



# Put together a DIY Christmas package

For crafty gifts, pair how-to books with supplies

By **HOLLY RAMER**  
Associated Press

CONCORD, N.H. — Santa has his crew of crafty elves, but those of us living south of the North Pole could use a little help.

Sure, your creative friends and loved ones will appreciate a how-to book full of new projects for an existing hobby, or ideas that could spark a new one. But consider going the extra mile by putting together a DIY kit with supplies that allow them to dive right in. Want to really make it special? Make one of the projects yourself and tuck it in with the book and supplies as inspiration.

I've been lucky enough to be on the receiving end of this idea. Admittedly, I was perplexed when I tore away the wrapping paper and found a stack of used books with no discernable theme — a novel, a biography, a collection of famous quotations and a picture book. My confusion disappeared when I opened the second parcel my friend presented to me: a book about making crafts with recycled books.

**"Book Art: Creative Ideas to Transform Your Books into Decorations, Stationery, Display Scenes and More"** by Clare Youngs (CICO Books, 2018) includes nearly three dozen projects ranging from simple cards to elaborate three-dimensional sculptures. Rather than have your recipient



A book about embroidery paired with hoops, floss, scissors and other stitching supplies.

AP Photo/Holly Ramer

rooting around in her home library, hit up some yard sales or thrift stores and pick out a few hefty hardcovers. Ideally, offer a mix of newer volumes and well-worn tomes, some with dense text and some with colorful illustrations. Consider including a craft knife, an awl for punching holes and a glue stick. A small, self-healing cutting mat also would come in handy, as would some tracing paper for transferring designs to book pages. If you're lucky, you might get a handmade thank-you card featuring one of the projects!

If you have any knitters



AP Photo/Holly Ramer

This book features adorable pom pom animals. Tuck it in a basket full of yarn and pom pom makers. Knitters on your holiday list might appreciate a gift that provides ideas on using up leftover yarn.

on your list, **"Pom Pom Animals"** by Trikotri (NIP-PAN IPS Co., 2018) provides plenty of projects to use up leftover yarn. The book includes 45 adorable and surprisingly realistic-looking animals, and while I'm not sure anyone but the hippest of hipsters would actually wear a squirrel head brooch, the animals would be cute atop hair ties for children or pinned to tote bags. Put together a basket of supplies including plastic pom pom makers in various sizes, wool yarn in various shades of brown, white, gray and black, a package of plas-

tic safety eyes and a small assortment of wool roving. While these projects may be a bit too intricate for children, the idea can easily be adapted by choosing a book aimed at a younger audience and pairing it with brightly colored acrylic yarn. The Klutz brand of activity-based books includes several pom pom titles that include supplies with the instructions.

Embroidery has made a comeback in the fashion world in recent years, spawning multiple how-to books. **"Hoop Dreams"** by Kristin Morgan (Abrams, 2018) features modern designs and instructions for projects ranging from simple decorative hoops to jewelry. Embroidery floss comes in a near endless array of colors, so pick out a handful and package them up with some hoops, needles, scissors and marking pens. The small monogrammed hoop featured in the first chapter would make a good Christmas ornament, too.

And while no one wants a lump of coal in his or her stocking, a box of rocks is a different story. Rock painting, from the mesmerizing patterns of mandala stones to cute critters, is getting trendy, and a DIY kit is easy and fairly inexpensive to put together. Buy an assortment of acrylic craft paint and brushes, paint pens and varnish, and collect rocks from around your yard, a beach or a riverbank. **"Art on the Rocks"** by F. Sehnaz Bac, Marisa Redondo and Margaret Vance (Quarto Publishing Group, 2017) features about three dozen projects for rocks of all shapes and sizes.

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# Giftwrap from a printing press

By **KIM COOK**  
Associated Press

For many of us, wrapping gifts is even more fun than giving them. But each year, we throw away miles and miles of wrapping paper, much of which can't be recycled because of inks, coatings or other additives.

If you want to make a gift to the environment at the same time you're giving to others, choose any of a variety of smart, stylish and eco-friendly ways to gift-wrap this year.

To really get on the eco express, wrap gifts in vintage road maps, pages from old books, newspaper comics, foreign language newspapers, kids' drawings, brown paper bags. Clean and reuse tins, bottles or packaging from favorite stores. Or borrow the Japanese tradition of furoshiki, wrapping gifts in fabric by using scarves, thin blankets, tea towels or other eye-catching pieces of material.

But there's also a grow-

ing number of eco-friendly papers out there.

Sara Smith of Maui, Hawaii, founded the company Wrappily in an effort to "green-up giving."

"After learning that gift wrap generates over 4 million tons of trash every year, I had a 'what-if' realization: What if wrapping paper could be printed on a newspaper press, so it was made locally and easy to recycle?" she says. She set up her supply chain, milling, printing and packaging in Washington State.

"I'm certain no one has over-thought wrapping paper to the extent I have," she laughs.

She promotes indie artists and prints the designs on uncoated, 100-percent recyclable and compostable newsprint. Wrappily offers customized papers as well as ready-to-ship, printed ones. For example, there are birch tree, reindeer and argyle-knit motifs by artist Nadia Hassan of Greensboro, North Carolina, and festive, midcentury-modern



Kirsty Copperfield/Wrappily

This undated photo provided by Wrappily shows one of the company's holiday wrap designs.

geometrics from Manhattan studio Hour of Nine. There's a modern take on Scandinavian folk art from Dutch designer Tamara Houtveen in a zingy palette of pinks, reds, blues and citron.

At The Container Store,

designs this season include a tailored antler print in warm navy and tan hues; a retro Rudolph pattern; and a cozy snowflake pattern on a gray, cable-knit printed background — all printed either on recycled paper or recy-

clad cotton.

Paper Source partners with mills and printers that follow sustainability practices. The company also recycles, donates or reuses all its scrap paper.

At Grandin Road, there's a black-and-tan or red-and-gold geometric print on paper that's made from the bark of the Lokta bush in Nepal. Sales help support a women's co-op in a region of that country that was ravaged by a 2015 earthquake.

Bloomin, a Colorado company, offers seed paper: richly colored sheets made from recycled paper pulp embedded with flower, veg-

etable, herb, grass and tree seeds. You can use it for gift tags and cards, and then the paper can be soaked in water and planted by the gift recipient.

Los Angeles design studio Art Paper Scissors offers packets of little drawstring Hanukkah countdown goodie bags made of unbleached muslin, printed with heat-transferred blue numbers.

InterfaithLiving in Silver Spring, Maryland, offers designs on Etsy.com that combine Christmas and Hanukkah images and messages, printed on recycled, recyclable Kraft paper.

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