

Pretty Polystyrene Xmas Trees

Craft shops sell all sorts of wonderful polystyrene shapes ready for decorating. I've made two sorts of table top Christmas trees here and to make them you'll need:

Christmas Cone Tree (I got all of these things from Spotlight)

- Polystyrene cone and small star
- Green and iridescent white/gold acrylic paint and a brush
- Decorative craft paper (I used scrapbooking paper that is printed on both sides)
- Small pins (beading pins are the best- they have flat heads and are nice and short)
- Ribbon
- Clear craft glue
- A toothpick



- 1) Paint the cone with dark green paint and the star with the iridescent paint. You could paint the star with PVA glue and dust it with glitter instead if you like. Spike the star onto a toothpick before you start painting it- makes it much easier to handle! Push the other end into a spare bit of polystyrene, florist foam or an orange to set aside and dry.
- 2) When the star and cone are dry, push the toothpick and star into the top of the cone leaving about 5mm of toothpick showing between the top of the tree and the bottom of the star.
- 3) Cut your craft paper into strips measuring around 8cm long x 1.5cm wide. A paper guillotine makes a super fast job of this! One 30 x 30cm square sheet of craft paper will make enough loops for one cone tree.
- 4) Gently fold a loop in half but don't crease it- you want a soft loop not a hard edge and push a pin through the two ends and then into the (now dry) painted cone. Start at the bottom of the cone, pinning loops around the base in lines. Work upwards in rows, alternating the placements of the loops so they don't form straight lines from top to bottom (think of a brick pattern here!) My craft paper had a different pattern and colour on each side, so I alternated the rows with different loops of colour.
- 5) As you go further up the cone, you'll need to angle the pins down so that they don't push through the narrow top. When you get to the top you might need a dab of glue to secure the last loops. Give each loop a wee push from the bottom to shape it.
- 6) Tie a ribbon onto the toothpick and your Christmas Cone Tree is finished. These make lovely little centre pieces for your Christmas lunch table- plus they keep the kids busy making them!

NB: if you don't have access to craft paper, use pages from magazines- the loops of colour look very festive and work just as well.

Christmas Bell Tree

- Polystyrene bells in two sizes (you'll need 1 large and 2 small per tree)
 - Small polystyrene star
 - Clear craft glue (make sure you can use it on polystyrene- some glues 'melt' it)
 - Bamboo skewer
 - Sharp craft knife
 - Craft paper and card 5cm square
 - Green, red and iridescent white/gold acrylic paint and a brush
 - Clear varnish/sealer- use a water based one.
 - Glitter (I used an iridescent white that changes colour in different lights)
 - Narrow Christmas ribbon
 - Sequins, beads and short bead pins
- 1) Cut the top 1/3rd off the larger bell shape. Discard the small bit you cut off.
 - 2) Glue the cut part of the larger bell to the underside of a smaller one to form a tree (like two triangles stacked on top of each other)
 - 3) Push a skewer right through the middle of them so that 1.5cm pokes out from the top of the tree and trim the remainder so you have a 5cm tree trunk.
 - 4) Paint the tree and skewer dark green and set it aside to dry (spike it into an orange!)
 - 5) Paint the star in iridescent white/gold or cover it with glitter
 - 6) Cut the top 1/3rd off a smaller bell shape and paint it red- this will be the base.
 - 7) When all the shapes are dry (you might need to give them two coats of paint to get good coverage) give them a coat of clear varnish/sealer. If your budget doesn't extend to this don't worry- it's only for a glossy finish which you can live without. Or water down a little PVA glue and use that as a sealer- it dries clear and is perfectly fine to use.
 - 8) Assemble the shapes- star on the top, red base at the bottom with the cut side down. Cut a small square of card and cover it with craft paper or paint it and glue the red base to it. This makes the tree stable and stops it from tipping over.
 - 9) Glue a strip of Xmas ribbon around the red base.
 - 10) Run a wiggly line of glue around the edges of the bells that make the tree and dust them with glitter.
 - 11) Thread sequins and beads onto the pins and dot them all over the tree.
 - 12) Make a few more so you have a little line of trees for your mantelpiece/window sill or Christmas table.