

How to make an Elder Whistle

Elder wood is very good for crafting as the wood whittles easily and their stems can be hollowed out. By whittling some elder, you can make your very own whistle.

You will need:

Piece of elder approximately 10-15cm in length - Elder trees can be recognised with their green leaves and white flowers in the spring, black berries in the autumn, and large purple buds in the winter.

Whittling knife - Remember to take extra caution when using, take your time and always cut away from your body.

Anvil secateurs

Tent peg or long nail

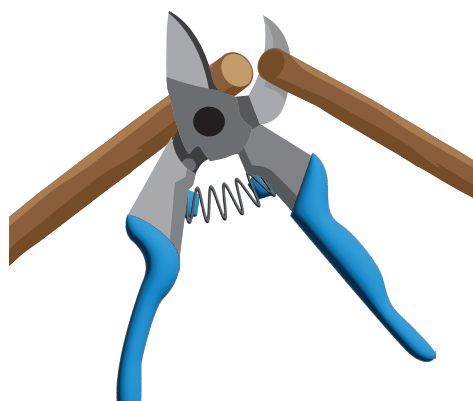


How to identify a piece of elder:

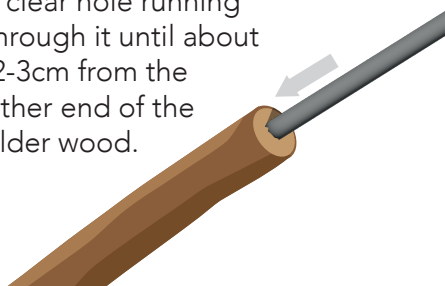
Elder wood is hard-yellow and its bark is grey to brown in colour. You can often find elder wood near riverbanks and wet woodlands, but you can find it almost anywhere.

Instructions:

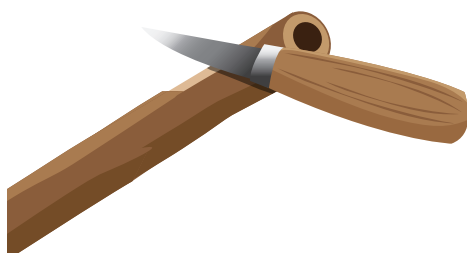
1. Find a straight piece of elder from the woodland floor and use your secateurs to cut a length of approximately 10-15cm.



2. Using a tent peg, poke the pith down into the piece of elder. Make sure you scrape away at the pith so that there's a clear hole running through it until about 2-3cm from the other end of the elder wood.



3. Now you need to carve out the notch for the whistle. Firstly, make a cut with your knife approximately 1-2cm in from the end of the wood that has had its pith removed and cut downward halfway. Once done, position your knife 1.5cm further along the wood, and carve up towards the cut you have just made.



4. Keep shaving pieces of the outer elder off until you can see the pith layer and have created a hole.

5. Now find a thin piece of wood to make the dowel that will fit into the space that the pith originally took up. It needs to be a tight fit, but there will be a small air gap for air to pass through and make a whistle sound. To do this, shave your wood so that it has a flat side which will run level with the notch.



6. You can test your whistle at this point. You may have to check for loose debris or adjust the size of the notch you have made.

7. Ensuring it fits and there's an air passage running to the notch, cut your dowel to the length between the notch and mouth hole, so it's not sticking out too much.

8. Once happy, you can then carve the mouth end into a nice shape.

