

How to Create Pine 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" really, it 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. For distant trees the use of a standard kitchen skewer provides

the illusion of height and can be easily covered by placing smaller trees in front. For a more "feature" tree, closer to the viewer, a BBQ skewer provides a more authentic appearance. You may consider using a wooden dowel, but this immediately increases the cost. 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 skewer and cut it to your desired length, do not discard the smaller piece as this can be used to make a smaller tree, 2 for 1!

With a sharp blade create a point at both ends.

Creating a point at both ends serves 3 purposes:

1. Provides a pointed end at the base to easily insert into polystyrene, when building, and when complete into the layout.
2. The pointed top makes it much easier to slide the coconut fibre onto the tree at the next step.
3. 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 makes the base from which the rest of the foliage will sit. Wood glue is preferable as it is thicker, tackier and makes less mess. PVA or modelers hobby white glue tends to be runny and less effective.



Take the Coconut Mat and pull apart horizontally as the mat is too thick at present. Cut a piece about the size of your thumb nail and “tease out” slightly to enable you to place it on the skewer.

Work out where you wish the foliage to start and place a “decent” amount of glue around the entire skewer. Now slide the coconut matting down onto the glue, ensure square and put aside to dry.



Step 3

The Foliage is created using the Coconut Fibre and not the Matting.



Pull off a section of the fibre and then tease out the fibre as thin as you wish and a suitable size for the tree you wish to create, remember you will need an “Oversized” piece as you will be trimming to size later. Don’t get fussy about creating numerous sizes for creating a shaped tree, the trimming process will sort this out. I suggest you make 2 sizes i.e. bottom to half way up and then half way up to top.



Now take your basic trunk, with the stopper at the bottom, and with a decent amount of glue cover the top of the stopper and about 0.5cm above around the entire trunk. Now slide the first layer of foliage down onto the stopper, ensure it is square and then put aside to dry. This provides a firm base from which to build the foliage up.

N.B. At this stage it is important to recognise that pine trees are see through and packing the layers tightly together should be avoided. Adding the ground cover, later, will fill out the tree naturally.



Now add the next layer. It is advised that layers have a 0.5 – 0.75cm gap to provide the layered effect of the tree. You will be left with the pointed top sticking above the foliage, just cut up some coconut matting, place a “Dob of glue” on the top and push some of the matting into the glue.

Set aside to dry.

Now we start to create the shape of the tree. Slow is good so don't rush into creating the exact shape you need 80% is good enough at this stage. Decide what size you wish the base to be and then cut parallel to the trunk all the way up (see middle tree). Once this is done "Twirl" the tree between your fingers to remove the lose fibres, you will be surprised how much comes off. RESERVE all the bits as these can be used for other trees but mixing the fibres. Now you can start shaping the tree a little more, to about 90% (see right hand tree) as the painting and flocking process will change the shape even further at which stage the final trim can be conducted.

Step 4

On the larger trunks you may wish to add some texture to represent bark. At step 1 the idea of using a small wire brush to create the illusion of bark was introduced. You may, however, wish to coat the base of the trunk with PVA and sprinkle with either sawdust or sieved dirt to provide a less smooth appearance.

Step 5

The tree is now ready for painting. It is recommended a cheap can of "Flat Black" spray paint is used for this process

Step 6

The tree is ready for flocking. You can use spray adhesive but this is expensive and the results no better. Take a cheap spray bottle and mix 40% PVA white glue and 60% water, shake well. Make sure the mixture is thin enough to spray, if not add more water. Have your ground cover ready. You can use commercially manufactured products but coloured sifted sawdust is significantly cheaper and just as effective.



Spray the tree ensuring everything is coated by turning upside down, twirl the tree to ensure even coverage and removal of excess glue. Over a tray/plate etc. and starting in the horizontal position slowly turn the tree while "Lightly" sprinkling the ground cover. Sprinkle from top and bottom. The product in the tray can be re-used.

You may wish to stop at this stage but your tree, as with commercially purchased items, will be the same colour and have no contrast. Another quick spray, in random areas and use of a different coloured flock will bring the tree to life. Set aside to dry.



Step 7

Once dry you may now trim the tree to your final shape and plant!

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

Coconut Matting

\$6 from Bunnings Gardening

Coconut Fiber

\$6 from Bunnings Gardening



Glue

PVA Wood Glue

This is thin glue and used for spraying when mixed with water.



Gorilla Wood Glue

This is thicker, more tacky and makes less mess.



Glue Sprayer

Big W/Cheap as Chips \$1.50

Spray paint

Fiddly Bits Flat Black \$6 Bunnings paint



Foliage

Woodland Scenics Fine Turf "Weeds" \$28 Model shop/ebay.

Woodland Scenics Fine Turf "Burnt Grass" \$31 Model shop/ebay



OR

Saw Dust Free Bunnings Trade



To This



Colour sample pot

\$6.80 Bunnings paint – Colour as required



Small Wire Brush

Bunnings Tool Shop @10 for 3



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