

# Paper Mache Tree Stump

## SUPPLIES

- 5 gallon pail. Empty pails can be purchased at hardware stores and in the Walmart paint section.
- Small piece of wood (1 square foot of MDF (medium-density fiberboard or plywood)
- 2" flat head nut and bolt
- Jigsaw (to cut wood)
- Drill (for center hole)
- Newspaper
- White glue
- Paint – dark brown, light brown, tan, black
- Foil
- Toilet paper tubes
- Masking tape
- Clear satin or gloss finish, spray or brush on



## BUCKET AND WOOD SEAT

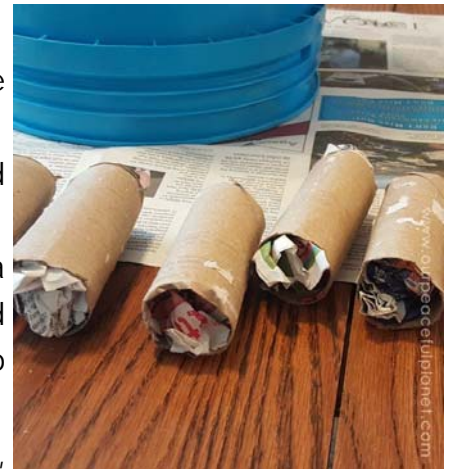
1. Remove handle from the bucket.
2. Set bucket on piece of wood and trace around the base. Cut out the circle with a jigsaw.
3. Turn the bucket upside down and place wood piece on what is the bottom of the bucket but will be the top of the stool. Drill a hole through the center to fit the bolt through. Insert bolt and tighten nut onto the bolt from beneath (The nut should sink into wood and be flush with top of wood).



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## CREATING THE SHAPE

1. Gather toilet paper rolls and stuff them with newspaper – We used eight.
2. Choose where you want your branches and thick roots and use masking tape to apply toilet paper tubes to the bucket
3. Rip off a 1 to 2 foot piece of foil and loosely roll it up into a tube – press foil into seams between toilet paper tubes and bucket to smooth out connections and fill gaps. Tape into place.
4. Using the same foil forms, compress foil to make longer, thinner ropes to attach where you want the “veins” or more depth. We also folded some of the tubes of foil into a triangular shape with the wide part attached to the top lip or the bottom lip of the bucket to give it more depth as well.
5. Tape down everything securely to avoid gaps and to cover all foil since it is rough when crinkled. TIP: the more you compress your foil and newspaper, the sturdier the outside of the stool will be.



## MOD PODGE

1. Cut newspaper into strips – most of ours were larger strips, about 1-2" x 5-6", but we also cut up some 1"x2" pieces for the areas that had more dips, grooves and edges because they lie flatter.
2. Mix your paper mache adhesive: We used 1.5 cups of Mod Podge, ½ cup of white glue and ¾ cup water. (Water and flour work fine as paper mache but it can leave a powdery





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residue which will end up using more paint to cover later since it is so absorbent. It also takes longer to dry.



3. Dip newspaper into mixture, wipe excess off both sides and apply to entire surface of bucket and tubes, layering over one another as you go – this is the most time consuming part as it took about 2 hours (we only did 1 layer). Try to make it as smooth as possible.

4. **TIP:** For long term use, let the layer dry and apply multiple coats of paper mache. This not only makes the paper exterior stronger, but it allows you to be more of a perfectionist since you can trim or sand off imperfections between coats. If you do more than one coat you only need to let the coats dry enough to not be tacky before applying the next coat.



5. Let the final layer dry thoroughly! (That means overnight – maybe longer if you did multiple coats of paper mache.)

## PAINTING FIRST COATS

1. Paint the top of stump and top of any “cut branches” with the tan paint, coming about an inch down the sides.



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2. Paint the rest of the stump with a dark brown, coming up to the inch of tan but not covering it.
3. The overlay of tan allows you to pull out a smaller brush and, using the same dark brown, paint up to the edges leaving "cracks" of tan. This gives it a more realistic look.



## TOP OF STUMP EFFECT

1. For the top of the stump and branches water down some of your light brown and wipe it around the edges of the circle – use your hand or a damp paper towel to wipe it off in a circular motion so that it gives it some light shading around the edges. Using the same watered down brown, grab a thinner brush and draw a line around the top of the stool, about ½" in from the edge. Continue drawing circles inward, about ¼" to ½" apart until you reach the center. Repeat with cut branches.



## ADDING DEPTH AND SHADOW

1. Once that is done mix the dark brown with some black to darken it up and paint in the "dips" and grooves of the stump. You can be far from imperfect with this as it's just a base coat for shading. We watered down the darker paint a little and put it into every dip and groove, outlining all of the forms we had built up with foil and tape.
2. Using a light brown you can now make it resemble a real tree. Notice how we did it in the photos, painting pieces that





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don't touch, leaving the dark brown background. This is easy to do and does not require any exact drawing skills.

3. Mix the dark brown and black again, this time diluting with water. Go back over the light brown



you painted on the stump, applying your watered down darker paint to the edges of each



shape. Wipe with a paper towel if needed. Since the paint is diluted and the background is the same darker color, it's almost impossible to mess this up. Just keep building up the layers of darker paint around the lighter brown bark you painted until it looks good to you. **OPTIONAL METHOD:** At this point you could actually bypass this part as a whole and just dip a damp paper towel into the watered down dark paint solution and rub it around where you see fit. You're just giving it the perception of depth and shadow.

## FINAL CLEAR COAT

1. Lastly, let it dry and spray with two coats of Clear Coat or other satin or gloss finish. (We used satin.) This makes it look more professional and also allows for cleaning the surface easier if needed.

