

Rolf Dietz
STRAW STARS LIKE SNOW CRYSTALS
Easy 8 pointed Stars – not only for children.

Includes a story describing how the Crafty Mouse invented straw stars. Book also includes tips for successful straw star crafting.

Topics:

- How to split the straw.
- How to place the straw.
- How to bind the straw with thread.
- How to trim the star into shape.
- How to make double stars.
- How to enlarge the stars.
- How to make wire stars.

You will need: The patented straw splitter, crown mold with clamp, scissors, and crochet yarn.

Publisher: Andreas Dietz Bastelverlag
69412 EBERBACH, Koenigsberger Str. 45/1, GERMANY

Title of the original German edition:

"Stohsterne wie Schneekristalle, Kinderleichte 8er Sterne - nicht nur für Kinder."

©2000 by Rolf A. Dietz

Translation into English by Katharina Davitt, German Corner, P.O. Box 70, Keno OR 97627

Title: "Straw Stars like Snow Crystals. Easy 8-Pointed Stars -- Not Only For Children"

©2000 by Rolf A. Dietz

All rights reserved including the translation into other languages. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of the publisher and the copyright -owner.

Printed in Germany

HOW THE CRAFTY MOUSE INVENTED THE STRAW STAR

Hello children, I'm Freddy, the crafty mouse. I live in a cozy mouse hole underneath the straw field. For me this is the greatest place on earth. I just have to come out of my mouse hole, and can eat all day long. My little mouse hole is very comfortable. It is filled with nice and soft straw I've collected. At night I sleep on my straw and have wonderful dreams. On summer nights I love to lay in the straw field and count stars. Have you ever counted all the stars? I've never been able to count them all. There are just too many stars. In winter it is too cold to lay outside and count stars. One winter night I was laying in my hole and I became very sad. I wasn't able to see the stars from within my mouse hole. One sudden I had an idea. Why not make my own stars and hang them onto the ceiling? Wow, that was it. But what should I use to make them? I was looking around and all I saw was some straw on the floor of my mouse hole. Well, there was my answer; make stars from the straw. I had plenty of it. I've tried various ways of making stars with straw, until I finished my first star. I hung it onto my ceiling and was

glad to finally see a star. As you can see one star was just not enough for me who loves to watch the sky in summer. So the following days I got busy. I made many more stars, and hung them all over the ceiling. It started to look just like the real summer sky, and I was quite proud of what I've done. I've made a small wreath around Christmas using pine tree branches. Just like the one at the farmer's house. I decorated my wreath with stars and invited my friends for a get together. All of them were dazzled by my decorations, and I had to show them how to make their own stars. That's when I had the idea of printing a book, so all my friends, and of course all children, can make the same stars. It is not that hard at all.

HOW TO SPLIT THE STRAW (Page 3)

The straw should not be squished or broken. Cut the ends a little bit, if they are frayed. Bends in the straw are no problem, because they can be sorted out later. Soak the straws in warm water, if they are too brittle.

- Picture 1: It is best to place the splitter onto the table. Now put the straw straight into it and push carefully until it hits the table surface.
- Picture 2: Now lift up the splitter and slowly push the straw half way through it.
- Picture 3: Next turn over the splitter and pull the remainder through the splitter.

It is important to push the straw in a right angle through the splitter, not in any other angle. It is best to split 10 or more straws at a time. Sort the straw segments into small, medium, and wide. Use small containers or drinking glasses to sort.

For the beginning you will need $\frac{1}{3}$ and $\frac{1}{2}$ straw pieces. You can measure the length from the drawing in the book and cut to size.

$\frac{1}{3}$ = 3 inches

$\frac{1}{2}$ = 4 $\frac{1}{4}$ inches

HOW TO MAKE STAR 1 (Page 3)

You will need:

- Large crown mold
- 8 x $\frac{1}{3}$ beige straw pieces
- 4 x $\frac{1}{2}$ black straw pieces.

Follow the pictures on pages 4 and 5.

Tips:

- Use wide straw pieces for the best look.
- Lay the eight $\frac{1}{3}$ pieces onto the thick lines in the crown mold. These straw pieces are called the side straws.
- The pictures in the book show you how to place each individual straw piece.
- Always put the glossy straw side up.
- Keep a finger on top of the pieces so they will not fall out.
- Now you have all 8 pieces in the crown mold, and each opening has 2 ends coming out (picture 8, page 4).
- Next you have to put the 4 black straws into the crown mold. Cross them as shown in the pictures. These straw pieces are called cross straws (pictures 9-12, page 5).
- Don't forget to hold them in place by keeping a finger on them.

- Now it is time to put the clamp into the crown mold. Gently press the clamp and place into the crown mold.
- The clamp keeps everything in place and nothing should fall out (picture 13, page 5).
- Adjust the straws, by pushing or pulling until they all look equal. You may loosen the clamp a little to make the adjustments.

HOW TO BIND THE STRAW WITH THREAD (Page 6)

Follow the pictures on pages 6 through 7.

