

Basic Instructions

- Dalene Kelly



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<http://www.beadedflowerpatterns.com>



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Introduction

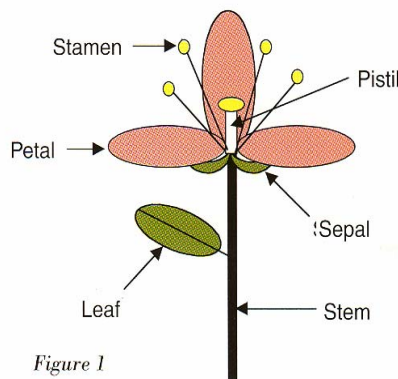
The technique is referred to as French Beading. It's commonly recognized that French and other European peasants created this art when they collected discarded glass heads and used them to create arrangements and flowered memorial wreaths. Although it's listed along with other beading techniques, French Beading is more like sculpting than sewing. The beads are first strung onto a spool of wire. The wire is then bent and twisted into the flower shapes.

Therefore, even with a pattern, the French-Bead artist has to have some knowledge of flowers. Patterns will give you a pile of parts, but it's up to you to assemble them in the right direction. What is the RIGHT direction?

The next time you receive one of those beautifully photographed seed catalogs, file it with your beading supplies. No pattern or explanation can compare to a photo or the live plant. Since most companies are trying to sell the exquisite blooms, the catalogs are excellent references for beading.

When French Beading, some patterns are quite lifelike while others are created, in a manner that merely suggests reality. In most cases, large flowers are beaded to depict more detail than the smaller varieties.

As you begin accumulating a pile of flower parts, it's easy to forget exactly what you are creating. Therefore, this simple diagram of common names (fig. 1) can be used as a quick reference. If a pattern doesn't have all these parts, don't panic. This is an art, not a science. After all, a rose is a rose, is a rose.



Materials, Tools, and Supplies

Beads (check out www.shipwreck.com)

Finish - Begin by choosing only glass seed beads that appear uniform in size and shape. They can be found in transparent, opaque (shiny, silk, or matte), pearl (painted), and lined finishes. Although the first three are used interchangeably, lined beads can produce some special problems. The lining materials in these beads can deteriorate over a period of time. Sunshine, cleaning products, and sometimes even the act of stringing the beads can ruin the color.

Shape - Round seed beads are the beads of choice. However, particularly on very large flowers, cut seed beads can produce a very elegant effect.

Size - To produce the flowers in this book, the recommended size is 11/0. However, any size will work.

Quantities - All of the quantities given are estimates. It's usually safest to buy extra, as some will inevitably end up escaping to the floor.

Seed beads are available either loose or strung. For ease and speed, you will probably be much happier finding a supplier that carries strung heads (mostly Czechoslovakian). If you can't find them locally, many are available on the Internet. However, loose heads can also be used easily if you invest a little more money and purchase a bead spinner (or stringer).

The quantities for the patterns in this hook are based on these approximate figures:

- 16 - 17 beads per inch
- 18" per strand
- 12 strands per hank
- 20 - 24 hanks per kilo (2.2 lbs)

Wire (check out www.parawire.com)

Finish - Artistic wires, which are usually electroplated copper work extremely well.

Wire is metal, and metal rusts, therefore, my first choice is always a coated or painted wire. A wide range of colors, as well as gold and silver, can be found in the jewelry and bead departments of your local craft store. For a more economical source of green, black, and white, check out the paddle wire in the floral and bridal departments. I really like 30-gauge floral paddle wire for all of my assembly. It's cheap, and it won't show once the flower is taped.

Sizes - You will use a 24 gauge wire for most flower parts. However, depending on your strength, and the holes in your beads, choose the gauge that works best for you.

On long spear-shaped leaves, try a 22-gauge wire for stiffness.

Use 30 gauge wires for assembly and lacing. If you have trouble handling the wire, experiment with different sizes and materials. The ultimate decision on wire is up to your personal preference.

Stem wire is available in pre-cut painted lengths in the floral department. Listed here are suggested sizes:

Small flowers—18-gauge

Medium to large flowers—14- to 16-gauge

Large or un-balanced flowers (like orchid plants)—1/8" round rod stock, threaded rod stock, cut up coat hangers, or any really stiff wire or rod

Floral Tape

In the floral department, look for regular, wax-coated paper tape. When your flower is completed, smoothly wrap the entire stem with floral tape, and then rub the stem to seal the wax on the tape. This will provide a waterproof seal.

