



<http://www.home.earthlink.net/~tekvov/id1.html>

Tombstones



Tombstone materials

- 4x8 sheet of 3/4 inch aluminum coated styrofoam (Called Homasote. It's the kind they put up under siding)
- Flat white exterior house paint (water base)
- Optional flat black water base exterior house paint.
- Black craft paint
- Optional brown and pail green craft paint

Tools

1. Permanent black marker
2. Small bowl to mix paint in
3. paper towels
4. 1/4 to 1/2 inch pain brushes
5. 4 inch paint brush or
6. Roller and tray (optional but saves time)
7. Yard stick and tape measurer
8. Long bladed razor knife, serrated knife or electric knife
9. Latex gloves
10. 1/4 inch grid paper and ruler
11. Pencil

Support materials

1. 2x4 lumber or
2. 2x2 strapping

Note. You can get away with using a 2x2 instead of cutting a 2x4 down to size. This will eliminate some work.

Tools

1. Table, skill or hand saw
2. All safety gear and precautions
3. Clamp to hold wood

Liquid nails and caulking gun

A styrofoam tombstone supported by two pieces of wood. One glued to the back, the other driven into the ground. Screws are used to attach the tombstone to the stake in the ground.

Read all directions before starting this project.

This one sounds really expensive, but if you break it down and consider that you can get up to seven or more stones out of one 4'X8' sheet of styrofoam the cost of each one is reasonable. How you may ask? Click on the grid page link to the left and you'll go to two of my quarter inch grid layout sheets. In reality your tombstones don't have to be "life" size to be good props. However if they are too small you'll lose the effect. It's best to keep most sizes between two and four feet tall.

STEP ONE

With your quarter inch grid paper and ruler draw out a four by eight inch rectangle. Mark each inch as a foot (4 on the short side, 8 on the long). This makes each 1/4 in. square equal to 3 inches. Now draw in your tombstones. Make sure to keep the narrowest one no skinnier than 15 inches and your shortest one no shorter than 2 feet. It may be hard to imagine the size of each stone until you start transferring their measurements to the styrofoam. You might want to check out a few of your designs on newspaper. Cut them out and pin them up. Take a good look. If you like them, they're good. Also it's easier to vary the style of tombstones once you start transferring the stones to the styrofoam.

STEP TWO

Now place your 4x8 sheet of styrofoam on a large work space with no obstructions. Starting at one corner, measure out the first tombstone. Make sure you keep its height and width just like it is on your grid paper. Don't mark the styrofoam any more than you have to. The black ink may bleed through your paint. Measure out your remaining stones. A trick to keep the inner ones straight is to mark their positions on both sides of the outer edges and use a tape measure to position them where they need to be..

Live and learn. Use a black marker for all your tombstones. Red or blue will bleed through the paint and are hard to cover up.

STEP THREE

When cutting out your stones there are a few things to keep in mind.

One, styrofoam is messy. Make sure where your working can be easily cleaned up.

Two is your knife. It should go all the way through the styrofoam in one cut.

Three, when cutting a curve cut the hole curve in one pass. Stopping and starting will only leave a ridge.

Four, take your time. Don't get too upset if you can't keep the knife straight all the time.

Any small angle isn't going to be noticed by anyone but you. Cut out all your tombstones.

STEP FOUR

With a large brush or roller and tray, paint your tombstones with the flat white exterior house paint. It is very important to completely cover the raw edges of the styrofoam with paint. Any moisture that gets in will warp the stone. Let dry. You will need more than one coat to keep the aluminum from showing through. Because our stones are in the front yard and we didn't want them seen from the street I painted the backs flat black. This hid the wooden supports as well. I started with a flat white because most of the old graveyards around here used limestone.

