

Grow-Your-Own Sugar-Crystal Candy*

Try to say that 5 times fast! Do you remember growing sugar crystals on cotton thread? This method brings that retro confection to the spotlight, yielding an abundance of rock candy. There's plenty of room for improvising—choose pastel colors for an Easter basket treat or try to match **colors with **flavors**. Fiery red cinnamon? Refreshingly green mint? A warm vanilla tan? Color and flavor combinations are endless, so have fun!*

Materials:

- 6 cups of white granulated sugar (makes three flavors)
- 1 cup of water
- Wooden spoon & medium-sized metal pot
- 3 canning jars
- Kid-Friendly sticks – halved chopsticks or food skewers (snip off the point)
- Food coloring and flavorings:
 - Extracts: Vanilla, cinnamon, raspberry, mint, etc. (use ½ teaspoon)
 - Liquid water enhancer: mixed berry, sweet tea, lemonade (use 1 squirt)
 - No color needed: vanilla and maple extracts (use ½ teaspoon)



Directions:

Adults! This activity is hot. Utilize young minds to help create flavor and color combinations at the table while you cook the sugar solution on the stove.

- 1) Heat the 1 cup of water to a boil on the stove. Add the sugar 1 TB at time, allowing it to dissolve before adding more. Once all six cups of sugar are completely dissolved, remove from the heat. Cool to room temperature (20-30 minutes).
- 2) While it cools: Little hands can help wash and dry the 3 canning jars (approximately 12 ounce preferred). Also, prep the candy stick by dipping it in the simple syrup. Allow the sticky stick to dry, while the sugar solution cools. Then roll the stick in plain sugar right before lowering into the jar.
- 3) Prep the jars by running them under hot water. Pour about 1/3 of the solution into each of the 3 jars. Add a few drops of food coloring along with the flavor choices to create your candy.
- 4) Clip or clothespin the stick in place, hovering above the bottom of the jar. Store the jars in a cool place, away from light and curious hands. Crystals start to form in a few hours. After a few days, check the stick for crystals.
- 5) Don't toss the leftover sugar solution. Wrap it in a sturdy papertowel, and leave overnight. The color design on the towel is just as cool as the hardened rock candy!
- 6) Present as sticks, chunks in gift bags, or crumbs sprinkled on baked goods. Enjoy!

Extension: Share your edible art at [#littlechildrenBIGactivity](https://twitter.com/littlechildrenBIGactivity).

See the "I've been thinking..." section at www.joanruddimanedd.com for continuously updated content.