Wire cutters

Choose comfortable-to-use, sharp, hobby or jewelry front-cutters. Side-cutters are more difficult to handle.

Flat, long-nosed pliers, Needle-nosed pliers and Nylon-jawed pliers

Scissors - Small, sharp, and comfortable to use.

Hem gauge or ruler - The hem gauge is preferred because it can be set to the size needed, thereby insuring that all of the petals are uniform.

Darning Needle - Use to lace large leaves and petals.

Divided or flat lunch tray (optional) - Lay or glue felt inside the sections. It makes a wonderful work area, and it keeps your loose beads off the floor.

Hemostats - These are available in medical, hardware, or sporting goods (hook removers) stores. In my opinion, this is your most important tool.

Seed Bead Sizes	
7/0	4mm
8/0	3.1mm
9/0	2.7mm
10/0	2.3mm
11/0	2.1mm
12/0	1.9mm
13/0	1.7mm
14/0	1.6mm

Wire Gauges		
Gauge	Inches	mm
—	.125 (1/8)	3.2
16	.063	1.6
18	.048	1.2
20	.035	.88
22	.029	.73
24	.023	.58
26	.018	.46
28	.016	.41
30	.014	.36
32	.013	.33
34	.012	.30



General Instructions

1. Begin by transferring your heads onto the spool of wire. If using strung heads, hold the string taut and slide tile wire through several inches at a time. If using loose beads. "spear" them onto the wire one at a time, or use a Bead Spinner. Put enough beads on the wire to complete tile entire petal or leaf. It can be very difficult to make up for a shortage of beads. Err on the side of excess.
2. Determine (from the pattern) the size of your "basic" beaded row. Count (or measure) the required amount of seed beads; slide them toward the tip, leaving several inches of bare basic wire. Hold the beads in place by pinching the wire below them. Wrap the wire loosely around your hand, forming the "basic loop." Bring the wire up under the beads, and twist several times (fig. 2). If you have trouble keeping your basic row on the wire, try bending the tip of the wire into a tight loop before beginning. (You will now be wrapping beads up one side and down the other side of the first basic row.)
3. Keep your basic wire straight at all Limes! Push some beads forward and bring the braded wire to the top of the basic row. Cross OVER then UNDER the basic wire; Pull tile wire tight (fig. 3). Follow the same procedure, going down the other side.
- Rows are counted straight across the center, so you have completed three rows (fig.4).
4. Proceed in the same manner, until you have the desired number of rows.

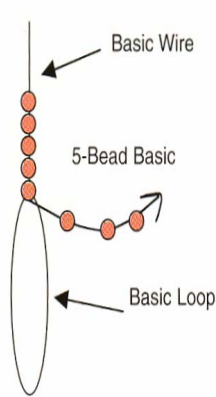


Figure 2

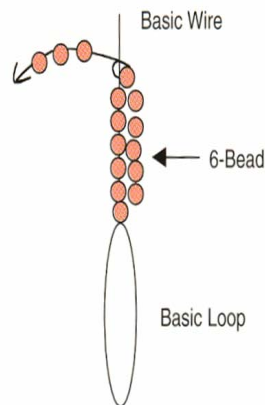


Figure 3

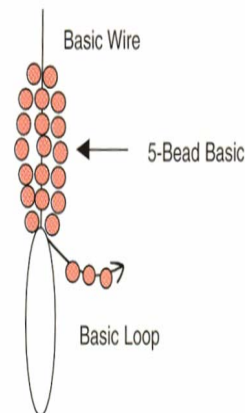


Figure 4

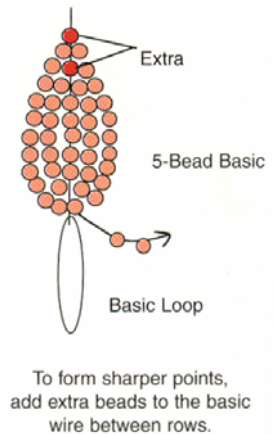


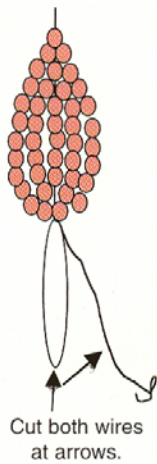
Figure 5

To form a rounded petal: Keep the wire very close and straight across the previous row, when crossing the basic wire.

