Scott's Halloween Page

Eyes in the Bushes

Using some empty film canisters and a string of Xmas lights with multiple flashing effects, I created a bunch of little creature eyes you can string through the bushes.

Materials:

- Empty 35mm film canisters (ask for them at the local film developers; they're free!)
- 1 string of miniature white Xmas lights with multiple flashing effects
- White poster board
- Scotch tape
- Permanent markers

Tools
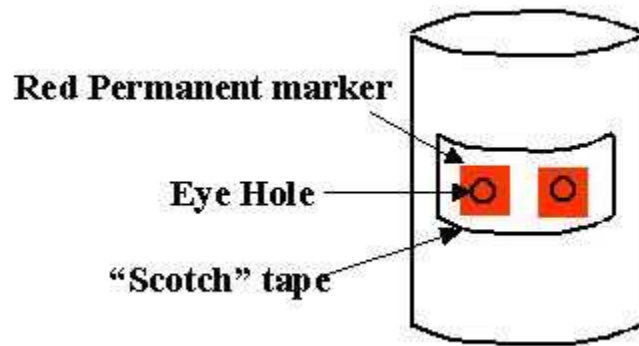
- Drill
- 3/16 inch drill bit
- Utility knife

Drill 2 holes about 1/2 inch apart in the side of the film canister. Drill them so that the holes will be side by side when the canister is upright.

Cut a rectangle of poster board as tall as the canister, and slightly wider than the canister. Slide the rectangle of poster board into the canister. You can use glue to paste it to the inside wall, opposite the eye holes, but you don't have to. The poster board will provide a reflector for the light.

Place a piece of Scotch tape over the holes in the canister. This type of tape should be the frosted kind. This will diffuse the light coming out of the "eyes".
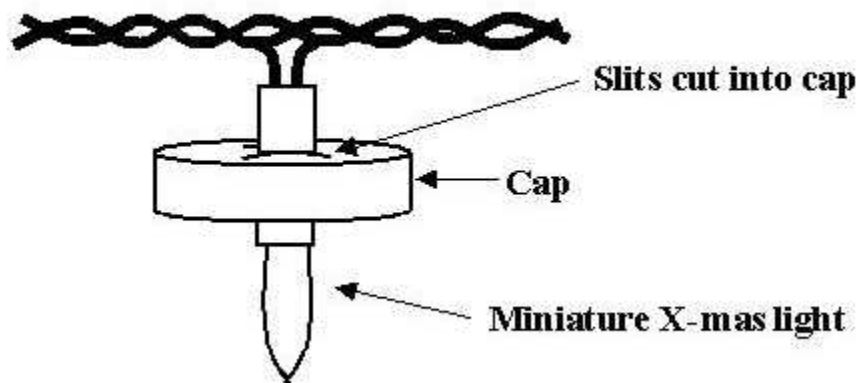
Red Permanent marker

Eye Hole

"Scotch" tape

Use a colored permanent marker to color the tape over the eyes. I used red, but yellow, blue, and green would look cool too.

Cut 2 slits, in the shape of an "X", in the lid of the canister. The slits should be about 3/4 inch long.

Place the lid on the canister. Push one Xmas light all the way through the "X" in the lid. Pull the light back out part way, so that it is firmly held in the lid. This keeps the light centered in the canister.

Slits cut into cap

Cap

Miniature X-mas light

You're done!

To set them up, string the lights throughout your bushes. The canisters will rotate freely under the caps, so you can face the eyes any direction you want.

What makes them look so cool, in my opinion, is the multiple flashing effects on the Xmas light string. I prefer the slow-fade/chasing effect, where every third light fades on and off as they chase each other down the string. With the lights placed randomly in the bushes, they don't look like chasing lights; they look like eyes fading in and out

randomly. Other cool effects are the slow fade on/off for the entire string, and the chasing effect with no fade.

Other options:

- Cut the eyes in different shapes: Round is easiest because you can use a drill. If you can find a metal tool with a triangular cross section, you could heat it and poke triangular eyes in the canister.
- Use colored lights instead of colored tape: Most of the Xmas lights with multiple flashing effects seem to come in white. However, you could replace the bulbs with different colors from other light strings. It still helps to have the tape over the eyes to diffuse the light.
- Use colored cellophane instead of tape: This might give you a deeper color than the marker.
- Fewer lights: If you don't want to use the whole string, place the extra lights in a light-proof container. Make sure it doesn't get hot.
- Sounds: Hide a tape recorder of growling or demonic giggles in the bushes. See my Sound page.
- Motion: Attach a small motor, with an offset weight, to the branches of the bushes. When you trigger the motor, the bushes will shake. Or just attach a string to the branches and pull it.