

# Shrunken heads...Minnesota style

*Article written by: Kate Marsland, Master Gardener*

Making shrunken heads is easy to do at home and not at all scary. That's because you make the heads out of apples and watch them shrink before your eyes!

## **Here are the supplies you'll need:**

- **Newspapers**
- **Medium or large apple**
- **Lemon juice (bottled is okay)**
- **Paring knife**
- **Peeler**
- **Pencil**
- **Jar or bottle**
- **2 Whole cloves**

Start by spreading newspaper over your table to keep it clean. Use peeler to peel the apple, leaving a circle of skin at the top. When done, the skin will look like hair, so try to shape it like that.

Carve your apple into a head, with a paring knife. You can also use the tip of a spoon or the pointy end of a peeler.

Start by removing a small amount of the core from the bottom. (Later you stick a pencil in there.) Make deep cuts where you want the eyes and lightly outline the nose. Cut away wedges of apple from either side of the nose to make it stand out. The more you cut away, the bigger the nose will be. Make a slit for the mouth, or try to outline lips and trim around them like you did the nose. Use your fingernail, or the tip of a knife or peeler to scratch wrinkles on the forehead, cheek and chin areas. Be as creative as you want. You could try to carve a cat face or monster or anything! If you peel all the apple skin, you can make your head be bald.

Soak the apple in lemon juice for 15 minutes, then lightly dry it with a paper towel. Stick the pencil in the little hole at the bottom and stick the pencil into the opening of the jar. Let the apple dry without touching anything. The pencil holds the apple up away from the jar.

The apple head will take 3-4 weeks to dry and shrink completely, but it will look a little different every day. On the second day, stick the cloves into the eyes. By the sixth day, remove the pencil and set the apple on a plastic surface (like a lid) to finish drying undisturbed.

Does it look like you expected? Or like anyone you know? Make lots if you want and ask to borrow a camera to record the shrinking. Be sure to eat a fresh apple once in a while, too! Did you know apples didn't always grow in Minnesota? Thanks to the University of Minnesota, there are lots of apple varieties that will grow here now. Maybe you know where an apple tree is in your neighborhood. Look for their pretty pink and white flowers next spring.