



Conifer Clinic

By: John Grosner

The Pine trees constructed in this clinic are most similar to: Eastern White or Hemlock. With modifications, this technique, can be used to represent any type of coniferous tree.

- Materials needed:
1. commercial scrubbing pad or equivalent
 2. Bambu skewers
 3. dark green and flat black enamel spray paint
 4. light grey oil base paint
 5. small paint brushes (various sizes)
 6. Woodland Scenics green grass turf (T45)
 7. Woodland Scenics Fine Turf Soil (T41)
 8. joint compound
 9. Super glue
 10. paint thinner
 11. Styrofoam blocks
 12. paper towels/rags

Procedure:

1. Prepaint Bambu skewers with flat black enamel spray paint. Let dry.
2. Rip scrubbing pad up into thin pieces of assorted sizes: 1X2, 1X4, 2X2, 2X4, 3X3, 3X4. etc.
3. With pointed end of skewer facing up, slide 2-3 bigger rectangular pieces onto skewer. These will make up the lower tree branches. Distance from pointed skewer end to lower branches will determine tree height. Space them out around the tree trunk (skewer).

NOTE: Most trees are only seen from three sides or less depending as to where they are going to be placed on the layout. So for appearance sake, your tree only has to look good from one side.

4. Gradually working from the bottom branches up, slide on progressively smaller pieces until the overall acceptable tree height is established. Leave about 3/4" of the point exposed.(branchless)

5. Fold small piece of scrubbing pad into an appropriate size to represent tree top. Put it in place. The attachment of this piece and any other loose branches is secured with Super Glue.

6. Place tree into styrofoam block. Lightly spray paint branch tops with dark green enamel spray paint. Drizzle Woodland Scenics Green Grass (T45) into the wet paint.

NOTE: This is done to give your tree, when placed on the layout, the appearance of the sun shining down on it.

7. Allow tree to dry.

8. Using the 3/5 rule, place trees on railroad with best appearing side facing onlooker.

9. Apply joint compound with small soft brush to tree base.

NOTE: This is done to thicken the skewer if needed, and create tree roots.

10. Allow joint compound to dry over night.

11. Paint trunk and roots using the light gray oil base paint with small paint brush being careful not to get the paint on the foliage.

12. Fold a piece of copy paper in half. Place a small amount of Woodland Scenics Fine Turf Soil into the fold. Holding the top edges of the paper with two hands, gently blow the fine soil lightly onto the wet grey paint. Allow to dry.

NOTE: This is done to create texture and simulate bark.

I have used this method to produce Eastern Pine/Hemlocks with great success on my own railroad. They not only look very realistic from a natural viewpoint and in my opinion are a cut above the "in the box" bottle brush variety.

As a footnote: After being on the railroad a number of years I noticed the trees looked a little dusty. Were these trees resilient enough to stand up to a cleaning. I first dusted with a large soft make-up brush and vacuuumed at the same time. They were then washed by brushing on clean water and gently dabbing up excess water with a paper towel. The dust was removed and the vibrant colors returned.