

Making Leaves

(using the cut and pinch method)

By Kathy Moore

Skill Level 1 (of 4)

Introduction

My preferred way of making leaves is, without doubt, using this cut and pinch method. It is simple to do and results in a leaf with a very neat and fine finish. It allows the paste to be rolled very thinly enhancing the final result.

The size of wire to use will depend on the size of the leaf being made. For standard sized rose leaves, for example, a 30# or 28# wire is suitable, whilst a large Hydrangea leaf would need a 24# wire.

This method works for virtually all leaves that have a central vein down the centre. It can also be applied to some wired petals.

The colouring on leaves is very important to create a realistic likeness. Try to copy either from a real leaf, or from books, images off the Internet (my favourite source!) or catalogues.

I am not a fan of making botanically correct flowers for decorating cakes. They may have their place, but for me the love of cake decorating means making a rose (or any other flower or leaf) that looks like, and is recognised as a rose and thoroughly enjoying doing so - so have fun and enjoy!

Equipment and Materials			
	✓		✓
Non stick board		Florist wires	
Non stick rolling pin		Dusting powders	
Petal Pad		Leaf veiners	
Dog bone tool		Leaf cutters	
Dresden tool		Florist tape	
White fat (e.g. White Flora)		Petal paste	
Edible glue and brush		Confectioners glaze, cleaner & brush	
Scissors and wire cutting scissors			
Small fine palette knife.			

Preparation and Tips

Use paste colouring to bring the petal paste to the colour you require. Sugarflair Foliage Green Extra is excellent for this purpose. A high strength, really good green colour means you do not have to add too much to obtain the right shade. Adding too much paste colouring to petal paste can affect the consistency, resulting in a paste that is difficult to work with, and the possibility of poor setting qualities. Remember, you can add colour, shading and highlights to leaves using dusting powders so it is worthwhile not making the petal paste too dark.

Humidity and moisture will affect petal paste, as sugar is hygroscopic, attracting moisture, so try to work in cool dry conditions, away from any condensation or moisture. In humid conditions, store work in an airing cupboard if you have one.

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Method

1. Use the appropriate sized wire. Cut into suitable lengths and burn the tape off at one end (burning off the tape allows a finer finish to the leaf). The amount to burn off depends on the size of the leaf but it should be no less than half the length of the leaf.
2. Roll out the paste on a non stick board lightly greased with white fat.
3. Cut out the leaf shape.
4. Vein and transfer the leaf to the petal pad.
5. Use the dog bone tool to smooth round the edges.
6. Lightly glue the burnt end of the wire and lay it halfway down the leaf.
7. Fold the leaf over and press just where the wire is.



8. Pick up the leaf and pinch where the wire is - it should be right against the fold in the leaf.
9. Holding the leaf between your thumb and finger, use the dresden tool to open the leaf out. If you want a curved leaf, gently bend the wire at this stage.
10. Transfer to a former or similar to dry remembering to give shape and movement to your leaf.
11. Colour using dusting powders.
12. Quickly and carefully pass through the steam from a boiling kettle to set the powders.
13. Glaze the leaves as appropriate, using confectioners glaze in either full or half strength. Half strength will be diluted with 50% Isopropyl alcohol (or glaze cleaner).



14. Some leaves have no shine on at all e.g. Foxgloves, so use plenty of dusting powder to create their velvety finish.