

# SCENERY MADE EASY!

By Robbo

Number 4 in a Series

## Creating the Scenery for The Bridge

I thought it would be more appropriate to have a separate article on how scenery was created for my bridge project, rather than trying to do it all in one Construction Article. I could then concentrate on the separate items that were created and show how these were made and what materials were used in their production.

Although I enjoy the trains; building the layout; building the structures; painting, etc., my real passion is creating scenery for everything that resides within. I find creating a diorama that can draw you in and encourage you to look for individual mini scenes is very satisfying for me — my creative juices are stimulated!

The easiest way to go about this article I think, is to break it down into individual sub-sections. That way if someone wanted to look at how one specific item warrants repeated viewing, they can go to that section without having to read the complete article every time!

So, having said all of that — let us commence!

### **THE GRASSES AND FLOWERS.**

To create my base groundwork I first use the old fashioned carpet underlay felt. Treated correctly, this can even be left “as is” to represent a grassy field, either as burnt summer grass; and left in its natural brown colours, or coloured green with different shades to represent the different seasonal colour changes in a field.



As it comes it is generally about 20mm thick, but you can easily pull it apart. In the middle of the felt material there is a layer of string webbing that keeps everything together. I gently tease the layers apart and finish up with something that is easier to handle. The material is very easily pulled and teased to create a suitable grassy area.

Once I have it ready I simply put a PVA glue covering onto the diorama base and adhere the underlay to this — let it completely dry out if you are going to colour it — I use acrylic paints with a large painting brush to apply the colour.



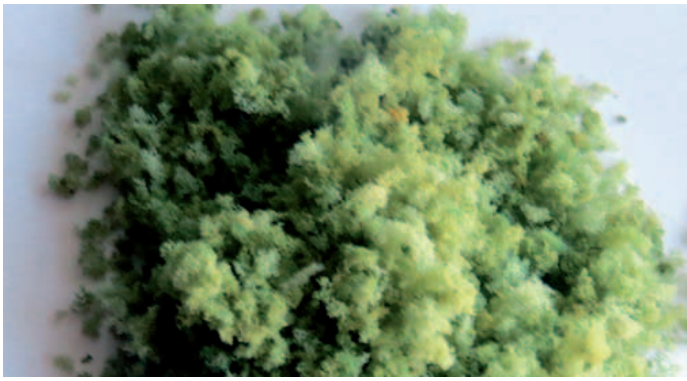
Again, I wait for this to thoroughly dry out — then I use fine ground foam and sprinkle this over the area, firstly using a cheap hair spray as the adhesive. I can't see the point in using expensive artist's spray adhesives and because you will probably use quite a bit, the cheaper the better.

Once the area has been sprayed, the foam can be sprinkled liberally over the areas, and then sprayed again so that it is well and truly adhering.

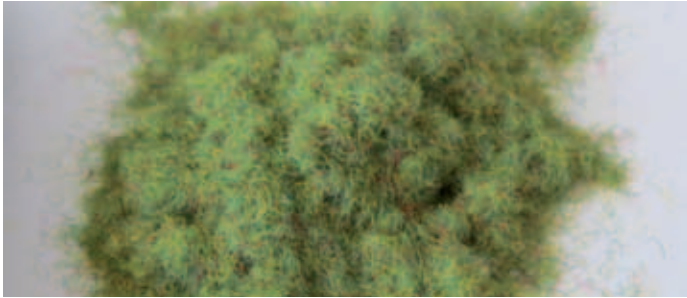
Also a coarser ground foam of the same colour or different shades can be randomly sprinkled to create grassy clumps, as you see in fields — then







finally, I use a grass "Flock" and sprinkle this so as you have the appearance of individual blades of grass in your field — it can be extremely effective!



Where I have placed my roadway, I have allowed some of the grass scatter to encroach into the roadbase. This has been done intentionally to give the appearance of grass growing from the "crushed stone" at the road and rail line edges.



Also, I have allowed grasses to infiltrate onto the pavement areas of the canal, below the bridge. Nothing in nature is ever neat and tidy — only when "man" has shown his handiwork trying to make things look neat and tidy do we see straight lines. When modelling, try to replicate nature as much as possible and a much better looking diorama/scene will be achieved!

