

R a i n s t i c k s

Origin - South America

Rainsticks are musical and ceremonial instruments used from ancient times to the present day. Their name describes the soothing rain-like sound that these instruments produce. Rainsticks are made from the wood skeleton of a dead cactus plant. No living plants are used. The cactus plant grows in large quantities in desert areas, and dies after about 70 years. When the cactus dies the exterior thorns and flesh fall off leaving the skeleton. The thorns are then collected from the area around the cactus and poured back into the cactus skeleton. Tiny stones and pebbles are then poured down inside the cactus creating a rainstick!

Although rainsticks were used by many different cultures, they were primarily used in Chili where there is a legend that rainsticks were created to remind the spirits that rain was needed.

Materials:

Paper towel tubing, plastic lids from milk jug, tape, beans or rice or cereal and felt tip markers.

Description:

Read the above description before engaging the children in making their own Rainsticks.

Give the children a paper towel tube and let them decorate it with markers and stickers (or anything else you want to use).

Close one end off with a milk cap (tape up the end with masking tape just to make sure the filling won't come out).

Let the children partially fill the tube with beans or even dried cereal. Close the other end with a cap.

Then let them shake, shake, shake. It sounds just like raindrops!

