

THE  
SPECIAL TREES  
OF  
HAUNTSVILLE



**In this edition you will learn how to make 8 unique trees that can be used for a Halloween Display or can be easily adapted for use in any other village. If you do not remember how to make the basic tree described in the First Edition please read that first. Then you will understand the techniques described below.**

### **Tree with Extra Branch**

This one is really easy. I have a building from Department 56 called Steins Maple House. The piece features a cabin from the New England woodlands with a bunch of figurines engaged in collecting Maple Sap from trees for making syrup. So I made a tree, added a branch and hung a bucket on the branch to collect the dripping sap. The branch was made by adding a twig (like you learned to make for the basic tree) and simply taping the twig to the trunk of a basic tree. This particular tree had golden leaves like a Maple so hanging a bucket on the twig to catch dripping sap seemed just perfect. You could use the same technique and hang a bird house from the branch.



**Winter Birch Tree**

I have seen similar trees sold by both Department 56 and Lemax but I found I could make them so much cheaper. To make the winter birch shown here you will need the following supplies. Start by making a standard Basic Tree but this time you will use the White Floral Tape instead of the brown.

You will also need a bottle of brown craft paint. Any brand will do nicely. I've used dark brown but I prefer something Fawn or Tan, just a personal choice. You will also need a wide tip Sharpie Marker in Black.



To construct this tree use the white tape to create at least 25 twigs. Then dip the tip of each twig into the tan paint to create the distinctive colored tip. You may prefer to use a small brush and paint the tip but I've found the dipping is faster.

When the paint dries assemble the tree as you did for the standard Basic Tree. Then using the Sharpie randomly place black marks onto the branches as shown in the photo above to create the Birch markings.

One side note. I have noticed that the white tape will turn slightly yellow over time. Personally, I like the yellow tint but I wanted to warn you that the shift in color may occur.

I have noted that the Aspen trees found in the western U.S.A. have leaves that turn a lovely yellow in autumn and with their white trunks they are quite stunning. Accordingly I have made a number of these trees as shown below. They really brighten up a dark corner in a display. A sample tree with the yellow



leaves is shown below You already know how to add leaves to a tree so give it a try. The tree below is just a basic tree made from only 5 branches. The addition of the leaves make it look much fuller.



**Spooky Halloween Tree**

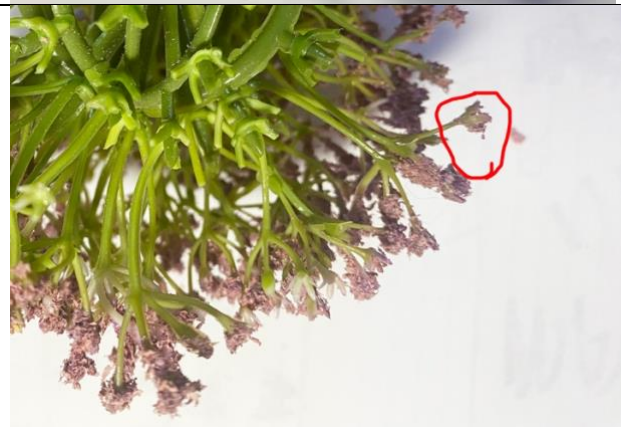


For Halloween I needed some trees to line a roadway but just a bare branch basic tree did not seem “spooky” enough—I was looking for something more eerie. Sometimes tree making just needs a bit of imagination. I went to Michael’s and looked at all the plastic plants just looking for something I could cut apart and use for the tips of the twigs.

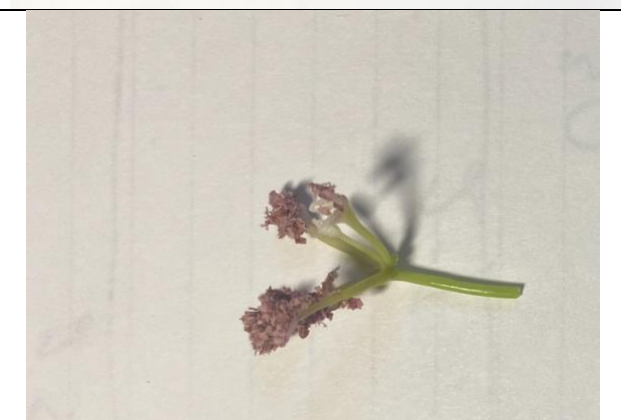
What I found was about a 4 inch round ball of some unknown flower. All that I have left to show here is what remains after I cut it apart.



What I saw were the little individual flower parts. Note the piece circled in red, that is all I ended up using. As you can see I cut off dozens of these little flower pieces and attached one to the tip of each twig.



I cut 25 of these little flower pieces off the ball flower shown above.



This time when I attached the flower piece to the wire I simply laid the flower along the side of the twig and then attached it with tape. For these trees I used Black Floral tape instead of the brown.



I followed this procedure with all twenty-five twigs. Then I assembled the branch as before. When I make the basic tree I use 5 twigs to make one branch. Shown to the right is one completely assembled branch.



Because the original flowers were purple and I wanted a black spooky tree I used a can of black spray paint to spray the flowers and the tree.



One final note about making a tree such as this. If I'm going to make an unusual tree I will make at least three of them. I have found that when



displaying trees they look best when displayed in odd numbered groups. So I would display 1 or 3 or 5. It is much easier to make several trees all at the same time than to start setting up the display and wish I had “just one more”. Believe me, this is the voice of experience speaking. Below is a finish “Spooky” tree.





