

Wilderness Glass

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How to make box toppers out of nubby ends.

I love making these; they're such a great way to use up [nubby ends](#) or colorful bits of scrap. First I take all my nubby ends, nip the good parts off, and set them aside for use in other projects.



Line your kiln shelf with thinfire. Place your stainless steel former on top, and line the edges with 1/16" fiber paper. Use whatever size former is big enough to fill with a layer of nubby ends. You want them just deep enough so that you won't be able to see the white thinfire on the bottom. I like to add a little bit of medium opaline or translucent white frit to give the finished piece a smooth, creamy look. Avoid using clear because it can give the illusion of empty holes. I would also avoid solid white, as the contrast is too harsh. The schedule I use for this step is: 9999/1350/30, 200/1500/30, 9999/900/60.



Remove from former, and wash all the thinfire off. Be careful to scrub all the fiber paper off the edges. Carefully knock off any spikey edges. Your slab should look similar to this.



Break the slab into roughly 1/3" to 1/2" squares, and vary the lengths a little. I use a hammer and hardy for this. If you don't have these, you can score the glass and use heavy duty breakers. This might be a bit difficult though, depending on the thickness of the glass. A hammer and a chisel outside (with safety glasses on) might do the trick.



A peek at some of the edges. This is where the prettiness starts to reveal itself!



After you've chopped them all into bits, spread them out and turn each one so your favorite side is facing up. It's okay if the sizes are not consistent, this actually helps the designs spread out better. Arrange the chunks in a mold or former of your choice with your favorite side facing up. Don't add any frit in this step.

For my salt cellar toppers, I use [4" x 1.75" cake rings](#) lined with 1/16" fiber paper. Be careful not to pack them too tightly with chunks because you don't want them to come out too thick. The schedule I use for this step is 300/500/10, 9999/1350/30, 200/1500/30, 9999/900/90.

For the final step, I pop them back on a thinfire lined kiln shelf with my favorite side facing up. Cover with a layer of clear powder to avoid any devit, and to give a beautiful, even shine. The schedule I use for this step is 250/500/10, 350/850/10/ 9999/1500/10, 9999/900/120.

This is what they look like after this final fusing step. They will be a little wider than the salt cellar top, which is what I wanted. I tape the outer edge of the box, then trace onto the flat side of the glass. This prevents the marker from marking the wood. Remove the tape after. This is an important step, because the tops are not all the same size since they're hand carved. I grind my toppers down to fit on my flat lap, and give the edges a nice, shiny finish.



I use clear Gorilla glue to attach them to the tops. They have a tendency to slide, so use a couple of pieces of tape to hold them in place for a few hours.

This is one of my finished salt cellars. [\(You can buy the wood bases here\)](#). I get SO many compliments on these! The technique can be used for any number of different things. They're also really pretty cut into free-form hearts.