There are also "Static Grasses" that can be applied with a Static Grass Applicator that creates an electric field so that when sprinkled the grass will actually stand up, just like the real thing. It is my intention to do an article on how you can build

your own Static Grass Applicator — or you can do a search on YouTube to see how it is done!

To create the small individual grass clumps I use a commercial product from either NOCH or MININATUR. These are individual pieces that are "lifted" from their carrier sheet and stuck down onto the areas with a small dab of PVA glue on their bases. They are very effective and can be used to add interest and highlight a specific scene.



Something else I use for the tall, random grasses (dead or green) is a natural grass seed from the Purple Fountain Grass — Botanical name for purple fountain grass is *Pennisetum setaceum* 'Rubrum.' This is more of a tropical plant but can also be found in colder climates and is used a great deal by landscapers for gardens and along driveways, etc.



The individual grass seeds come away from the fronds readily by simply pulling the hand along the grassy frond, leaving you with masses of grass clumps for your field. These can be a little



long for OO scale but are easily trimmed with a sharp pair of scissors! Place a dab of glue on the base and place in strategic positions, finally trimming when glue has dried.

Woodland Scenics as well as BUSCH and NOCH produce products for creating the illusion of multi coloured flowers! The Woodland Scenics company produce a very finely ground foam that is coloured and you then sprinkle into your grassy areas to simulate wild field flowers — or sprinkled on “bushes” to create a flowering shrub!



too sure if it is actually horsehair or not! Anyway, whatever it is, it does the job.

I cut off a piece and then pull and tease it out to the rough shape I need for a spot in the fields — then place a good glob of PVA onto the base and stick it down in position. I sometimes wait until it is completely dried, but you don't really need to — I then give it a good covering of hair spray and gently sprinkle a suitably coloured fine ground up foam. Again I spray over this, not only to make sure it adheres, but also to accept the next product.



BUSCH and NOCH produce actual ready made flowers of all descriptions. These can be individual items or rows of flowers like poppies; tulips; roses — even corn; hops vines; strawberries and grape vines. My advice would be to have a look on ebay and doing a search for those brand names just mentioned, but they can be a little pricey, particularly the BUSCH products — but they are simply superb the way they look!

On the other hand, the scatter material made by Woodland Scenics is quite reasonably priced and it allows you to create your own flower types. Like anything today, you can pretty well find most of your needs on the Internet!

### **BRAMBLES AND HANGING VINES**

I have been using a lot of different materials in the past, but one that does create a very good representation of Bramble Bushes and Hedgerows is “rubberised horsehair” — once used extensively by upholsterers for the “stuffing” in easy chairs.

The one I use is marketed as such, but I'm not



NOCH Scenics produce packets of 4 different coloured “Leaves” that do look like what they are supposed to represent. I am not sure if it is actual sawdust coloured, or if it is made from a paper product — but when sprinkled over the “bramble” bush it looks fantastic. It is a good idea to first sprinkle a dark colour, spray it, then use a lighter coloured one sprinkled randomly — this produces the effects of shadows and highlights (*see photo on top of next page*).

If desired, you can then sprinkle LIGHTLY with a coloured fine ground up foam produced by Woodland Scenics (red, yellow, orange, white and purple are available) to replicate either flowers or berries.





Another method for producing a “hanging vine” or shrub is to use Poly Fibre and following the exact same steps as just shown with the rubberised horsehair! You can buy ready coloured Poly Fibre (Woodland Scenics) or do what I am now doing — use the poly fibre filling used in stuffing cushions and teddy bears, available cheaply from good craft stores. A large 1kg bag will last a lifetime!



A really good Hedgerow or trimmed hedge in a garden can also use the Rubberized Horsehair product. It just means with a trimmed hedge you would trim it neatly with scissors to a suitable height and create a fence line to whatever area you wish to create.

For a country hedgerow — again you will need to trim it to a height, but not so neatly. It can be teased out to have a more random shape to it — then follow the same steps as for the Brambles! And, again, coloured fine foam can be used for flowers or berries!

