

Make Your Own Leaves

by Nancy Ryan

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Host Susan Brubaker Knapp with Nancy Ryan

Materials

- ½ yard spun polyester interfacing (I use lightweight Pellon® Lutrador®.)
- Acrylic paint
- Disposable cup
- Foam brush
- Leaf pattern or draw your own
- 24g wire (I buy this from the jewelry section of a craft store.)
- Craft heat gun
- Thread for leaf veins (50wt cotton or polyester)
- Sewing machine with free-motion capabilities
- 90/14 topstitch needle

When the wind begins to blow and the leaves start to fall to the ground, Mother Nature is telling us that fall has arrived. As a textile artist, I am always looking for things that I can create in non-traditional fabrics and I am intrigued by the way leaves begin to dry and curl up during the autumn.

DIRECTIONS

1. Place acrylic paint in a disposable cup and add water a little bit at a time. Mix with the foam brush until it is a thin liquid. Place the interfacing on a protected surface and paint the entire piece with the thinned paint. Allow the paint to dry completely.
2. Enlarge the leaf pattern to the desired size (my leaf was about 15" x 16"). Place the interfacing on top of the leaf pattern and trace the leaf with a pencil.
3. Free-motion stitch on the drawn lines of the tracing. Create leaf veins by stitching additional lines

to create a more realistic look to the leaf. When complete, cut out the leaf. Trim close but do not cut the stitching.

4. Turn the leaf to the back side. Place 24g wire on the main veins only and zigzag over the wire.

Tip: I use a 2.5 zigzag stitch.

5. Heat up the craft heat gun.

CAUTION:

Always use a heat gun intended for crafting. Industrial heat guns are too forceful and can cause fire when applied to textiles. Work in a well-ventilated area and have a fire extinguisher nearby.

6. Place the leaf right side up on a heat-resistant surface, such as a cookie sheet dedicated to non-food use. Apply heat from the heat gun to the leaf, moving over it in a circular motion until the interfacing begins to burn and holes appear. Keep

the heat gun moving so it does not concentrate and burn too much in one spot.

7. The resulting leaf can be mounted on a wall, as is, or used as an embellishment on an art quilt. It's hard to make just one! ■■■

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