

Hydrangea: Variations on a Theme
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The hydrangea cane is a whole new way to think about clay. Polymer clay (I use Premo) is the only product that will allow you to create **feathers** and **leaves** and an infinite assortment of **blossoms!**



To make the blossoms pictured above, go to the [Hydrangea Cane](#) lesson at [Polymer Clay Central](#) and work through the directions given there.

They may seem a bit daunting, but as you work through them, step-by-step, the process becomes very clear and simple.



As you make more and more blossoms, experiment with the design. Try these for layers in your blossom and see what can happen!

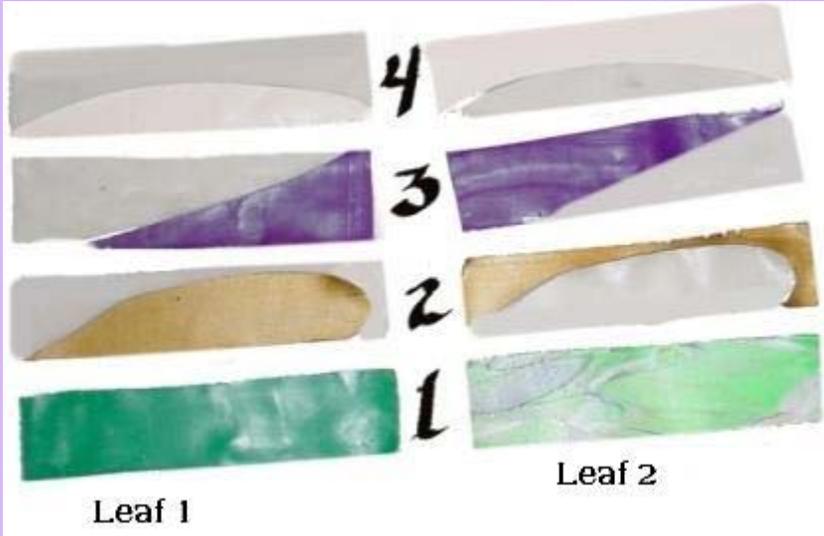
- 1: marbled purple and translucent; 2: white; 3: translucent and purple
- 4: translucent and green; 5: translucent; 6: translucent and purple



Another idea is to use a Skinner blend as one of the layers. The results are very lovely.

Once you have the basic principle of the blossom down, making feathers and leaves is simple. The process is just the same as making blossoms, with one or two changes.

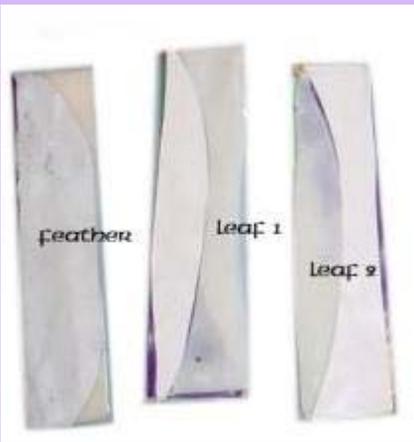
To begin your feathers and leaves, start by creating four sheets of design for each of the three following projects: Leaf 1, Leaf 2, and Feather.



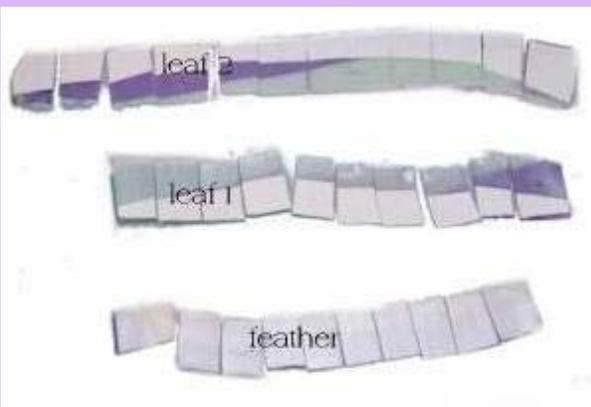
Leaf 1 consists of the following: 4: white and translucent; 3: translucent and purple; 2: translucent and gold; 1: green

Leaf 2 consists of the following: 4: translucent and white; 3: purple and translucent; 2: gold and translucent; 1: translucent and green marble

Feather consists of the following: 4: translucent and white; 3: translucent and purple; 2: white; 1. translucent and purple and white marble



Stack your layers in order, with 1 on the bottom. To the right, you can see the three finished stacks, all with 4 on top.



Now cut your stacks into 1/6th or 1/8th slices (here I cut in 1/10ths and 1/12).

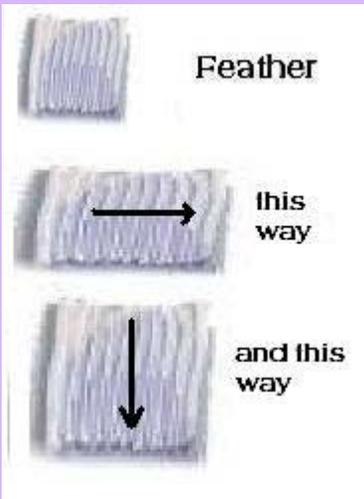


Start stacking the pieces on top of each other until they are all stacked.

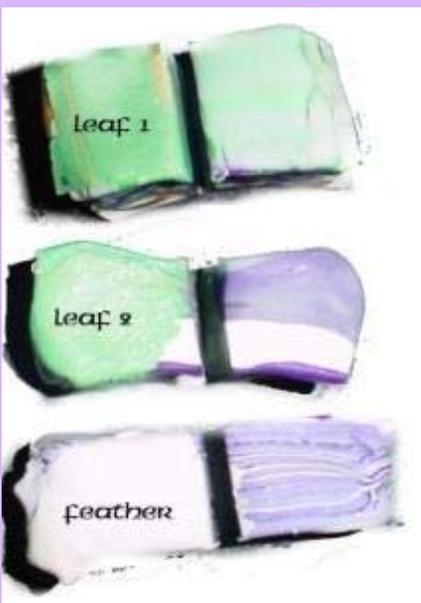
It is important at this stage to be aware of the orientation of each slice and of the growing cane.

Using the picture as your model, build a stack using the far left slice as your starting point.

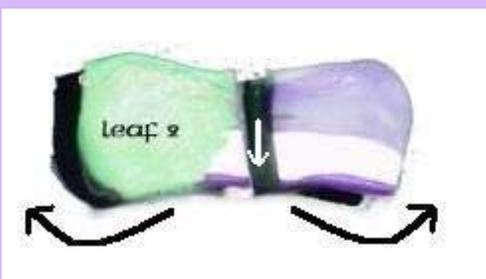
Note how the slice get turn onto its narrow right side as you are building the cane.



Next you need to reduce the stack. Again, you need to keep track of the sides to make sure the cane is reducing in the direction you want.



Once the cane is long enough but still a workable size, cut it in half.



Turn the left slice one quarter to the left, so the interior side becomes the side facing you. Turn the right slice one quarter turn to the right, so the interior side becomes the side facing you.

What you should see is two identical mirror images. Apply a thin layer of light or dark clay between your two slices, so your order from left to right is slice, thin layer, slice. Press all three together, and you've formed a vein between the two slices.



After you have pressed the three together firmly, you will have a cane that looks something like this (this one is actually a flower cane -- yours will look more feather or leaf-like).

Now you can start to shape your square cane into a feather or leaf. Pinch the top corners together all along the length and pinch the bottom corners together all along the length.

Round it off. Reduce. Shape and use.

Here are some photos of a phoenix I made using this feather technique:



Have fun. Share your stuff!

Peace be with you.

Dawn:)