To form a pointed petal: Cross the basic wire at a 45° angle, leaving a very slight space before your over and under wrap.

To make even more of a point: Add an extra bead to the top of your basic wire, between the rows (fig. 5). This is not mentioned in most patterns, but it can be used to accomplish the desired effect. Long, narrow, pointed leaves and petals are especially enhanced by the use of extra beads.

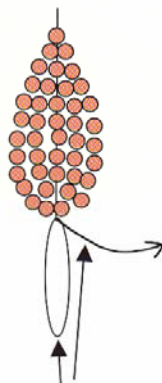
5. To end the flower, check the pattern to determine the number of wires you should have remaining. Use one of the methods below to cut the wire from the spool. The bulkiness of the wires during construction and the support needed for each petal will determine how you should cut the piece from the spool. The more wires you leave, the stiffer it will be.



Cut both wires at arrows.

Figure 6

3 Wires (stiff)—Cut the basic loop open at the bottom, and pull out some spool wire. Cut the spool wire and twist the three wires (fig. 6).



Cut both wires at arrows.

Figure 7

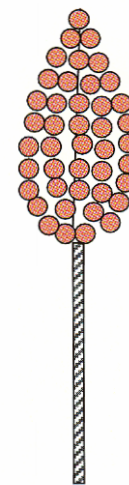
2 Wires (medium)—Cut the spool wire 1/2" from the bottom of the piece. Cut the bottom of the basic loop open, and twist (fig. 7).



Cut both wires at arrows.

Figure 8

1 Wire (light)—Cut both the spool wire and one side of the basic loop 1/2" from the piece, and twist (fig. 8).



Top basic wire is trimmed to 1/4 inch and folded back

Bottom loop is cut and twisted

Figure 9

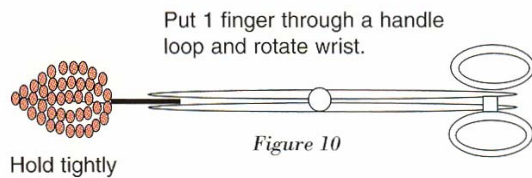


Figure 10

6. Cut the top section of the basic wire to a 1/4" length. Fold it down tightly against the back of the piece (fig. 9).

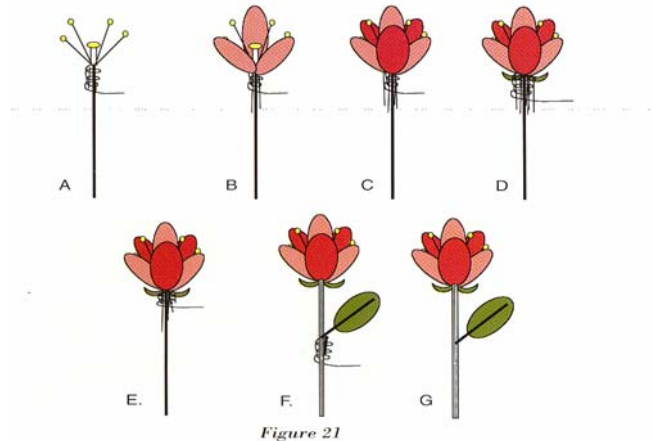
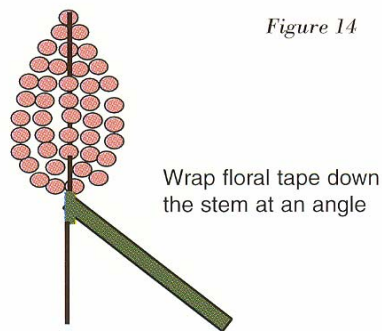
7. Twist the bottom wires with the hemostats. When twisting wires, grab the wire tips with the locking hemostats, hold the flower part in one hand, and put the middle finger of your other hand through one of the handle loops. Pull tight, rotating your wrist. The result is a smooth, even stem that will not fall apart later. **CAUTION!** Twist only until smooth and even (fig. 10). If you get carried away, you'll lose your stem!

