, effectively “carving” out your design.
- 7) Consider nature journaling about the experience. What animals visit your pumpkin? Are they nibbling on the seed spots or on the rest of the pumpkin? Is the pumpkin changing in any other way? Draw what you see.
- 8) When the critters nibble through enough of the pumpkin to create holes, place a candle inside and light up your jack-o-lantern!



# HAPPY HALLOWEEN!



*Watch this squirrel unwittingly carve a jack-o-lantern!*



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