Water for Displays

Some people use real water in their displays. Real water looks and sounds great in a display. But, if you have a cat like mine who feels it is her job to drink any water in a display, you may not want to use real water.

Then, others choose to use simple ways of putting water in displays. By using blue construction paper, heavy blue aquarium backing paper or plastic aquarium backing, (go to the aquarium section in a pet store), blue cellophane or Reynolds Blue Seal-Tight plastic wrap (available seasonally) they create water for their display. And, crinkling the cellophane or plastic wrap, you can even make a waterfall.

Using "Realistic Water"

To make a pond, lake, river, or stream, take a piece of Styrofoam and draw the type of water area you want in your display. Lakes are not round, but usually have coves that go in and out. Rivers do not meander in a straight line but usually curve around and sometimes at different levels.

After you decide what you want your display water to look like, cut around the edges of the drawing. You can use a hot knife or a regular knife. Remember do not cut very deep—no more than one-half (1/2) inch. Next carve out the foam until you have the size you want. Then, mix Plaster of Paris, Fix-It-All, or another plaster type material with water and apply to the water area and the surrounding area. When that dries, paint the area using acrylic paints.

If you plan to have trees surrounding the lake (or river, or pond), you will want to paint the lake bed more of a greenish color to reflect the trees on the shore. Some lakes are muddy and some are blue and clear. A frozen lake would probably look like shades of gray. Remember darker colors indicate deep water and light colors more shallow water.

When the paint has dried, you can add rocks or tree branches. Next, pour no more than one-eighth (1/8) inch of "Realistic Water" in the depression. This should dry overnight (24 hours). If you want it deeper, you can then pour another coat. Again, let it dry. Some shrinkage will occur.

If you purchase on the Internet from Woodland Scenics, it is $15 for a 16-ounce bottle. You can also purchase it at train or hobby stores.

Using "Water Effects"

If you want to add a waterfall or make ripples on your lake/river, you can use "Water Effects."

Use a non-stick surface to apply "Water Effects." I like to use Reynolds Non-Stick foil. It is easy to clean up afterwards because you can just toss it or recycle

it.

Measure the cliff or area you plan to display the waterfall and add one-half (1/2) inch.

Measure the same distance on the non-stick surface. Squeeze the bottle of "Water Effects" and make lines to that length and width. Allow the "waterfall" to dry overnight (24 hours). It will become clear as it dries. When it is dry, peel it off the non-stick surface and attach it to the display area by using a little more "Water Effects" as the glue for it. Also, add a little "Water Effects" to attach the bottom of the waterfall. You can then squeeze more "Water Effects" onto the surface of the pond or lake to create a rippling effect. Use a stick or brush to help make the ripples, if necessary.

You can also mix the "Water Effects" with paint to make the waterfall "bloody" (red) or "slimy" (green) for a Halloween display. And, you can sprinkle glitter on the product before it dries to give the effect of a frozen waterfall.

If you purchase on the Internet from Woodland Scenics, it is $9 for an 8-ounce bottle. You can also purchase at a train or hobby store, but check the Internet prices first.

Using Caulk

A good method of making an ocean is to use clear caulk. Be certain it is CLEAR and not white or another color. You can find clear caulk at a home improvement or hardware store.

Again, prepare your Styrofoam by carving a shoreline. I use a spoon to scoop out the foam and try to make it uneven like wave action.

Next use the plaster material to cover the water area.

When it dries, paint it using acrylic paints. Remember to make the paint on your "ocean" darker where the water is deeper and lighter when it is near the shore. Allow the paint to dry.

Spread Clear caulk over the area and make raised portions with the caulk to indicate "waves."

Using white paint on a dry brush, brush the wave tips to indicate foam.

You can add rocks or tiny shells in the water or on your beach area. I have even taken sand and glued it to the shore area (messy, but looks good). Dept. 56 made a ground cover that resembles sand, item #52840, Ground Cover, that retired in 2006 but may still be available at some stores.

Caulk takes forever to dry and will always seem a little tacky. If you are using

boats or other items in the water that you do not want to stick to the caulk surface, trace the footprint of the item on paper or thin cardboard and cut it out. Place it on the caulk where you want to sit the item and then sit the item on the paper or cardboard cutout. You can then easily remove the item when you are ready to pack it away.

<u>Other Materials Used for Making Water</u>

Floral Setting Resin, casting resin, and other clear resins.

Mixing sugar and water with blue food coloring makes a lake or pond. Just add enough water to wet the sugar and add one drop of blue food coloring and cook until the sugar has melted. Pour into foil "bowl" and let cool.

Melted wax – best to melt in a double boiler that you don't want to use again except for melting wax. Wax is a petroleum product and will ignite if heated to 390 degrees so it is best to put in a pan over boiling water to melt.