## A Tree With Lights

One of the best things about Lemax is that each year they make a variety of lights. Not just street lamps but strings of lights and they make them not only in white but in colors. In addition they make seasonal lights as well. You can find pumpkins at Halloween and for Christmas there are a variety of lights including snowmen. Each year there is something different.

To the right is a string of white lights (25 lights on the string). I have used these white lights to light walkways, and decorate house rooftops. I've also draped the lights in basic trees like you would decorate a real tree in your front yard for Christmas.

One year I found a string of pumpkin lights and decided that I could make a pumpkin tree. See below.





To make the tree shown above I started with a basic tree and added roots to the tree to make it free standing. I made these roots much longer than normal to support the extra weight of the lights. I started at the top of the tree and just draped the lights across the branches. It took two strings of the lights because there were only 10 lights per string. I was not worried about the wires showing in the tree limbs because the wires were black and the tree was dark brown. In a dimly lit room they would blend right in. However getting the wires down the tree trunk was another matter. I wound the wires around the tree trunk and then using the floral tape directly taped the wires to the tree trunk. When I added the tree to the display (shown below) I ran the extra wires and the white case for batteries along the styrofoam base and covered them with various types of ground cover. You can see the tree displayed below near a cemetery.



Adding lights to a tree in this manner is a great way to add light to a village accessory that does not have lights of its own. The cemetery gate shown here is mostly black so when the display is complete this adds just enough light to keep Halloween dark and spooky and yet show off the cemetery.

Let your imagination go and be creative. Try things that will make your village unique. Everyone has the same houses and little touches, like this tree, can make a big difference toward making your display really special.

### **Plastic Garland Green Tree**

Here is another example of a summer tree. The leaves are from a 6 foot garland I found at Michaels and I cut off pieces or sections of the leaves for use on the tree.

This tree is made from a basic tree that had 25 twigs formed into 5 branches. 2 branches were combined to make a limb and a total of 2 limbs were made and combined into a trunk to which the fifth branch was added. To the right you can see how the leaf cuttings were attached to a twig by bending the tip of the twig with pliers.



The fully assembled tree can be seen below:





### **Trees made from Heavy Wrapped Wire**

While trees made from the Floral Stem Wires work quite well there are occasions when I have wanted some trees that looked a bit more massive. When I discovered the heavy wire shown below I knew it was exactly what I needed.

The coil of wire shown on the right is about the thickness of a heavy coathanger but not quite as stiff. The advantage is that this wire is already wrapped so I do not need the Floral Tape. Like all my other trees I am going to start this by creating a basic tree so I will be cutting 25 wire pieces of wire. I cut about half the wires to be 9 inches long and the others to be about 11 inches long. This was done for two reasons. First, I wanted a taller tree and second, because I was going to use the bottom of the wires to form roots so the tree would stand by itself.



Because of the thickness of the wire and because the wire was already wrapped, I assembled the tree by simply twisting the twigs into branches and then twisting the branches into limbs. To the right is one branch formed by just cutting the wrapped wire from the original coil and wrapping them together.



Shown at the right is the fully assembled tree. Note that everything is assembled just by twisting. I found it too difficult to twist the tree limbs into a trunk so I cut a separate piece of wire and just wrapped it around the limbs to form the trunk. I left the bottoms of the limb wires loose and just bent them 90 degrees to form the roots. Over time the wrapping at the tips of the twig wires comes loose and gets a bit fuzzy looking but I think this just adds to the charm of the tree.



I have made quite a few of these tree just as shown above but when I found some small oak leaf garland I made several more of these trees and added leaves to the end of the twigs in the same manner as I attached leaves to all previous trees described in this article. The resulting tree is shown below.





### **NEW TREE FOR THIS YEAR'S HAUNTSVILLE**

#### **I'M REALLY EXCITED ABOUT THIS ADDITION TO MY FOREST OF TREES**

Just a bit of background. I live in south Florida, the home of the everglades. The everglades are filled with giant bald cypress tree that become heavily draped with thick Spanish moss. The moss that grows on the trees gets so thick that it can blot out sunlight in mid day. With the gloom caused by the moss and the murky green water filled with pythons and alligators I can think of no place more spooky which to be caught as night approaches. For my Spanish Moss tree if just bought a bag of Spanish Moss at Michael's a draped the moss on the tree so that it would lay on the water surface as it does in the Everglades. I will be creating a scene similar to the one shown below as part of this year's Hauntsville.

The scene will feature the trees and Everglades Joe who will be poling is flatbottomed boat through the murky waters of the Everglades. Note is companion Al (that is Al E. Gator) drifting along side Joe's boat. You might also spot the owl on a tree branch.

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This concludes my tutorial on tree making. I hope you have found at least one tree that you might try making to add to your own display. When you visit Hauntsville at Halloween this fall see how many of the trees we have discussed you can spot in the village .

Up coming editions on this page of the Village Collector will begin to show the building process for Hauntsville. Hopefully these editions will be posted soon. I have a great deal of styrofoam to cut, paint and assemble to drop by often to see my progress.

If you have any questions, just drop me a line via email at [treadwl@comcast.net](mailto:treadwl@comcast.net)