

# How to Create Fir Trees



Trees may appear perfect in nature but on closer examination they are all different so don't be afraid of experimenting or of making what you may believe is a mistake. In the end you are creating and spending exhaustive time in trying to achieve "perfection" which really is not worth the time and doesn't affect the end result, Trust Me!

These inexpensive trees provide a fantastic effect either on their own or as a group. Being larger, and more detailed than the pine trees, they can be placed closer to the front of the diorama and act more as a "Feature".

This process enables you to create trees to the height you wish and provides the ability to represent "Thicker" growth on some trees, the finished colour is entirely up to you. The process is the same for all.

Warning – The idea of making "Scale Height" trees may sound exciting but when complete and placed on your layout may well appear "Over-sized" and "Out of Place"

What you need to make these trees is shown at the end of these instructions.

## Step 1

Take a BBQ skewer, or wooden dowel, and cut it your desired length. With a sharp blade create a point at both ends. N.B. Kitchen skewers may be used but the thin trunk may look out of place when finished. BBQ skewers are not that much more expensive.



Creating a point at both ends serves 2 purposes:

1. Provides a pointed end at the base to easily insert into polystyrene, when building, and when complete into the layout.
2. Trees have a pointed top and not an abrupt square finish.

At this stage you need to consider what final effect you wish the base of your tree to have, see step 4. If you wish to use a small wire brush to gain the required look then now is the time. This only applies if you are using a BBQ skewer or wooden dowel as the kitchen skewer is too small.

## Step 2



This stage creates the basic shape of the tree

Start at the base and wrap the florist wire around the trunk several times. Make a loop in the wire, about 3 fingers in length, and continue wrapping. At approx. 0.5cm make another loop and continue up the tree.



As you get higher you can reduce the length of the loops to two fingers, don't get too fussy as the length of the branches can be trimmed later. As you arrive at the taper make a few turns with the florist wire and cut. Cut a 20cm piece of wire and fold as shown above.

Using the long length to wrap around the loops fix the top wire in place. Using strong glue/gel fix both the top of the "Trunk Wire" and "Top section" to the skewer.

N.B. Strong glue or Gel is much preferred as normal super glue will run and make life difficult.

Set aside to dry.

### Step 3

When dry cut the individual loops to form the branches and trim to create the shape of the tree

We are now going to add the bark using either sawdust or sieved dirt and grout. Wood glue is best for this process as it is thicker, hiding the wire loops, and creates less run off than PVA glue. Starting at the top, liberally coat a section of the tree with glue and then sprinkle the sawdust or dirt onto the trunk. It makes less mess if you do the trunk in sections.

Put aside to dry.



### Step 4



Now take your wood glue and 12mm static grass. Again wood glue is preferred as it is more tacky and creates less mess than PVA/Modeling glue.

**N.B. You do Not require an earthed static grass applicator for this stage.**

Using a paint brush coat 2 branches at a time with glue, both top and bottom, and sprinkle/tease the 12mm grass onto each branch. Shake the excess off and re-use.

**N.B. It is Not recommended you use spray glue as this will stick to the trunk and ensure the 12mm static grass will stick where you don't wish it to get. Removing the static grass from the trunk is a nightmare and only ruins the final result.**

Continue up the tree until all branches have been coated in the static grass.

Put aside to dry.

**N.B. At this stage you have a choice depending on how thick you wish your final foliage to be.**

If you wish your tree to have a thicker foliage then proceed with this additional step.

At this stage use well mixed watered down PVA/Modeling glue at about 30% glue/70% water. This allows the glue to capillary along the individual spikes on the branch. Taking the "Dry" tree and diluted glue repeat the above process taking two branches at a time, coating both sides of the branch and then sprinkling/teasing the static grass to the branches. For a less dress look you may choose to only coat the top of the branches. Put aside to dry.

## Step 5

The tree is now ready for painting. Use a Matt/Satin finish and the colour of your choice. In the examples shown Rustoleum Expresso Brown has been used.

The brown provides a more authentic finish as opposed to a black for more distant trees.

Put aside to dry



## Step 6

You now need to consider what final colour your tree to be, the choice is yours. Be wary of choosing a "Bright" or "Stark" finish as the tree will look false. A mid green or Hay colour has been used in these examples. Don't be afraid to experiment and mix different colours together.

Taking your watered down PVA/modeling glue apply to either one or both sides of two branches. Now take the 4mm grass, colour as required, and sprinkle/tease onto the branches. Continue until the tree is covered.

Put aside to dry.

## Step 7

Once dry you can shape the tree as desired. You will find the structure robust and the branches easily bent to the desired shape.

## Step 8

Plant the tree.

The above process allows you to make trees of various sizes, density and colours, there is no right or wrong way.



## Estimated cost per tree (2024 prices)

Using dowel \$3.20

Using skewers \$2.50

## Materials Used

Items are available from various suppliers, below is where the builder purchased and in no way represents suggested brands.

### Trunks

Kitchen Skewers \$3 for 25 Coles/Woolworths

BBQ Skewers \$6 for 25 Coles/Woolworths

Wooden Dowel \$5 per metre Bunnings craft



## Foliage

12mm Static grass – The colour does not matter as you will be spraying.

4mm static grass – The colour is dependent upon what you wish for the final result. Beware of bright and bold colours as these will look somewhat artificial.

## Glue

PVA Wood Glue

This is thin glue and mixed 30/70 with water.



Gorilla Wood Glue

This is thicker, more tacky and makes less mess.

## Spray paint

Rustoleum Satin Espresso \$17 Bunnings paint

Avoid using Gloss paint! If you can find a cheaper flat/satin paint then please use, and let me know where you purchased it from.



Fiddly Bits Flat Black \$6 Bunnings paint

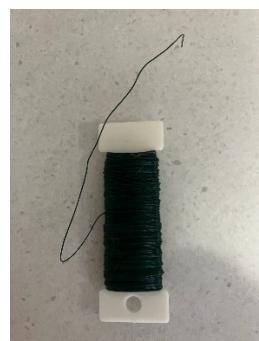
Flat black can be used but the end result is not as convincing when the tree is viewed at close range.

## Trunk Coverage

Saw Dust Free Bunnings Trade

Or Sieved soil/dirt Free

These are used to both cover the wire coils and provide texture.



## Branches

Florist wire Spotlight \$7



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