

## rose petal meditation beads



I've been raiding my mother's rose garden for a couple of weeks and have gotten tired of making potpourri so I decided to try my hand at rose petal beads. These are so much fun (and, apparently, where the "rosary" got it's name from) Decided to make this set of meditation beads with them as a belated Summer Solstice project (let me just mention that suns are a pain to bend out of wire) Beads aren't all that pretty-- my next batch looks to be turning out better, but they smell heavenly! I think I'm going to try cooking the next set in cast iron (they say that that will turn them black) and make moon spacers out of silver wire.

I put the rose petals in a blender with water, cook them in my cast iron kettle, then put them in the blender again to make a smooth paste, then cook them down as much as I can. I made them with the children in my care this year and they made mother's day necklaces

I just did a google search on "rose petal beads" but they're really easy. You can add orris root, gum arabic, flour, or rose oil, but mine are just the rose petals and water. Some say to break up the petals with a blender or mortar and pestle before cooking them, I just went ahead and put my petals in the pot (I tried dry and fresh-- didn't seem to matter) The traditional method is to let them simmer for about an hour a day for 6 days, but I was in a hurry so I did 2 hours a day over 3 days-- you can probably just do them in a day. Apparently, if you cook them in enamel they keep more color-- kinda of a brown/red (I did mix petal colors). If you cook them in cast iron they go black, which is what is usual. Then I put them in my food processor. Took them out and strained through cheesecloth which gave me a clay-like paste. Sat down and rolled them into little balls on waxed paper and in my palms. One of the instruction sets I had said you could snake them and then cut beads, but I don't know that the clay will hold up to that. 50-75% shrinkage is apparently normal. I don't think mine shrunk quite that much-- or I was overcompensating, because these are pretty big. I'm making the next set smaller.

You can't put holes in them immediately-- it's too hard to keep the shape. You're supposed to let these air dry over the course of weeks being careful not to let them mold. Once again, I was in a hurry, so I put them on a cookie sheet in a 200 degree oven. after about 5 hours I pulled them out and they were hard enough to take wire and poke holes through the beads. I strung them on the wire and then put them back in the oven, "jiggling" them on the wire once in awhile to keep the holes open. Cooked them for another 5 hours, then hung them up because I was going to bed. Put them back in the next day for most of the day. I think I put them in a little long, because they lost a good portion of their scent so I think I'll cook them less next time and I might add some rose oil. Easy, huh

I think if you are willing to go the slower route you would be surprised, the rose oil is in that liquid you strained out. I cook mine over the course of a few days, just turn the pot on while I am in the kitchen. The ones that are black seem to look better over a long period of time. You can even freeze the petals too. Sometimes I cook it up and then freeze it until I get around to it.