STEP FIVE

Now you will need the black craft paint; The flat exterior house paint; A small bowl; and paper towels. And something to mix the paint with. In the small bowl, add a dollop (about three table spoons) of your white paint. Mix in enough of the black paint to make a light gray (a little goes a long way). Wad up a paper towel and lightly dip one end into your gray paint. Moving in the direction your tombstone will stand smear the gray paint on. Don't cover up all the white. Add more black paint to your gray to darken it and add this new color to your stone. This will give it better texture. You don't need to get as carried away with this as I did. I admit that my stones are a bit cartoony. Remember, less is more.

You can also vary the color of your tombstones by adding different color paint to the gray. let this dry Tint or use what color looks best in your area.

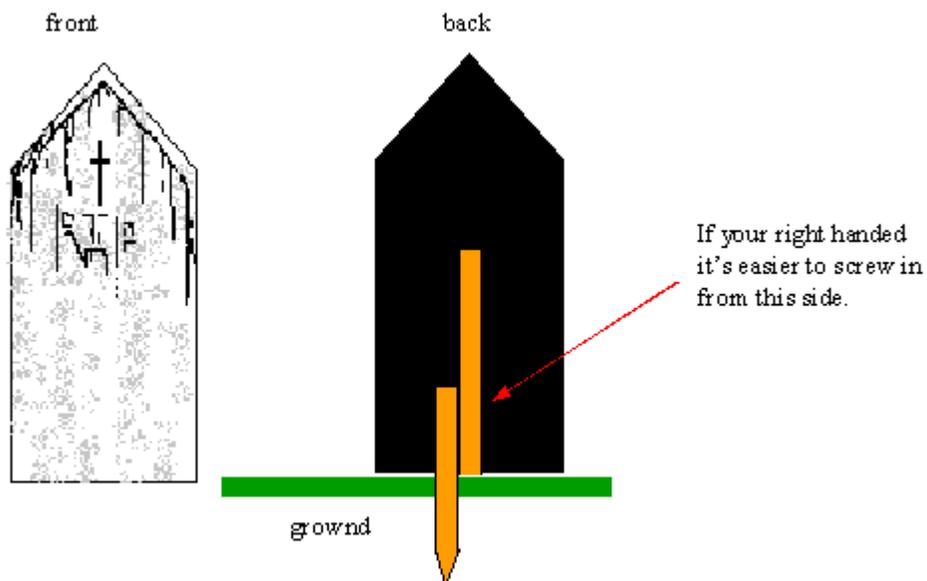
STEP SIX

Finger Painting Fun!!! All I did to get the detail on each tombstone was to mix black and white paint to get a deep dark gray and a 1/4 inch paint brush. Paint on a small section and while the paint is wet smear it downward with your fingers. To get a 3D R. I. P. and cross use the outlines below.

STEP SEVEN

You will need two pieces of wood for each stone. One to be glued to the back of the stone and one to be used as a spike. To set the stone up you'll pound the end of the

spike into the ground and then use wood screws to attach the two pieces of wood together. Don't try to pound the wood on the back of the tombstone into the ground. This will damage your stone. Rip a 2x4 into three pieces length wise. (2 at 1 1/4 inch and one at 1 inch). Or cut a 2x2 to size. The length of wood to be glued to the back of the tombstone should be no less than 1/3 it's height. For tall stones it's a good idea to have longer spikes. This will give the stone more stability. After determining the length of wood you'll need cut them out and paint them. to match the back of the tombstone.



Demonstration of how this tombstone is supported.

The drawing above shows how the tombstone is supported. A piece of wood is first glued to the back of the stone. A second piece is used as a spike and is hammered into the ground.

Storing your stones.

To disassemble unscrew the tombstone from the ground spike. Pulling the support out of the ground while attached to the stone may cause damage. I store my stones stacked flat on top of each other. The ground spikes I store in a large box along with the wood screws.

If you don't seal your stones or use moisture proof paint your stones will be damaged by wet weather. If you paint your stones white and gray and use polyurethane to seal them they will turn green.

Obtained from
Omarshantedtrail.com