

Step-By-Step Instructions to Complete Your Yard Art Decoration



SELECTING THE WOOD

We recommend using 1/2" or 5/8" grade B/C exterior plywood to create your yard decoration. You can use 3/4", but the display will be thicker and heavier than necessary. Although you do not need to use pressure-treated plywood, it is important to use exterior grade plywood. We do not recommend using composition (flake) board, or similar products.

TRACING THE PATTERN

Before tracing the design onto the plywood, decide how you will cut out your yard decoration. Depending on your skill level, you may want to cut each and every small indent in the pattern. Otherwise, review the pattern and determine where you want to make your cuts, rounding off the areas between some of the details. You will compensate for these changes when you paint your final project.

You do not need additional carbon paper. Your project is printed on a special paper that has a carbon backing. Lay the plywood on a strong flat surface with the smooth side of the plywood facing up. Tape or clamp the pattern on the plywood with the blue side (carbon side) of the pattern on the wood. Using a heavy pencil, trace only the outside line of your pattern onto the plywood. After tracing a few feet, stop and peel up the pattern to make sure the traced line is transferring to the plywood. Make sure the pattern stays in place as you complete the tracing.

CUTTING THE PATTERN

Before removing your pattern, compare your tracing to the illustration in the upper left corner. Make sure you have traced the pattern correctly and have included all of the lines you will be cutting around.

Use a jig saw with a fine-tooth blade to cut out the pattern. When finished, use sandpaper or wood shaping tools to smooth all the edges of your cuts. A router with a small round-over bit will also work well.

PREPARING FOR PAINTING

Use an exterior grade wood putty to fill any grooves or voids in the plywood. Also fill all holes in the edges of the plywood. After the putty has thoroughly dried, sand the putty until smooth.

Before painting, wipe off all sawdust particles and putty dust with a damp cloth and let dry. A little time and care will add years to the life expectancy and improve the look of your yard decoration.

PAINTING

Using an exterior-rated primer, paint both sides and all edges of your yard decoration. You can use either oil-based or latex primer. It is important that the type of primer you use is compatible with the gloss and accent paints you will be using. We have found that a light colored primer is preferable, and white is usually the best choice.

After the primer has thoroughly dried, tape or clamp the pattern onto the plywood cutout. Make sure to check the alignment and when satisfied, trace the entire pattern, making sure to trace all the lines.

Paint the pattern using the illustration on the other side of this page for referencing color. For best results, use at least two coats of paint on your yard decoration.

Paint your pattern using a slant-edge brush and exterior acrylic craft paint. Craft paint comes in convenient 2 ounce containers available at most craft stores. Most areas of color will require 2 ounces. A few of the larger areas on some patterns may require more. The amount of paint needed will also be affected by how heavily you choose to paint your decoration.

Generally it is easier to paint the light colors first. Let the paint thoroughly dry before painting a second coat or adjacent colors.

FINISHING

With the pattern completely painted, you have a couple of options to finish the decoration. You can use a waterproof black gloss paint marker to outline the pattern and define the details. This will give your decoration a more graphic look. Or, you may choose not to outline your decoration. This will give your decoration a softer look.

We recommend you seal both the front and back of your painted decoration with a water-based varnish. A coat of sealer will prolong the life of your yard decoration. Make sure you test the sealer on the paint and paint marker to make sure it does not bleed.

INSTALLING

PLACING IN YARD

We recommend using 1/2" conduit pipe to install your yard decoration. Cut two lengths of conduit the height of the yard decoration plus an extra 8-10" to have conduit to place in the ground. Mount the conduit pipe to decoration using 1/2" conduit straps and screws that are 1/8" less than the thickness of the plywood.

HANGING FROM STRUCTURE

Some yard decorations are patterned to hang from a tree, porch, roof or from the side of your house.

We can not give you detailed instructions for every potential hanging situation. We recommend you use heavy duty fishing line, light rope or wire to hang your decoration. Use eye-hooks screwed into the back or the edges of the decoration. If you are not sure of the safety of your installation, seek knowledgeable help from neighbors or hire a professional.



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