

A detailed model railroad scenery featuring a rocky hillside with various trees and a winding track. The scene is set in a valley with a prominent rocky outcrop on the left. The terrain is covered with moss and small plants. Several trees of different sizes and colors (green, blue, brown) are scattered across the landscape. A track curves through the valley, and a road is visible on the right side. The background shows more trees and a blurred structure, possibly a building or another part of the model.

Model Railroad Scenery From Natural Materials

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Why Use Natural Materials?



Just a few good reasons...

- The base material is readily available locally
- Random appearance is more natural
- Allows for heavy scenery cover at a lower cost than commercial options
- Presents good opportunities to add your own flavor to the textures and colors of your layout landscape
- Expands your skills in the hobby – one more neat thing that YOU did!

Your Resources

- Roadside areas
- Your backyard
- Your garden areas

Goldenrod

A great resource for deciduous trees.



- Can be picked anytime after the flower starts to develop
- Pick it early for a more branching effect
- Late picking like on the next photo creates a fuller looking tree

A photograph of a roadside area with several tall, thin plants bearing large, fluffy white flower heads. The plants are surrounded by other vegetation, including some with brown, dried leaves. The ground is covered with green grass and some dry, light-colored grass. The overall scene is a natural, somewhat overgrown roadside environment.

Roadside Goldenrod

Sedum

Great for deciduous trees



- Pick late in the fall when the stems dry
- Great for large canopy deciduous trees or smaller ornamentals



Sedum in a Landscape Bed



Sedum Ground Cover

Astilbe

Great for conifers in all scales



- Pick it when the flower and stem have dried
- Needs very little trimming to look great



Astilbe Ready to Pick

A detailed model train diorama featuring a river, a bridge, a train, and various trees. The scene is set in a lush, green landscape with a river flowing through the center. A bridge with a truss structure spans the river in the foreground. In the background, a train with a white locomotive and a green freight car is visible on a track. The diorama is filled with various types of trees, including tall evergreens and smaller deciduous trees, creating a dense forest. The overall scene is well-lit and detailed, showcasing a realistic miniature environment.

Let's Get Started...

No Bugs Allowed!

Once you pick the flowers, spray them with an aerosol insect killer spray and let them stand for a day

I usually spray them right in the bucket or bag that you used when picking them



Trim & Shape the Flowers

Goldenrod can be trimmed to resemble a deciduous or conifer tree



**Astilbe
Require
Minimal
Trimming**



Sedum

Goes a long way...

Three full flowers
generated this many
potential plantings.



Ground Sedum

Trimmed for Drying -
Works well for accent
plantings and trees that
are mature and
defoliating



Prep the Trees for Paint and Foliage

- Lightly spray the trimmed flowers with a dull or satin acrylic spray such as Minwax Polycrylic
- Spraying seals the shape and prevents deterioration from further drying of the flowers
- I do NOT use a watery diluted glue or matte medium since it impacts the dry shape