- First flip over the crown mold up side down, so that the knot will be on the back of the star (picture 14, page 6).
- Now we make a surgeon's knot. This means that you have to pull the thread twice through the loop to make a firm knot (picture 15, page 6).
- Once again, flip over the crown mold for binding (wrapping) the thread. You can hold the crown mold in your hand or place on the table edge (picture 16, page 6).
- The thread is now hanging down, and is always pulled from below to the next straw crossing section (picture 17, page 6).
- Make sure that the thread is following the outside of the crown mold, and does not slide beneath.
- Wrap the thread once or twice around the straws at each cross section. Pay attention to how tight you pull. Don't pull too hard, or the straw will break; too loose and the star will not hold (picture 18, page 6).
- There is no need to use a knot at each cross section. Just pull the thread between the two lower (side straws) and the one upper (cross) straw to fix the thread. Now it is holding the thread in place and you can even put your project aside (picture 19, page 6).
- Now repeat the same wrapping six more times until done. Once or twice around the straws, and once between the side- and cross straws.
- Wrap the thread between the upper and low straw. Finish with a surgeon's knot when you are back to the start.
- Flip the crown mold and make two more knots to finish the binding off.
- Cut the excess thread, but leave enough so you can hang the star.

Tip: Add a little bit of white glue to the joints, if the straws are too loose.

HOW TO TRIM THE STAR INTO SHAPE (Page 8)

- Remove the clamp from the crown mold leaving the star in the crown mold. Pull a little on the straws to adjust the stars, if necessary.
- Note: Do not pull on the straws once the star is completely out of the crown mold, or the star will become crooked (picture 22, page 8).
- Remove the star from the crown mold, by flipping the crown mold upside down onto a table and by pushing gently.
- The final trim is given to the star by cutting its ends (picture 24, page 8). Cut the star with a pair of scissors using the patterns on pictures 25 through 27.

Star 1 is suited well to practice the placing, binding, and cutting. Even 5-year-old children can make this star. Using different length or thickness in straw, and various cuts will produce individually different looking stars.

HOW TO MAKE STAR 2 (Page 10)

You will need:

- Large crown mold
- 8 x $\frac{1}{3}$ beige straw pieces
- 4 x $\frac{1}{2}$ black straw pieces.

Follow the pictures on pages 10 and 11.

- Take a close look at the large crown mold and you will notice thick and thin lines within the crown mold. We will use the thin lines for this star.
- Lay the 8 $\frac{1}{3}$ side straw pieces onto the thin lines in the crown mold. The wide lines will not be used.
- This star is done almost like the first one, so we will reduce the instructions to a minimum.
- Add the cross pieces once all 8-side pieces are in the crown mold. Don't forget to keep your finger on the straws.
- Put the clamp into the crown mold and wrap the star just like Star 1.
- It is a little bit harder to wrap this star, but you can produce a larger variety of stars. This comes true when all straw pieces are $\frac{1}{2}$ length. Examples are one page 11.

HOW TO MAKE DOUBLE STARS (Page 12)

You will need:

- Large crown mold
- 20 x $\frac{1}{2}$ black straw pieces. Blue was used for 8 of them in this example.

Follow the pictures on page 12.

- Lay 8 side straw pieces onto the thick lines in the crown mold (picture 34, page 12).
- Next, lay the 8 blue side straw pieces over the thin lines. It is very important to keep a finger on top of the straws (pictures 35-37, page 12).
- Now lay 4 cross pieces over the center of the star (picture 38, page 12).
- Put the clamp into the crown mold (picture 39, page 12).
- The star is easier to bind, if you precut the straw ends.
- Leave the straw long for a closed star look, and cut after wrapping.

HOW TO ENLARGE A STAR (Page 14)

You will need:

- Star 1 with longer cross straws (6 inches)
- 8 straws in blue (6 inches)

This is a step further after making many stars. You will need some experience before continuing on to this type of star.

- First, make Star 1 with 6 inch long cross straws. Lay the straws, bind, cut, and remove from the crown mold.
- Flip the star upside down, so that you will see the backside of it.
- Now slide in a blue straw piece underneath the treads, but parallel to a side straw (picture 40, page 14).
- Repeat this until all 8 pieces have been placed (pictures 41-44, page 14).
- Now bind the new blue straw pieces to the existing cross straws with thread. This goes pretty easy once you see where you have to wrap.
- Make a surgeon's knot on the backside of the star (picture 45, page 15).
- Flip over the star, and wrap the thread from the button up leaving the thread running on the backside of the star (picture 46, page 15).
- Be cautious when trimming the star so you will not cut the tread.
- You can add more straw pieces using the same technique, and make large stars for the window.
- You can also enlarge Star 2 or the double star. All stars can also be made in the small crown mold.

HOW TO MAKE WIRE STARS (Page 16)

All crown molds, even the 12 and 24s, can be used to make stars out of wires. These can be chenille, tinsel, or plush wires, or even thread with starch spray added. These stars are usually for the very experienced straw star maker.

Wire Stars:

You will need soft metal jewelry wires. You can even use pipe cleaners to practice. Cut 8 six inch long pieces. Place them like the straw pieces onto the thick or thin lines. Place the clamp, and twist the ends at least twice. No thread is needed. Cut the excess wire to finish off the wire star.