

Making Trees with YARROW

By Grant Morrell

The yarrow plant (*Achillea millefolium*) has a family of over 200 varieties. The flowers are borne in summer in shades of white, yellow, pink and red. Many of the white flowers are seen all over the country, it's this variety that has the best shape for tree making and are mainly found growing in the more colder climates of the North Island. The best time to pick is around March, April, May as the flowers have died off and the flower and stem go brown, any later the coming winter, wet weather will soften and destroy the head.



Places I have encountered to find the most is around the Waiouru district and the Wairarapa, you will see it scattered in small or big clumps along the road side in the rough foliage looking like a lot of dead plants 15 – 30 inches in height. If you go looking early you find the clumps of white flowers to pick the best place.

Tools for collection

- Car to travel
- Very large plastic rubbish bag
- Heavy duty scissors or garden shears, and
- Masking tape



Once you find a spot

- Pick the good stems until you have a large bouquet
- With the masking tape bind it up at the base
- Trim off the bottom and place in the large bag

Depending on the spot you find, you should fill the bags within ½ hour, don't think you have too much, believe me it doesn't go far when your start your tree making. So fill the car to the max.

Making the trees

Depending on the scene and size of your layout will depend on style of tree to make.

Material required making:

- Masking tape
- Scissors

Material required for construction;

- spray paint cans of
 - Brown, Yellow, Black
 - Light/Med/Dark green
 - Clear gloss
- Rubber gloves
- Ground cover sheet
- Scissors & Masking tape
- Scenic foam material of your choice for colour & fineness



To fill an area on the layout, a dozen trees will not go far, in a foot square area you could place up to 15 –30 trees (dependant on size). Decide on where you plan to settle down for an hour or so to make them, prepare a space, it is a slightly messy operation. Lay out an old sheet, have a cardboard box to place the trees in as you make them and a box to place the deadwood in.

To make a **basic round style** pick heads that are best looking (*fine tight bunches of seeds*) and place them together slowly moving down the sides so as to form a tree. When you feel it looks ok with a bit of masking tape (2 – 3 inches long), tightly wrap it round the stem.

With the scissors trim off bottom, remember to leave enough of the base to stick into the scenery ground. The size can vary accordingly to requirements. With the scissors then go round the tree and trims off any bits that look unappealing or protrude out. Place in box – one tree constructed.



Making a tall style tree - This is a little bit fiddly but has a nice finish. Start off with a small tight bunch, mask it with a bit of tape (*this is the top of the tree*) pick other pieces of yarrow and place a little further down around the stem, mask these in as you did the first. Continual this process moving down all the time and as you do, you will require more and more stems, remember to pick heads that are best looking (*fine tight bunches of seeds*). When the tree is

about a foot high (around 65 feet in 'S' scale) mask it off and then you can trim the stem which should be about 15 – 30 mm in diameter. With the scissors then go round the tree and trims off any bits that look unappealing or protrude out. Place in box – one tree constructed.

Once you have made 20 or 40 so trees now we can go outside and give them some colour. Lay out ground cover, am make 2 prep areas: - 1 for spraying paint and the other for sprinkling the scenic texture over the tree. What falls on the ground can be re-used. Don a pair of disposable gloves and shake the spray cans before use. I start off by painting the under sides with a combination of the black and brown, this gives it depth and shade. Do this to all the trees first. I then turn over and spray different colours of green followed by a fine sprinkling of scenic material, for that autumn touch I spray them first with a touch of yellow followed by a light touch of green and brown and finish off (your choice) again with scenic material. As each tree is done lay on the ground to dry then carefully place in box for later fixture to the layout.

Try and vary the colours of each tree you do, this gives a good effect when it comes time to place on the layout.

Scraps and deadwood: - there is a lot of fine mess when you clean up, this fine stuff I keep as it makes good ground cover along the track edge and under trees. Some of the small stuff is masked up and make small bushes - There you have it.