8. On long or wide pieces, it's necessary to Lace the rows together in order to get a smooth and neat appearance. (lightly, tape the stem wire.)

9. To finish the piece, tape the exposed wire with floral tape. You may also choose to bead, floss, or otherwise cover the stems. However, be sure to tape them first. It waterproofs the wire and provides a good non-skid base for anything you may choose to add.

Typical Assembly

- A. Use light-gauge wire to secure the pistil and stamens in place.
- B. & C. Add the petals either one at a time or in groups. Wire them in place.
- D. Position and wire the sepals in place.
- E. Trim the wires to different lengths so the stem will have a smooth appearance.
- F. Position the leaf at the desired level. Wire it in place.
- G. Tape over the exposed construction wire.

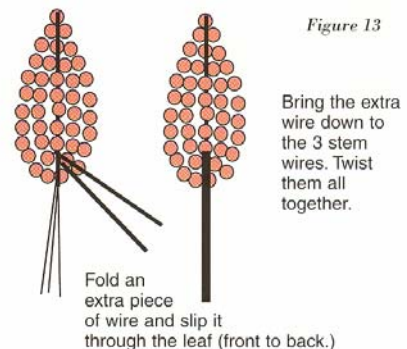
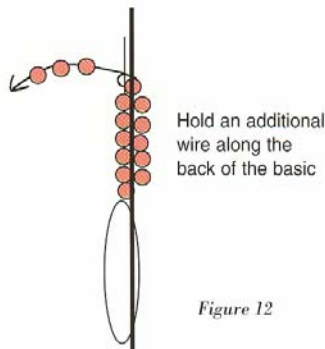
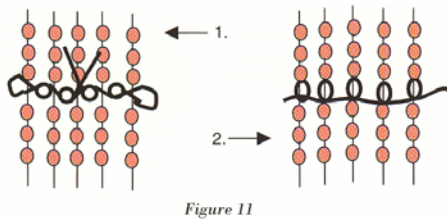


Lacing

Thread a piece of 30-gauge (or finer) wire through a darning needle. Twist the needle to secure the wire, and then use one of the two methods below.

a. Beginning in the center of the back of the piece, use an over-and-under motion to weave the wire to the outside edge. Then turn (running stitch), and use the same stitch to weave back across to the far edge. Turn, and weave back to the center. Pull the ends together, twist, and cut (fig. 11).

b. Beginning at the edge of the back, twist the loose end of the wire around the outside row of beads. Working on the back side, use a backstitch to work across to the far edge. Twist the end around the last row again to secure and trim (fig. 11).



Stem Stiffening

Method 1

For long, slender leaves that are meant to stand up straight, incorporate an additional stem wire into the construction. After you measure your basic row of beads, hold the extra, light-gauge stem wire against the back of the beads. On each round, wrap the bead wire around both the extra and the basic wires. When the leaf is finished, trim and twist the extra wire right along with the basic wire (fig. 12).

Method 2

For large, round leaves that just need support at the base, add only enough wire to thicken the short, twisted stem. After the leaf is completed, but before you twist the stem wire, cut a piece of wire that is twice as long as the distance from the bottom of the basic wire to the top of the lower wrapped area. Fold the cut piece of wire in half. From the right side of the leaf, insert one end of the folded wire, at the bottom, between rows 1 and 2. Insert the other end, at the bottom, between rows 1 and 3. Lightly twist the entire length of the cut wire. Then, combine the twisted wire with the stem wires and twist again (fig. 13).

Taping

Floral tape is usually found in 1/2" widths. Use as is or, for ease in handling when working on small pieces, remove a length of tape, cut it in half lengthwise, and use the 1/4" tape for taping small stems and leaves. Lightly stretch the tape to activate the wax. Hold the tip against the bloom end of the wire; twirl the wire between your fingers as you move the tape downward. This will create a tight, smooth spiral. Once the entire area is covered, tear off the tape. Then pinch, smooth, and rub the stem so that the tape edges fuse together (fig. 14).

Flossing Stems

This is done just like, but over the top of, your tape. The most elegant type of floss to use is untwisted silk. Because this is somewhat expensive and hard to find, feel free to experiment with a range of different materials.