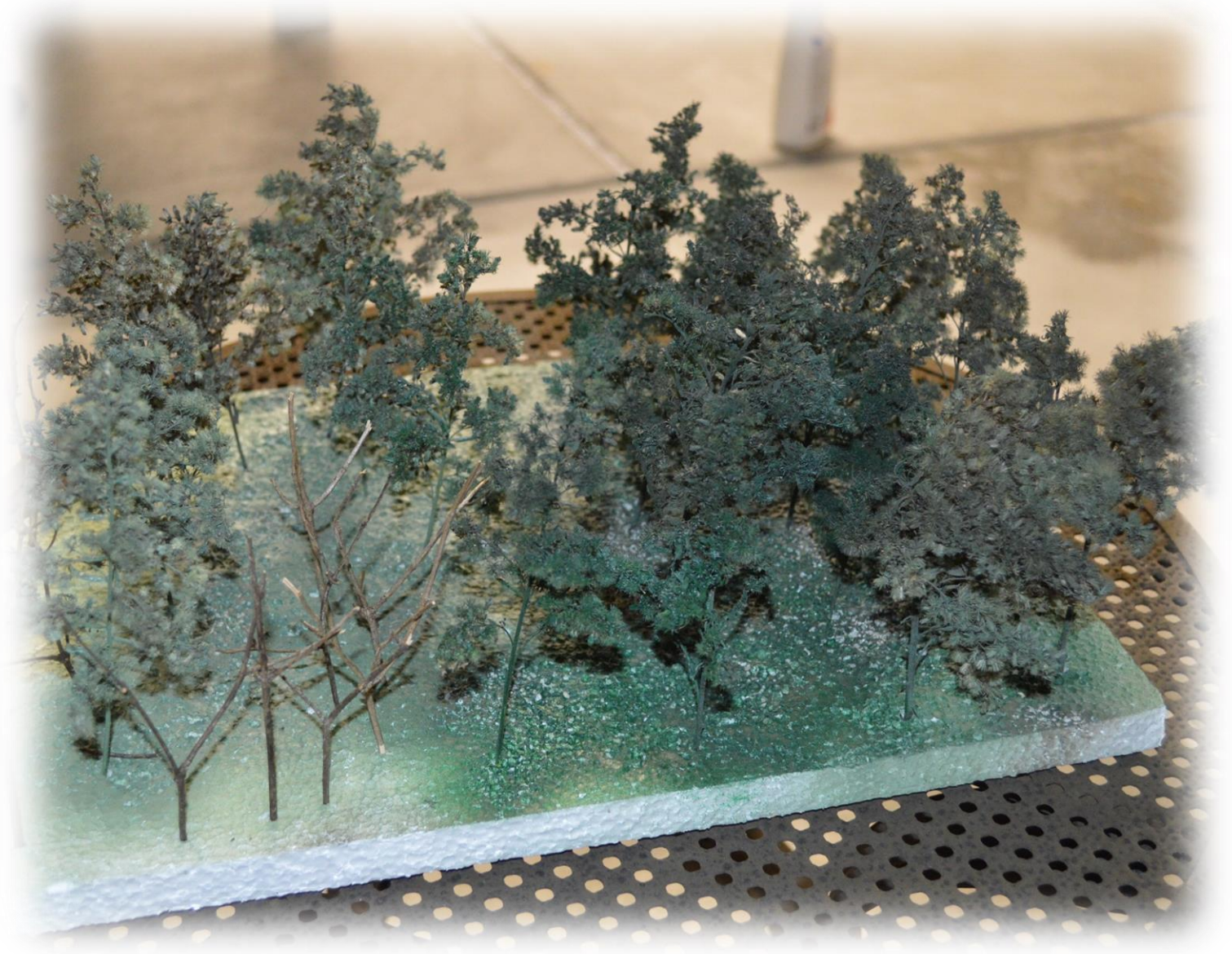
Add a Base Color

I have good success with Rust-Oleum 2X Ultra Cover Satin Finish and Krylon Ultra-Flat Camouflage

- Start light with Rust-Oleum Moss Green
- Add texture color with Hunter Green and Camouflage
- DON'T Overdue the paint



Painted Goldenrod



Painted Astilbe



Paint the Exposed Trunk and Branches

- Some flowers will dry with a natural color and do not need touchup
- Use a gray-brown tone
- Dry brush with white and black to add texture to larger trunks



Time to Add Foliage

Use a Spray Adhesive

- For outside work use adhesive similar to 3M Super 77
- For inside work use a low odor adhesive such as Krylon Low Odor Spray Glue
- Make sure you wear some type of protection for your hands – I use latex free vinyl gloves



Foliage Types

- I use products from Woodland Scenics and Scenic Express
- Fine and Extra Fine textures give the best results
- Use several colors to get a natural effect



Foliage Station Setup

- Tarp on floor
- Use an old shirt box from a special event as a foliage stager
- Use scrap cardboard as a base for the glue spraying
- Need Styrofoam to place completed trees in for drying



Glue time!

Spray the flowers – you will see a soft white color to the flower when the glue is even.



Foliage Time...

Once the flowers are sprayed you need to sprinkle the ground foam on the flower from all directions in order to get even coverage



