

Making a Regency Pomander

By Kelly Lock

History

Pomanders were used extensively during the Middle Ages and during the time of the Black Plague. People believed that illness and disease was spread through bad “air” or offensive smells, and so fragrant bags of herbs or spices were used to ward away illness and assist with good health.

Even in times when disease was not prevalent in the form of plague, people began to use pomanders to cope with the rancid smells rampant in overcrowded cities, where animals rotted in the streets and sewerage was left untreated. These types of pomanders were used extensively right through the Victorian era, with even Her Majesty Queen Victoria using one when appearing in public during the time of The Great Stink in 1858.

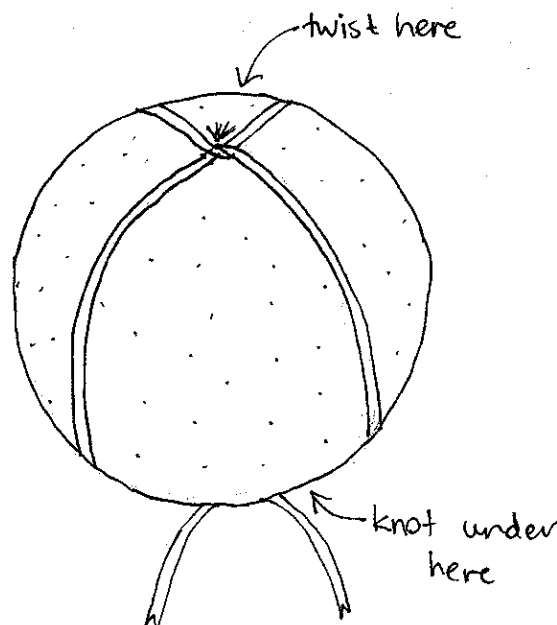
During the 18th Century and Regency period, these fragrant packages were more often used for decoration and presents around Christmas and New Year, and took the form of orange and clove balls, rather than containers of scented items. The resulting scent is now commonly associated with Christmas time.

Materials:

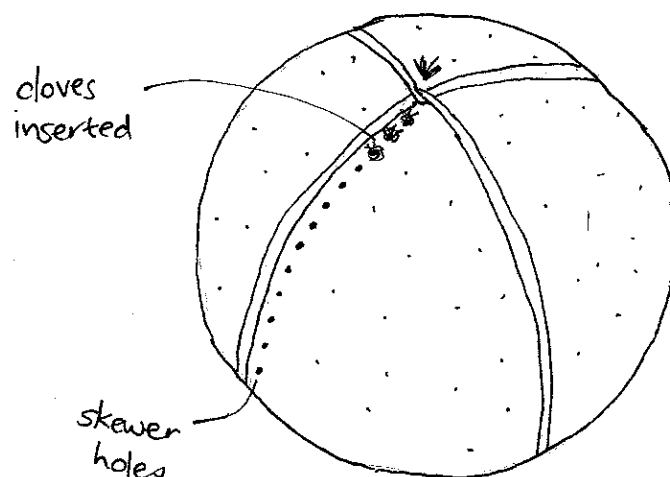
One orange
A packet of whole cloves
Ribbon to decorate
Skewer

Construction Steps:

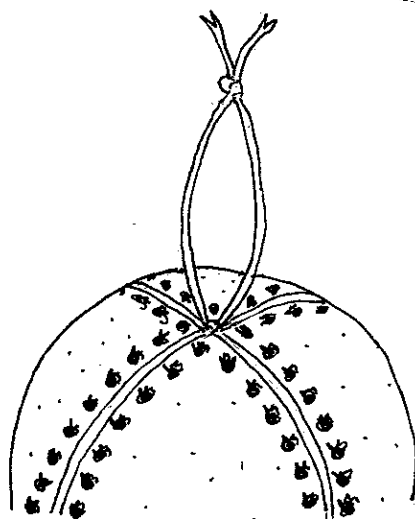
Step 1: Take your ribbon and wrap the orange with it, as you would wrap a present. Tie a knot to secure it.



Step 2: Begin to make holes in the skin of the orange where you want to poke in the cloves. Start by following the edges of the ribbon, and then fill in the remaining area. You can even make patterns if you wish.



Step 3: Use the “tails” of your ribbon to make a loop to hang your orange.



Your orange will last for several days fresh. Once your orange has mould on it, it will need to be discarded.

If you would like to preserve your orange for longer use, it will need to be dried. Instructions for drying your orange can be found in the resources below.

Resources:

Instructions for drying orange and clove pomanders:

<https://www.azurestandard.com/healthy-living/how-to-make-pomander-balls/>

Jane Austen Centre UK:

<https://janeausten.co.uk/blogs/hands-on-crafts/cloved-orange-a-regency-pomander>