Beading Stems

This is most impressive on large flowers and branches. Make sure to tape the stem first, and then string at least five feet of beads. Do the buds and small branches first.

Allowing about 2" of bare wire to trail down the stem, hold the bare end of the wire tight against the bottom of the bud. Wrap tightly twice around the stem. Slide the beads forward on the wire, and hold them tightly in place while wrapping them around and down the stem just like taping.

I keep my other thumbnail tight against the previously wound row. Then, as I wrap the next time around, the new row actually pushes my thumbnail down the stem. When you get to a leaf, pull the leaf downward, and bead tight into the crevice. Pull the leaf back up and bead around until you meet the leaf again.

At this time, let the beads slide back, and wrap the bare wire once around the base of the leaf.

Push the beads back up the wire, and continue to wrap the beads down to the point where the stems (branches) meet.

End here by wrapping the bare wire several times around the stem, as close to the beads as possible. Then spiral the bare wire down a few inches before cutting. Do the same thing to the rest of the small stems and branches. Then, after wiring the branches together, proceed in the same manner to do the large flower stems.

Here are two tips to help the process along: 1) If you have enough room, start your wrapping by putting the first row of heads between the petals and the sepals. Wrap the bare wire around each sepal, just as you did the leaf on the bud stem. 2) DON'T cut the wire when you reach the joints. Wrap the bare wire once around each joint and continue downward. Stop beading at least 1"- 3" from the bottom and end as before.

Cut the wire, and cover all exposed ends with floral tape.



Other Commonly Used Techniques

Continuous Loops

Without a basic wire, form a loop of beads in the desired length, cross the wires, and give them one full, 360 degree twist. Beginning at the base of the loop just completed, repeat the process for the desired number of loops (fig. 15). (Always twist all of the loops in the same direction.)

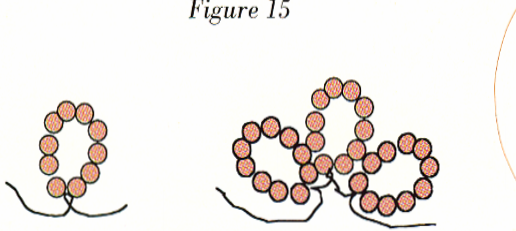
Continuous Double Loops

Use the same technique as the Continuous Loops to form the first loop. Then wrap the beads around the outside of the loops a second time. Twist and move on to the next loop (fig. 16). When you apply the second row of beads around the outside of the first loop, wrap the wire around the bottom. Do not try to twist again.

Continuous Crossover Loops

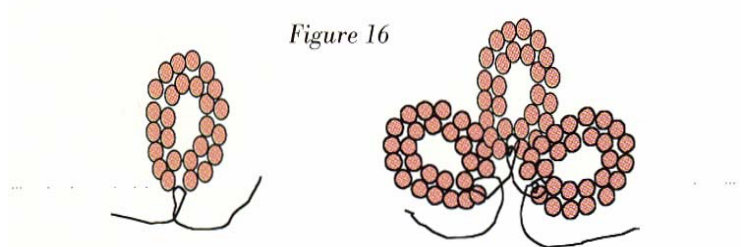
Beginning with the Continuous Loop technique, make the loop, twist to secure, and then head up the front of the loop and down the back. Twist, and move on to the next loop. This makes a 4-row crossover loop. For the 3-row crossover, head up the front and leave bare wire down the back. Twist and move on to the next loop (fig.

Figure 15



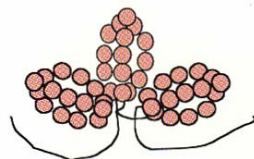
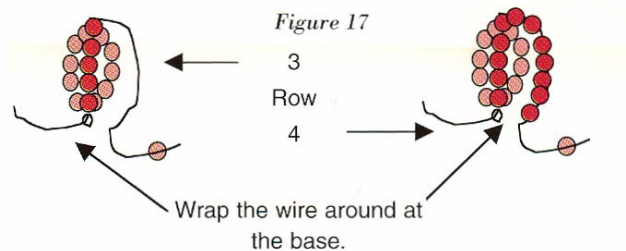
Use at least 1 full twist at the bottom of each loop.
(Always twist all of the loops in the same direction.)