The Underside

Sedum and Goldenrod
need to get coated top
and bottom



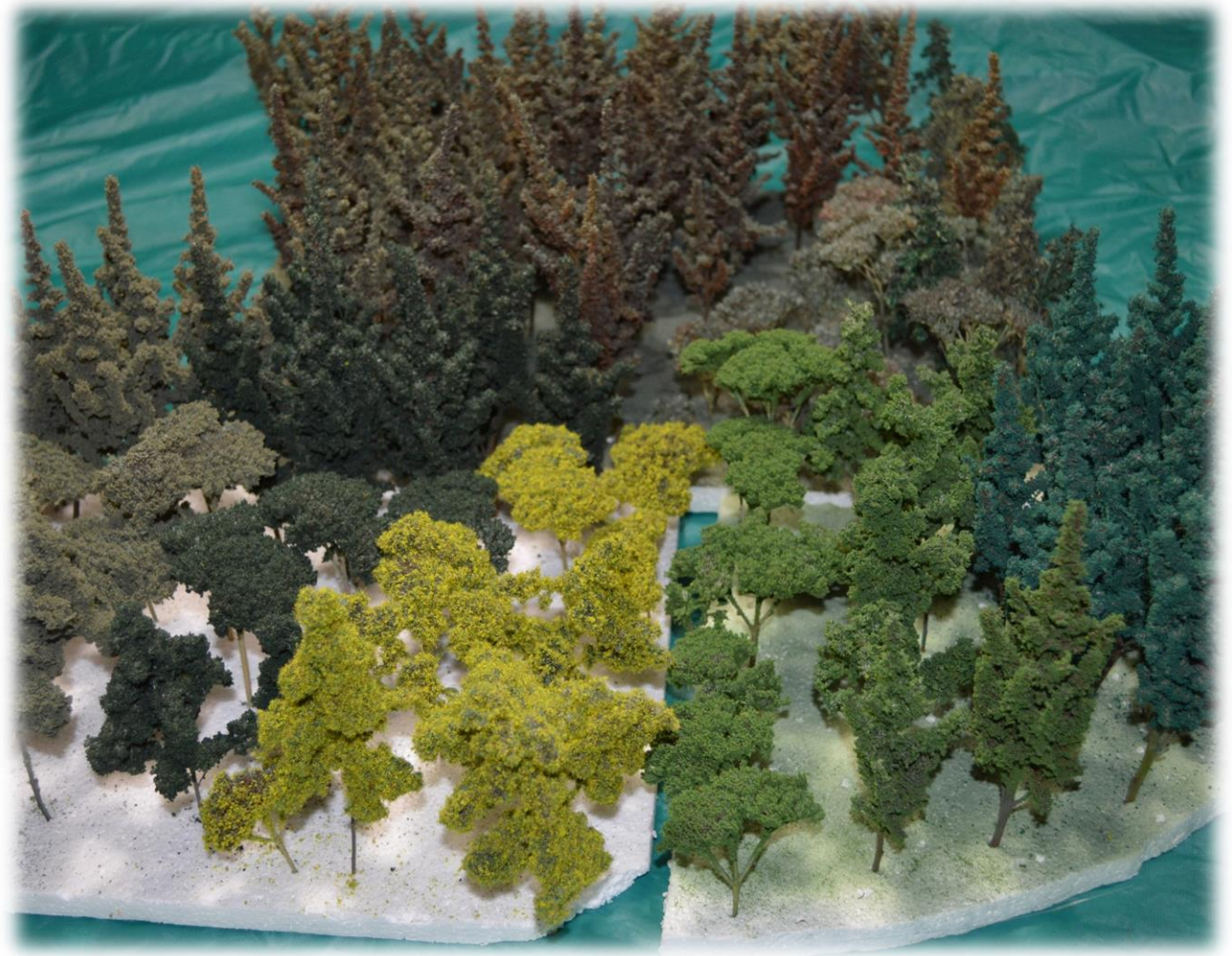
The Final Step

Spray the flocked trees with an inexpensive unscented hair spray



Finished Product!

- Multiple shapes
- Multiple flowers
- Multiple colors



A close-up photograph of a dense forest of mosses and lichens. The plants are in various shades of green, brown, and grey, creating a textured, carpet-like appearance. The lighting is soft, highlighting the intricate details of the small plants.

How About a Forest
in a Flash?

The Sedum Forest

- Clip the Sedum into a variety of heights and sizes once it is dry.
- The dried base color is brown like the leaves on an oak in the fall
- Group the flowers tightly spaced on a foam base
- Highlight the flower heads with Moss Green – don't overdue it – let some brown remain
- Use spray glue and shaker bottles of burnt forest green and earth brown to add foliage lightly to the tops
- Highlight with a shake of a forest green if you want more variety



This Forest took about two hours to create



A detailed model landscape featuring a railway track winding through a valley. The terrain is covered with various types of trees, including tall evergreens and smaller deciduous trees, interspersed with rocky outcrops. In the background, a body of water is visible under a clear sky. The overall scene is a miniature representation of a natural environment.

Questions and Demo