

A CLINIC ON SCENERY

(WHICH EVERYONE KNOWS HOW TO DO)

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Step 1: Study the area you are trying to model for the general look and coloration of the scenery. You would do this for anything else you are modeling, why not scenery?

Step 2: Land contours may be formed with horizontal layers of extruded Styrofoam insulation board. Build up the rough shape of the landform with horizontal foam layers cut to the land contours, usually 1" to 2" thick.

Advantages of foam: light weight, easy to cut, easy to control land forms, available at home centers.

Disadvantages: soft, easy to dent or break, usually only available in 4x8 sheets, not really suitable for track roadbed, wiring can be a problem, does not support vertical items well, shavings and fumes when hot wire cutting can be a problem.

Step 3: If you are modeling a river or lake, cut the river/lake bed in the foam and finish the underwater river/lake bed as described below. Cut 1/16" thick acrylic sheet 1/2" on the sides larger than the shore line. The acrylic will be supported on the top of the foam layer that outlines the shoreline. Lightly dust coat the backside of the acrylic with brown and/or green spray paint so the plastic is still transparent. Install the water surface over the shore line foam. Continue adding horizontal foam layers above the water.

Step 4: Foam layers are sculpted to form land contours. Use knives, Stanley Surform planes, coarse sandpaper, wood rasps, hot wire cutter or other cutting tools. Smooth contours to finished shape with sandpaper.

Step 5: Cover the foam land contours with Papier Mache (Examples: CelluClay or Sculptimold, [available from craft stores and some hobby shops], Taxidermist's Papier Mache, [or Plaster], etc.). Rock strata, hillside erosion, dirt roads, smooth roads and other land features are sculpted into semi-wet ground base. Papier Mache is slow drying so you have time to work in the details.

Advantages of Papier Mache: easy to mix and work, slow drying time, can be spread thin or thick and will not shrink or crack, surface can be rough or smooth, light weight.

Disadvantages: can be more expensive, harder to find, can take a longer to dry in a humid atmosphere, some brands not suitable for rock molds.

Rocks can also be made from broken ceiling tiles, broken Homosote board, broken cork boards, rock molds or other materials.

Step 6: Paint land forms, rocks, roads and other scenery details with artists' tube acrylic paint in earth tones or green depending on final scenery treatment. Suggested colors are: White, Payne's Gray, Raw Sienna, Yellow Oxide (Yellow Ochre), Raw Umber, Burnt Umber, Hooker's Green. Mix the tube colors to get the desired shade or color on a pallet (it is not hard).

Step 7: For the base layer of ground cover (grass, leaves or other ground cover) coat the surface with full strength Matte Medium. Sprinkle the ground cover on. There are several brands of ground foam* ground cover and foliage that can be used. You can also ground up dry leaves for forest floor cover. Spray the area with "wet" water (several drops of detergent in water). Then bond it in place with dilute Matte Medium and water with a drop of detergent applied with an eyedropper or spray.

Step 8: If you are modeling a forest, add fallen trees, logs, forest undergrowth and small bushes. Ground foam* scenery materials are used for forest undergrowth. These are glued on with full strength Matte Medium, then bonded in place with dilute Matte Medium.

Step 9: "Plant" trees* to finish out the forest or other scene. Finish the scenery by adding details to model a prototype scene.

*Some brands of scenery materials are: Bachmann, Busch, Faller, Noch, Scenic Express, Walthers, and Woodland Scenics