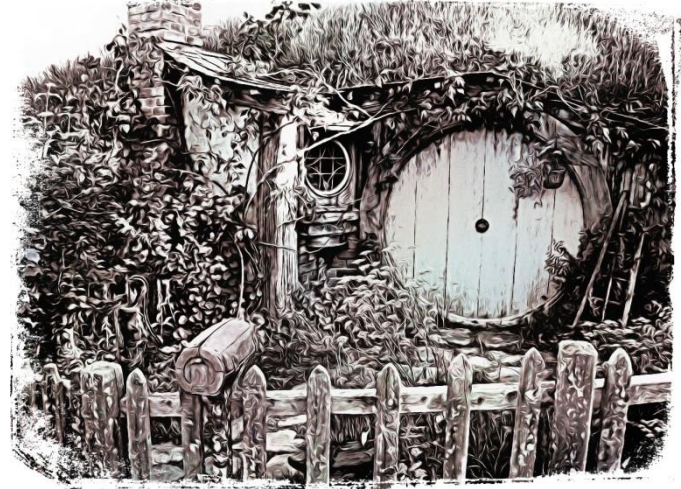


Ideas For Sustainable Nature Play

The Hobbit/Cob House

This can be made by constructing a frame and sheathing structure alongside a hillside, then covering the whole structure with dirt so that it looks as if it is an integral part of the landscape. The structure can be sown with any variety of plants, albeit not deeply rooted, and should have a rustic feel to it. Other nature play elements can be incorporated in the “yard” as well as inside the structure.



To alleviate any concerns about “confined space” designations, the “roof” can be an umbrella-like structure supported by a center post and rising two feet or so above the top of the wall.

The project would also be a great volunteer project as well as a good media friendly project. The whole structure is the epitome of sustainable and is primarily made with the cheapest materials around: mud and straw.



To get an idea of the basic construction methods used, check out this [video](#).

This [video](#) shows you what types of materials are used and can also give you an idea as to why this would be a great volunteer opportunity.

You can also go from basic to elaborately artistic

Log Flower Stepping Stones

These are very simple elements that can be made with one large log and eight smaller logs. This element can either be used as decorative stepping stones or, by incrementally raising the height of each successive “stepping stone”, it becomes a balancing game.



Living Checkerboard



You begin this project by planting a hardy, low groundcover, such as Corsican Mint and Dwarf Stonecrop in 2' X 2' square containers. Clear out a 16' X 16' area and set the containers in a checkerboard pattern. The checkers can be made by cutting a 1' to 2' diameter log into 3" to 4" inch pieces. For the more ambitious, stylized chess pieces can be made from various sized logs as well.

Landscape Sculpture

It would also be unique to utilize the natural elements for an artistic purpose. While I'm not saying to do something like the photograph to the right, I am saying that some sort of sculptural element could be derived from the natural elements and contours of the area.



John Thomas Niswonger