

Leaf Impressed Bird feeder Using Low-fire Blackjack Clay

Designed by Karen Lowrey



Spring is here and the birds are chirping!! Make a low-fire clay bird feeder that can hang outside your window. Use a store bought leaf to imprint or find a large leaf to press into your clay.



Materials needed:

4 lbs of Blackjack low fire clay

Large store bought leaf or a large one from your yard

Jute to hang the bird feeder

Cotton sheeting or canvas, 15" X 15

Wooden slats – 3/16" thick and 12" long

PVC pipe 12" long

A small cup of water

Wooden skewer or needle tool

Old credit card to smooth clay

Plastic straw to bore holes

Glass stones (optional) I used green

Plastic bags (I used dry cleaner bags)

Wooden slats – 3/16" thick and 12" long

Access to a kiln

Low-fire glaze of your choice (I used Mayco's Elements EL-123 Patina)

Paint brushes

Cut off wire



Lay out your canvas, wooden slats, rolling pin, needle tool, large leaf, and a small cup of water to begin. Take block of clay and slam down on the table to flatten the clay out. You might even take the clay and sling it to the right and then sling it to the left to get the clay to thin out. This will save time when you start to roll the clay out. I even take my rolling pin and pound the clay to get it thinner. With the 3/16" slats on the side, begin to use the rolling pin to roll the clay out.



Keep in mind the width of the leaf so that you can make it fit on the clay. Make sure to always keep the rolling pin on the slats so that the thickness of the clay will be uniform.



Place the leaf on top of the clay and press carefully with fingers into the clay.



I made some extra details with my needle tool. Make sure you don't go too deep into the clay as this could result in cracking. With the needle tool carefully cut the leaf out. With your finger slightly moistened, smooth out the rough edges on the sides of the clay. Set this aside until it is a little bit stiffer.



With the straw, you need to cut out holes in three strategic spots to hang the feeder while making sure the holes are large enough after the clay has shrunk to be able to feed the jute through the holes. Take plastic bags wadded up and begin curving the sides of the feeder up slightly. Cover with plastic to allow it to dry slowly. Dry completely to bone dry.



Bisque fire to a shelf cone 04 (1060 degrees Celsius) and let cool. With a low fire glaze that is compatible with your clay, brush the glaze onto the bisque fired piece. Let the glaze dry between coats. Let dry. You could place glass stones in the middle of the bird feeder if you prefer, but make sure there are not too many as when the glass melts; it becomes liquid and it might run off the piece. Fire in a kiln to a shelf cone 06 (999 degrees Celsius) and let cool completely.

Cut three pieces of the jute two feet long each. Use tape to secure the end of the jute to be able to thread it through the hole easier. Tie a knot under the bird feeder on all three strands. Take these three strands and tie together to be able to hang your bird feeder. Fill this with your favorite bird seed and sit back and enjoy watching all the birds!!

Enjoy your bird feeder for many years to come!!

ACTIVA Products
512 S. Garrett, Marshall, TX 75670
903-938-2224
www.activaproducts.com