Figure 16



When you apply the second row of beads around the outside of the first, wrap the wire around the bottom.
Do not try to twist again.

Figure 17



Three completed
Continuous
Crossover Loops

Beehive (Cup)

This technique is accomplished by bending the basic wire, the basic loop, or both, backwards, at a set angle, while continuing to add rows. A slight bend of both wires will form a type of raised-button shape, similar to the center of a daisy. A sharp bend of one wire will create a tapered cup (snapdragon petal). A sharp bend of both basics will create a thimble shape (coneflower center). See illustration for side views (fig. 19).

Weaving or Basket Bottom

This technique looks just as it sounds. However, you don't actually weave over and under the wires. Instead, every time you come to one of the spread wires (spokes), you wrap the wire around it, as if it were the basic wire.

Cut a determined number of wires. Hold them together in a bundle, and wrap the bare end of the beaded wire twice, tightly around the centers. Spread the wires open, like the spokes of a wheel, and bead around the center. (Some patterns will tell you how many beads to put between the spokes, others will not.) These are counted as rounds, instead of rows (fig. 20).

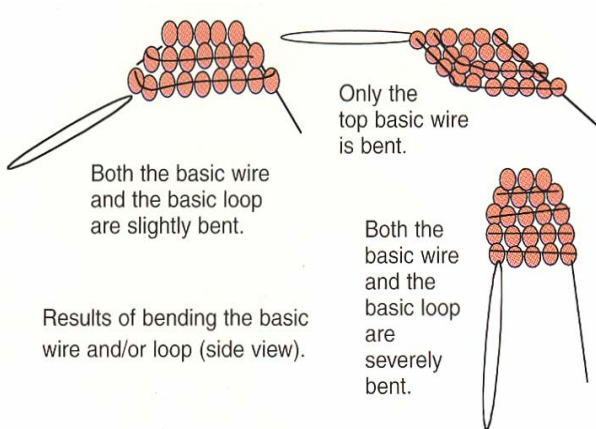


Figure 19

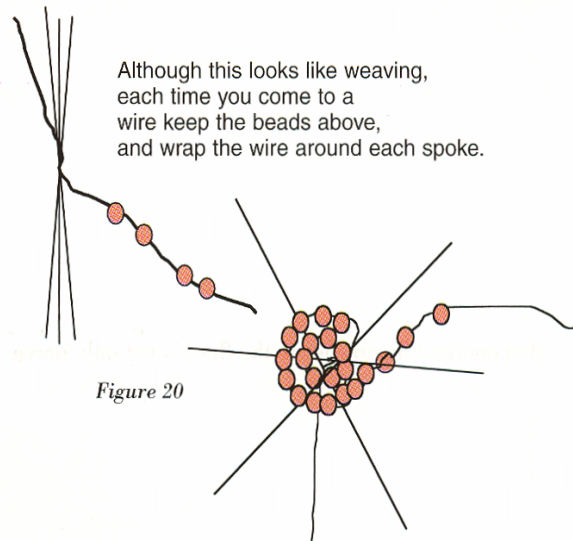


Figure 20



Hints and Tips

How should I clean my French-Beaded flowers?

If you are not sure whether or not the beads have a lined or dyed finish applied to them, the safest way to clean your flowers is to simply run them under hot water. If you are sure that they are “color safe,” a mild spray cleaner can also be used. The most important thing is to make sure that they are dried thoroughly! On hot sunny days, set them in the sun for an hour or two. On cool days, place them in the oven on the COOLEST setting for several hours, or use a hair dryer to blow them dry.

What kind of container should I use to display my flowers?

French-Beaded flowers are very heavy! Everyone who lifts one for the first time is amazed by the weight. This can create some unique problems when trying to assemble a bouquet. In other words, don't place a bouquet in Grandma's antique, bone china vase and walk away. It will, most likely, come crashing down.

Make sure that you choose containers that are extremely stable and have rather broad, flat bottoms. It's often necessary to have enough room to also add some material to the vase for added weight. A display that continually "crashes to the floor" is not only nerve wracking, but it usually ends up all bent and twisted.

How do I add extra weight to my vase?