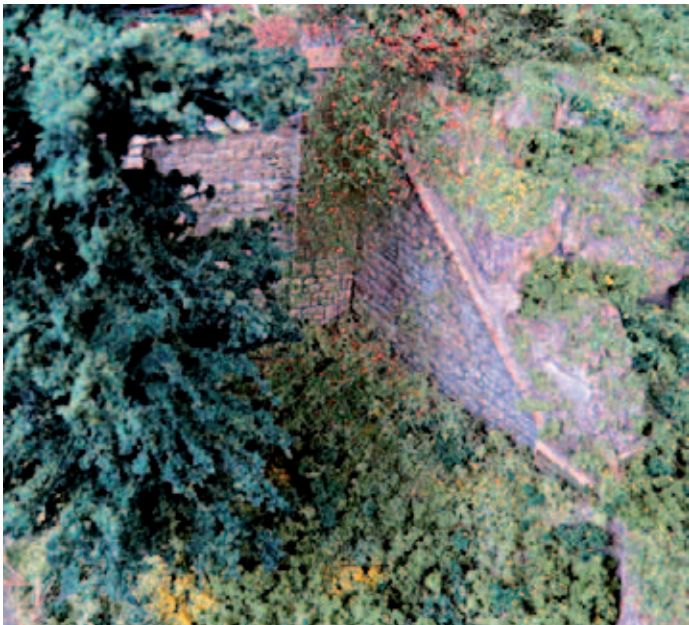


### **UNDERBRUSH, SHRUBS AND BUSHES**

Woodland Scenics (gee, it sounds like I’m a salesman for the company!!!) produce a number of products suitable for shrubs and bushes, or underbrush growth in forests. This is simply ground foam that has a glue placed through it at time of manufacture producing large clumps that can be easily pulled apart into suitable shapes and sizes for your bush.

There are Light, Medium and Dark Greens as well as an Olive Green colour available. When using it on your diorama/scene avoid using just the one colour, instead mix different shades into the areas.





Look at nature — the variations of greens and browns are myriad!

PVA glue is placed onto the base and pressed into position. If using a PVA glue it will take a while for it to dry and adhere correctly — if you wish a Contact Adhesive could be used instead, for a much faster drying time. It all depends on what you are wanting to create!

### **MOSS AND LICHENS**

For my Bridge walls I wanted to create small clumps to simulate Moss or Lichen because of the dampness of the area it was near. Also it could have been used in some areas on the Canal Stonework Walls and Steps.



What I use first is the very finely ground foam as a base. I spray the wall (or whatever, it could even be a cliff face) with hair spray — then I put a small amount of ground foam (suitable colour, of course) onto a suitably sized piece of stiff thin card (or stiff paper), bring the paper/card up close to the wall and VERY GENTLY blow (with your mouth), the foam onto the sprayed area of the wall.

Leave it to dry for a few minutes, being hair spray it doesn't take too long to dry — then, again give



it a spray over with the hair spray and repeat the blowing of the foam onto the wall.

By doing it in only small amounts you can build up the thickness until the required result is attained.

Next, spray with your hair spray (no pinching the wife's either guys!!!) but this time instead of using the finely ground foam I use the Static Grass Flock and repeat the same blowing process!

A word of warning — LESS IS BEST — don't get carried away because otherwise it does become addictive! I have only done this to certain areas on my bridge sides. Imagine the areas in reality that would be prone to collecting mosses and lichens on their surfaces, somewhere subjected to dampness.

I have also carried out these techniques on the capping along the dry stone walls of the bridge to create a mossy effect on the stones along the top of the walls.

### **TREES**

OK, again I have decided to treat this as a separate Scenery Article, because of the complexity of the methods — and, the diversity of the tree styles around us! No tree looks exactly the same, even the same species can vary in shape, colour and size.

Following on from this article about the bridge, I will be producing a brief article on the ones used on this diorama — then, at different times, have other similar articles on 2 or 3 different species of tree each time.

The basics can be adapted to whatever type of tree you wish to produce. And here I would suggest a quick study of tree images on the internet, such as GOOGLE IMAGES, or other similar search sites. Before starting any Linka project, I will always refer to the internet or information as to the appearance of something. We are really blessed by having such a massive data base that we can reference!

*Until next time ... happy modelling!*