

HAUNTSVILLE

Making Sturdy Trees With Leaves

By

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Part 2

In my previous edition of Hauntsville I explained my technique for growing trees (actually making them) for use in my Halloween Village or for that matter in any other village I build. In that edition we constructed the basic tree. All of the other trees I create start with that basic tree and then branch out to different variations. If you missed the first edition please go back and review the tree making process before proceeding as it will make what you read here much easier to understand.

Trees with Leaves

My first Department 56 village was the Dickens Village and when it came to trees the only real choices were evergreens and a few, but expensive, bare winter trees without leaves. When I saw the price of the winter trees I was motivated to make my own winter trees and came up with the basic tree that was featured my previous column. However I soon started thinking about what happens in the fall when trees have colored leaves and then in the spring and summer when trees sport their thick canopy of green. These thoughts lead me to come up with a solution to create leafy trees. Once I came up with the solution, creating a forest of deciduous trees such as what is shown below was quite easy.

Green Holly Tree

Autumn Color Tree



How to construct a Deciduous Tree

The first thing we need is leaves. Shown below are two examples of Leafy Garland that I found available at Michael's, JoAnn Fabrics and Hobby Lobby. These were available starting in August and September and availability continued up through the Christmas Season. Once I found out how easy this project turned out to be I just collected as many rolls as I could find and in every color available. Why? Because you can NEVER have too many trees!!! Below are samples of what you should look for.

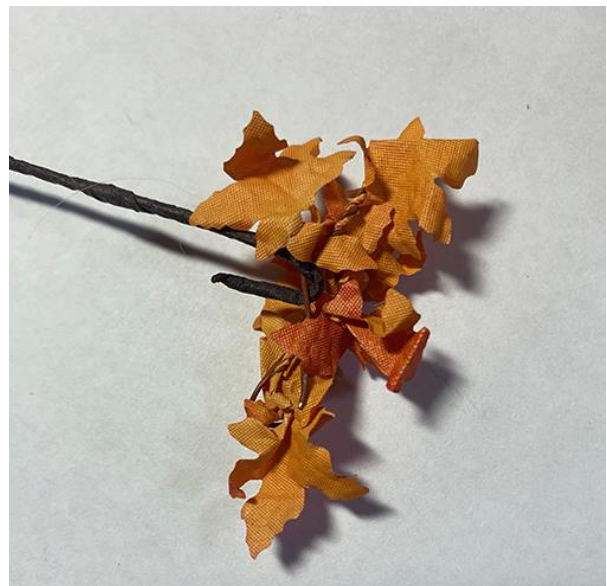


Autumn Tree Step 1

To create this tree we begin with the instructions for making the basic tree. You start by cutting at least 25 pieces of floral stem wire about 9 inches long and then tape each of them to make 25 twigs.

Autumn Tree Step 2

After making 25 twigs take the needlenose pliers and bend the end of each wire into a hook that is about $\frac{3}{8}$ inch long as shown in the photo below. Then cut a short piece of garland about 2 inches long and hook the twig's hook over the wire in the center of the garland as shown below on the right.



Autumn Tree Step 3

Then take your needle nose pliers and pinch the hook tight to secure the piece of garland onto the wire.

Repeat this process until you have secured 25 pieces of garland to 25 twigs.



Autumn Tree Step 4

Now separate your 25 twigs with leaves into sets of 5 each and then assemble the 5 twigs with garland into a branch in the same manner as when you made the basic tree.

Continue this process until you have 5 completed branches each made up of 5 twigs. See the sample branch below.



Finally, assemble the rest of the tree in the same manner as you made your basic tree. The addition of the leaves makes the basic leafy tree appear much fuller than a bare basic tree. However, if you want to make your tree even fuller just make additional branches and limbs until you achieve the size tree you want for your village.

When you have completed several trees assembling an autumn scene is quite easy. If you look carefully at the image below you will note that the red and yellow tree in the center has oak leaves. These oak leaves just come from a different garland.



Green leafy tree.

At the top of this column I showed rolls of two types of garland, Green Holly and Autumn Gold. I have made numerous trees using both types. Additionally you can find garland made of oak leaves and others as well.

Just remember the procedure is the same. Shown on the left is the process of making a twig for a holly tree. Note the hook on the end of the wire for securing the section of leaves.



FREE STANDING TREES

As I stated in the previous edition I build all my villages using a Styrofoam base. This allows me to drill holes in the base so that I will not have any wires visible in the final display as they can be run under the base. Since the base is Styrofoam I make the great majority of my trees with a pointed bottom as this allows me to just stick the trunk of the tree into the Styrofoam wherever I want it to be planted. However, there are times when I want the tree to have gnarled roots that run above ground or when the tree will be planted on a hard surface such as a bookshelf where I cannot just stick in the point. Thus, the tree needs to be free standing. Note the two tree types below.



Pointed Tree for Styrofoam



Tree with Roots or Free Standing

Follow the directions below to add roots or a free standing base to your basic tree.

Roots Step 1

To make a root take a piece of floral stem wire that is at least 5 inches long. Then using the floral tape wrap the wire to make a twig as you did when making your basic tree. After creating the twig, bend the wire in half as shown to the right and separate the ends so it sort of looks like a "Y". You will need to make at least 3 bent twigs for each tree but I sometimes make 4 or 5 to support the bigger trees. If you want longer roots just make your twig 6 or 7 inches long.



Roots Step 2

After you have made at least three root pieces use the needle nose pliers to both crimp the top portion tightly together and then to bend the wire into an "L" shape. The upper portion will be attached to your tree trunk and the spread at the bottom will become the "roots" and the support for the standing tree.



Roots Step 3

Once you have made the desired number of root pieces for your tree simply tape each piece of root assembly to the trunk of your tree. Be certain to use multiple layers of tape to provide additional strength to hold the roots in place.



The image to the right shows one of my trees with fancy roots. I have made roots really long and run them under broken pieces of sidewalk or used them to wrap around rocks to hold a tree on the edge of a mountain. This is where you can let your imagination run wild and come up with all sorts of creative ideas.



Displaying a village is much more than just setting up the houses. Get creative and plan for little touches that make the village different and keep your viewers engaged. For example, why would I go to all the trouble of making extra long roots to a tree? Well check out the scene below. I'll bet no other village has this scene in it.



In the next and final edition I will showcase how to make a variety of different trees that will add character to your village. Stay tuned. As always, if you have any questions please feel free to ask. Send your questions to treadwl@comcast.net