There are many ways to add extra weight to a favorite vase or container. One way is to fill your containers with marbles, stones, or BBs. Although rather messy, floral clay can also add enough extra weight to hold the flowers. If the bouquet is to stay in the vase “forever,” floral clay can even be melted (gently) and poured in after the bouquet is complete. In most cases, floral foam will NOT work. The flowers are just too top heavy to remain secure in Styrofoam®.

If all else fails, make your own pot. Tape over the drainage hole, and fill a clay pot with wet plaster of Paris. Leave enough empty room at the top to later add camouflage. Lightly wrap a piece of paper around a flower stem several times, and tape it. Push it all the way down into the pot. Then, pull out the stem, leaving the paper behind. Once the plaster becomes firm, twist the paper and pull it out. If some remains, use tweezers or hemostats to reach in and pull it out.

Using the same plaster method, you can cut lengths of plastic drinking straws, tape the ends, and insert them into the plaster. Add a couple extra to each pot, for future use. Once the plaster hardens, cut the straws off even with the surface. Disguise the plaster by covering its surface with moss or shredded bark.

Can I add scent to my French-Beaded flowers?

To give your flowers that extra touch of reality scented oils can be added to the pot. However, NEVER put scented oils on your beads! The ingredients can discolor the beads!

How do I keep the dogs and kids from knocking over my half finished projects?

Check out second-hand sources for a small computer cart on wheels. Not only will you have several shelves for your supplies, but the keyboard shelf is just the right size for your beading tray.

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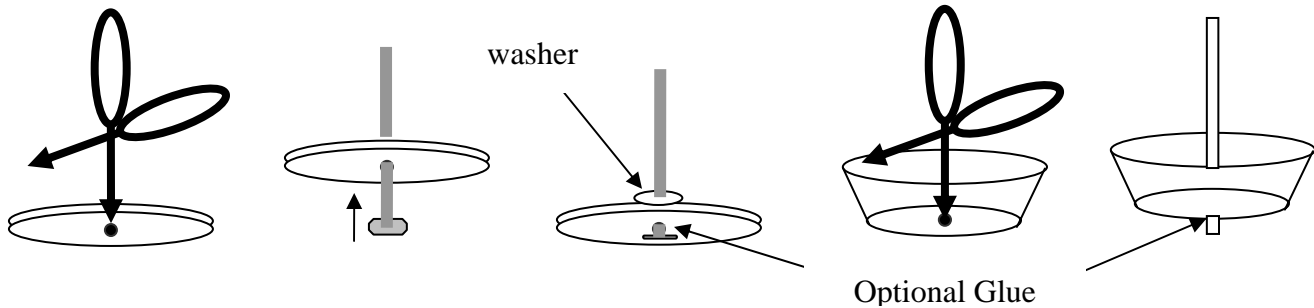
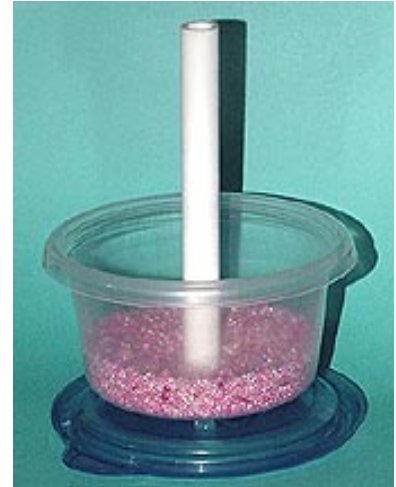
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Quick & Easy Bead Spinner

Materials Needed (shown)

- 1, 8 oz. Plastic Food Container w/ Lid
(8 oz Ziplock, Snap'n Seal®)
- 1, 5 inch piece of Tubing
(3/8 inch ID plastic pipe)
- 1, 5 inch Bolt (the largest that will turn freely in the tubing)
(5/16 inch Hex Head Shoulder Screw)
- 1, Metal Washer
(1/4 inch metal washer)
- Glue (optional)
(Hot Glue)



BASE

1. Carefully mark the center of the lid. (*Look for mold marks*)
2. Place the lid on a magazine or other padded surface.
3. Using the point of a single blade of the scissors, press down on the center of the lid while spinning the plastic. This should cut a hole without cracking the lid.
4. Pick up the lid and scissors. Carefully continue to gently push on the scissors, while spinning the lid until you get a hole slightly smaller than your bolt.
5. Push the bolt up through the inside of the lid.
6. Place it on a firm surface and push down until the edge of the lid, as well as the head of the bolt, are both resting on the table top.
7. Place the wash on the bolt and trim away any plastic that may be keeping the wash from sitting level. (Manicure scissors or clippers work great!)
8. (Optional) On the **underside**, use a generous dollop of hot glue to secure the bolt to the lid.

SPINNER

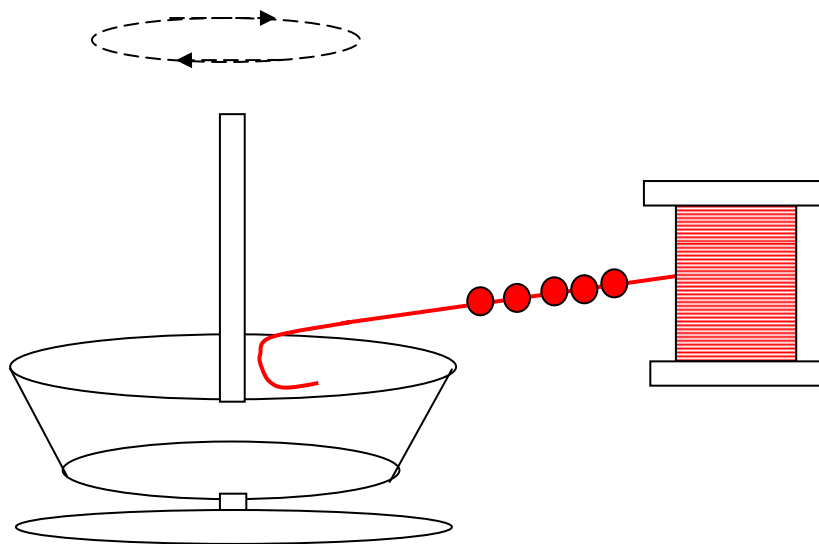
1. Carefully mark the center of the bowl. (*Look for mold marks*)
2. Use the same technique to cut a small hole in the bottom of the bowl.
3. Continue to enlarge the hole but this time, check the hole size often to make sure that you have a real good fit for your tubing.
4. Place the tubing in the hole with less than 1/4 inch extending out the bottom.
5. (Optional) On the **underside**, use a small amount of hot glue to secure the bolt to the lid.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR USE

1. Fill the bowl, no more than a quarter, full of beads.
2. Create a smooth hook in the end of your beading wire.
3. Using your left (non dominant) hand, spin the top post. Keep it spinning!!
4. Lower the hook into the spinning beads.
5. The beads will automatically begin climbing the wire.

NOTE:

1. Do not get discouraged if it doesn't immediately work.
2. Adjust the shape of your hook and remember to keep the bowl spinning constantly.
3. The faster you spin, the better it works.
4. HOWEVER, the faster you spin, the more beads will fly out. Try working on a felt covered tray.



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Trillium

MATERIALS NEEDED

4 strands white or pink, 11/0 seed beads
8 strands green, 11/0 seed beads
18 yellow beads
24 gauge, colored beading wire
12", 16 gauge stem wire
30 gauge assembly wire
1/2" green floral tape

PETALS

Make 3 (pointed top, round bottom)
3/4 inch basic, 11 rows
Reduce to 1 wire and twist.

SEPALS

Make 3 (pointed top, round bottom)
1/2 inch basic, 9 rows
Reduce to 1 wire and twist.

STAMENS (reduce to 1 wire)

- Put yellow beads on assembly wire.
- Leave 2 inches of bare wire.
- Make 6 continuous loops, use 1/2 inch wire with 3 beads on each.
- Twist the loops, leave 2 inches of bare wire.
- Cut and twist the wires.

LEAVES

Make 3 (pointed top, round bottom)
1/2 inch basic, 21 rows
Add an extra bead to the basic wire on each row, after row 10.

ASSEMBLY

- Lightly tape the stem wire.
- Use assembly wire to attach the stamen to the top of the stem wire.
- Wire the 3 petals in place as close to the bottom of the stamen as possible.
- Position the sepals below and between the petals and secure with wire.
- Drop down 2 inches, wire all 3 leaves at the same level.
- Use green floral tape to finish the stem.

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